

The Glory of the Father

The Case for Christ and Bahá'u'lláh

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The Glory of the Father

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Dedicated to

teachers and “pioneers” who have spread
the “knowledge of *the Glory of God*” to
the farthest reaches of the earth.



For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge
of the *glory of the Lord*, as the waters cover the
sea. Habakkuk 2:14

As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with
the *glory of the Lord*. Numbers 14:21

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the
glory of the Lord rises upon you. Isaiah 60:1 NIV

Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will
see *the glory of God*? Christ (John 11:40 NEB)

When the Lord...shall appear in his *glory*.
Psalms 102-16 NIV

The Lord is come in His great *glory*! Bahá'u'lláh

For the Son of man shall come in *the glory of
his Father*... Christ (Matt. 16:27)

I have come in the shadows of the clouds of
glory... Bahá'u'lláh

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the
atoms cry aloud: '*Lo! The Lord is come in His
great majesty!*' Bahá'u'lláh

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18. ***The Case for Bahá'u'lláh.*** Have you heard the greatest news? The news no one should miss

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26. ***You Are Invited.*** Are you dressed for the banquet of heaven?

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The Case for Bahá'u'lláh

*“Present your case,” says the Lord.
“Set forth your arguments...” Isaiah 41:21 NIV*

A new book titled *The Case for Christ* became an instant best-seller. Millions of Christians rejoiced in reading and learning the evidence for the First Advent of Christ. Would not those same Christians rejoice in reading and learning the evidence for His *Second* Advent?

What can a Jew lose from reading *The Case for Christ*? What can a Christian lose from reading *The Case for Bahá'u'lláh*—the One who claims to fulfill the promise of the Second Advent? Could we expect a non-believer to know Jesus without studying the evidence in support of His claim? How then can anyone judge Bahá'u'lláh without studying the evidence in support of His claim, without examining His case, without testing the glory and grandeur of His Spirit?

Test the spirits to see whether they are from God...

I John 4:1 NIV

Let us assume a Christian asks a Jewish friend to learn about Jesus, and he responds by saying: “We have been warned of false prophets. Our rabbis have told us repeatedly that our Redeemer has not yet come—and Jesus is not the one! Our

rabbis assure us that they interpret the Hebrew prophecies about our Messiah correctly.” If the preceding response from a Jew is unfair and unreasonable, how could the following response from a Christian to a similar invitation be fair and reasonable: “Our pastors have told us that our Redeemer has not yet come—and Bahá’u’lláh is not the one. Our pastors and priests assure us that they interpret the prophecies of the Second Advent correctly.” If this line of reasoning from a Jew is invalid, why would the same line of reasoning from a Christian be valid? “‘Let us reason together,’ says the Lord” (Isaiah 1:18 NIV).

The Scriptures have warned us to beware of false prophets. Have they also warned us to beware of true prophets? Have they also warned us to beware of our promised Redeemer? How can we distinguish one from the other? How can we separate the true One from the false one? Only by investigating the evidence. Is there any other way? What if Bahá’u’lláh does indeed fulfill the promise of the Second Advent? Is it wise to risk denying Him without knowing Him?

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

Christ (Matt. 10:32-33 NIV)

Treasure Hidden in a Field

In one of His parables, Jesus compared “the kingdom of heaven” to “treasure hidden in a field” (Matt. 13:44). Just as jewels remain concealed in the ground, so do the gems of knowledge and truth in God’s Word. The Hebrew Scriptures use the same metaphor:

...and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for ***hidden treasure***, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:3-5 NIV

Without digging, we never know what lies hidden. Digging and discovering hidden treasures of truth is the most joyous adventure.

You are fortunate to have heard “the Greatest News”—the News of the Advent of the promised Redeemer of our time, Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. This discovery can lead you to the most challenging and fulfilling adventure of your life.

Since you have discovered the treasure box, the next step is to open it and look at its contents. Many forces both from within and without may prevent you from doing so: “I already have all the treasures I will ever need. Why look for more?” “What if I lose my own treasures?” “What about fictitious gems?” These negative thoughts are, in some people, so powerful, they hesitate to get even a glimpse of the treasures inside. They hear this most glorious News—the News of the return of their Lord—but ignore it. They fail to ask even a single question, such as: “Who is Bahá'u'lláh? Tell me a little about Him!”

In the parable of the talents, Jesus asks us to overcome our fears, and to be daring and adventurous (Matt. 25:30). Once you overcome your fears and see the treasures, you cannot stop yourself. You will keep finding gem after gem and marveling at their beauty and brilliance. You will say, “This is the most glorious adventure. How could I have lived without seeing such wonders!” You will discover gems so divine, you know they could not have come from the earth.

Today the glorious gift of faith has turned into business. We are called constantly to join this faith or that denomination. Anyone who invites people to investigate religious beliefs of any kind is looked upon as a sales agent. Our natural and immediate reaction is, “I don’t need anything! Don’t bother me! Don’t take my time!” It does not matter what that religion teaches, what evidences it presents, where it comes from, or what it is called. What matters is our perception, which is totally negative and evasive. Just as we look upon a sales

agent as the one who wants a piece of our savings, we look upon the teacher of a new religion as the one who wants a piece of our soul. Our instinctive reaction is, “I am too precious to give myself away! I must protect myself against all those who want a part of me, who want to steal my faith!”

How can a new religion grow in such an environment? Only by gaining people’s trust. This is why perhaps 99 percent of those who take the time to learn about Bahá’u’lláh do so through encouragement from a friend or a relative they respect. Seldom do they respond to an ad or invitation from a stranger. The trust and respect allows them, even motivates them, to look at the evidence, to investigate the message. Only then do they begin to see the light, only then do they begin to wonder why they had not known about this great Revelation before. They forget their past, and begin to wonder why *others* don’t see the light!

You are indeed fortunate to have discovered this most glorious treasure once “hidden in a field.” You are fortunate that you have heard about Bahá’u’lláh. Can you imagine any Gift as blessed and splendid as *the Glory of God*? Our Creator asks us to give the adventure of examining this most precious Gift of God our highest priority. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). You now have the opportunity to learn about this Kingdom and its heavenly King who has already come and established His Kingdom in over 200 countries and territories. The prime requirement for knowing Him is to obey the instructions:

Seek and ye shall find.

Christ (Matt. 7:7)

Thou shalt find Him if thou seek with all thy heart and all thy soul.

Moses (Deut. 4:29)

Knocking is always mutual. **We** knock to seek His help for finding and opening the gate of His grace:

...knock, and it shall be opened unto you...

Christ (Matt. 7:7)

He knocks to seek our help for offering and opening our hearts:

I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. Christ (Rev. 3:20)

Only those who respond to the knocking and open their hearts receive the honor of “dining” with their Lord. Only they can receive the heavenly food (John 6:35).

Contents of this Volume

The prime purpose of this book is to portray the Spirit of God as manifested in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh—*the Glory of the Son* and *the Glory of the Father*—and to show that they are identical: they manifest the same splendor and grandeur. The comparison is based on the lives and words of the two great Redeemers—Christ and Bahá'u'lláh—rather than on what others have said about them.

To know a new Redeemer, we need to be spiritually prepared. We need to be *rich in virtues, possess a pure heart and a penetrating vision*. The prescription is in the Scripture:

Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays *awake* and *keeps his clothes* with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NIV)

I counsel you to buy from me *gold* refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and *white clothes* to wear...and *salve* to put on your eyes, so you can see.

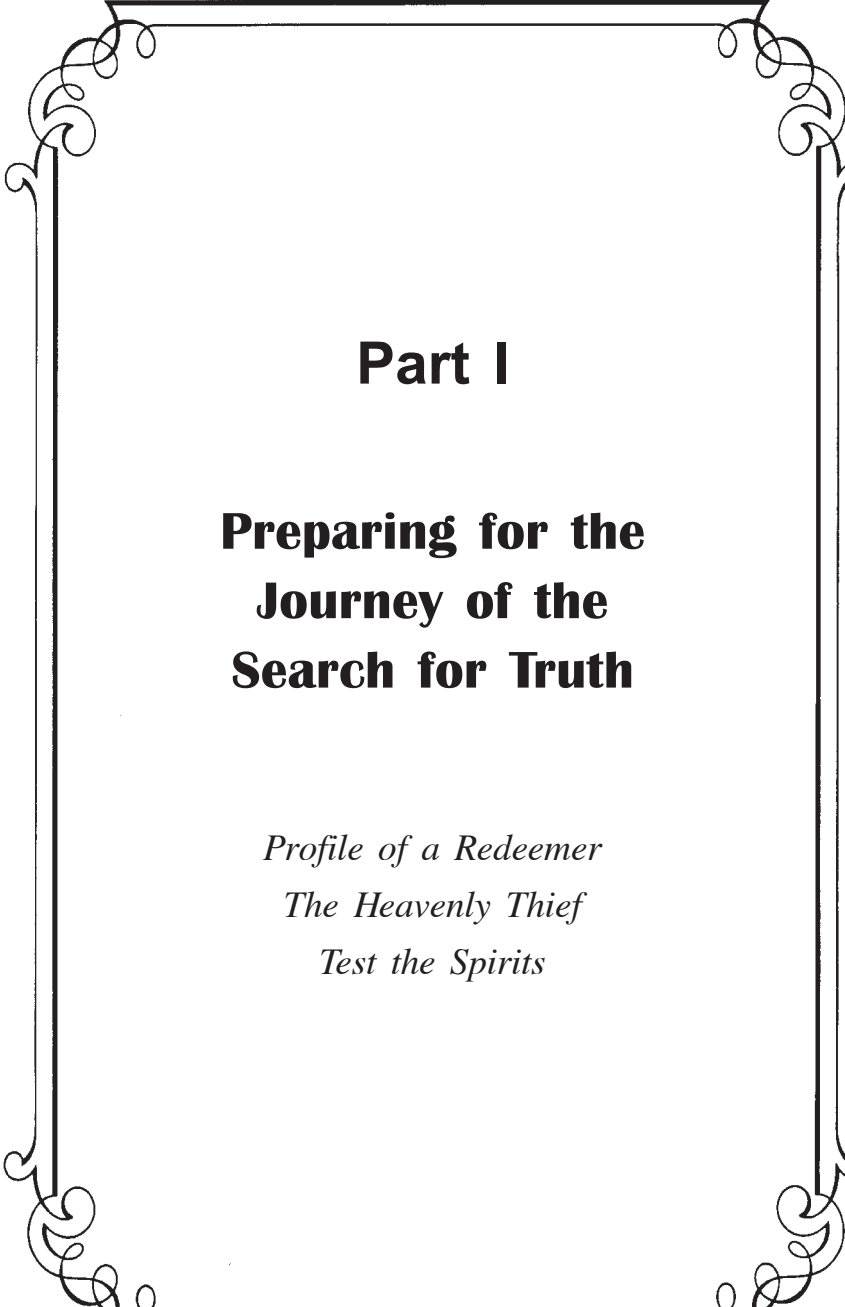
Christ (Rev. 3:18 NIV)

The Glory of the Father consists of four parts:

- **Part I** (Chapters 1-3) prepares you for your journey of the search for truth. It describes the virtues required for attaining the great honor of knowing a new Redeemer. If you are ready for the journey, feel free to skip these chapters.

- **Part II** (Chapters 4 to 12) presents the prime message of this book: Spiritual identity between Christ and Bahá'u'lláh.
- **Part III** offers prayers for seeking the blessings and favors of God.
- **Part IV** offers a list of readings for further research. For *The Glory of the Father* constitutes only one piece of the grand prophetic puzzle.

May God bless you and lead you
to the light of true knowledge.



Part I

Preparing for the Journey of the Search for Truth

Profile of a Redeemer

The Heavenly Thief

Test the Spirits

1

Profile of a Redeemer

This chapter presents briefly the recurring pattern of redemption throughout history. It shows the common elements in the lives of God's great Messengers and Redeemers, in the way their Message grows, and in the way people treat them. More specifically it compares the profiles of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh.

The world is gripped by darkness and despair. Confusion and conflict dominate the lives of the people. A man, meek and humble, arises and calls himself a Savior, a Messenger from God with a Message for those athirst for truth. He calls the people to God and righteousness, and gives them the tidings of a new day. He says he has come to bring hope, to bestow the gift of a new life, abundant and everlasting:

...for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Christ (John 18:37 NIV)

...I am come that they might have life, and they might have it more abundantly. Christ (John 10:10)

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Christ (John 8:12 NIV)

...do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink...your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Christ (Luke 12:29-31 NIV)

He says He has come:

- “to attract the souls...unto the summit of transcendent glory.”¹
- “to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind.”²
- “to quench the flame of hate and enmity.”³
- “to ensure the peace and tranquility of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.”⁴
- “to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding.”⁵
- “to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves.”⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

He claims to speak not by his own leave, but by the will of the All-Knowing:

I am not myself the source of the words I speak to you: it is the Father who dwells in me doing his own work.

Christ (John 14:10 NEB)

This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord...have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous

winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names...⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

He says he is as much dependent on God as others are on him:

I can of my own self do nothing. Christ (John 5:30)

Without me ye can do nothing. Christ (John 15:5)

He stands with utter humility before the Creator, declining to accept praise. His wish is to glorify God, not Himself:

Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. Christ (Luke 18:20 NEB)

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Christ (Matt. 5:16)

The Messenger declares that his advent is the fulfillment of ancient prophecies, that God has been faithful to His covenant, and people can now prove their faithfulness by accepting the Gift of God, by welcoming the dawning of the new day. He says:

O peoples of the earth!...Whatever ye have been promised in the Books of your Lord...hath...been made manifest. Beware lest the changes and chances of the world hold you back from Him Who is the Sovereign Truth. Ere long will everything visible perish and only that which hath been revealed by God, the Lord of lords, shall endure.⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Christ (John 5:39-40 NIV)

The Messenger substantiates His divine claim and devotion to God by His sufferings, supreme sacrifice, and detachment from worldly cares and desires:

How numerous the tribulations which have rained, and will soon rain, upon Me! I advance with My face set

towards Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Bounteous, whilst behind Me glideth the serpent. Mine eyes have rained down tears until My bed is drenched. I sorrow not for Myself, however. By God! Mine head yearneth for the spear out of love for its Lord. I never passed a tree, but Mine heart addressed it saying: 'O would that thou wert cut down in My name, and My body crucified upon thee, in the path of My Lord!'⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

His wish is to unveil joys unknown to the people, to immortalize their souls in peace and glory:

O SON OF THE SUPREME

To the eternal I call thee, yet thou dost seek that which perisheth. What hath made thee turn away from Our desire and seek thine own?¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

O MY SERVANT!

Abandon not for that which perisheth an everlasting dominion, and cast not away celestial sovereignty for a worldly desire. This is the river of everlasting life that hath flowed from the well-spring of the pen of the merciful; well is it with them that drink.¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh

He asks the people to set their hearts on God and their hopes on heaven, to break the barriers of flesh, and to rise to horizons on high, where light abides and darkness is no more. He calls those who seek his ways to follow him to the kingdom of heaven, where death is doomed and sorrow forgotten, where joy and peace and ecstasy blaze forth in immortal glory. He says:

O OFFSPRING OF DUST!

Be not content with the ease of a passing day, and deprive not thyself of everlasting rest. Barter not the garden of eternal delight for the dust-heap of a mortal world. Up from thy prison ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless.¹² Bahá'u'lláh

And again:

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.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

People respond to the call of the Redeemer in many ways. Some are curious, but no more. They surround him and listen to his tidings of cheer and hope. They allow him to plant the seed, but the seed never blossoms forth.

Others are attracted to his charm and drawn as by a magnet to his call of comfort and peace. They walk in his ways and stand in awe before the ever-flowing fountain of his wisdom. To them, he says:

...rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Christ (Luke 10:20)

Those who deny him, hear these words:

O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times?

Christ (Matt. 16:3)

The Messenger speaks simply and forcefully. His words carry authority.

...they were astonished...for his word was with power.

Luke 4:32

Of the many that he calls, only a few break away from their bondage to conformity and tradition. The masses ignore the call of the new Messenger. Many mock him and laugh at him, others call him insane.

...small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Christ (Matt. 7:13 NIV)

You stubborn people...you are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit. Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?

Acts 7:51-52 NIV

...you are revealing in action what you learned from your father.

Christ (John 5:39-40 NEB)

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 1:11

I am reproached and mocked all the time for uttering the word of the Lord.

Jeremiah 20:8 NEB

Yet, despite the mocking and laughing, he stands firm, unmoved as the mountains, high as the heavens. His confidence is unshakable, his calm unimpaired, his courage beyond measure, his patience boundless, his resignation divine.

Little by little the Message of the Redeemer spreads and his light catches on, extending farther and farther. His words like fresh leaven stir the minds of the masses and his message unsettles the old decaying order.

The Messenger singles out the religious leaders for special counsel, for they hold in their grasp the destiny of the masses. Theirs is the duty to guide, to lead the laity to new Knowledge. Yet they stand adamant—deaf to the call of the Messenger to build a new order and cast away the old.

The religious leaders are alarmed. Their security is threatened, their power at stake. They can ignore the spread of a stirring Message no longer. They incite their state to take harsh and swift action against the expansion of “unbelief and heresy.” They warn the people to stand on guard, to fear falsehood, for Satan is set loose.

At last, their negligence and denial moves the Messenger to rebuke them. He calls them “blind guides and hypocrites” (Matt. 23:13-15). For they shut the gates of heaven not only to themselves but to others as well:

Woe to you, teachers of the law [of the Lord] and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Christ (Matt. 23:13 NIV)

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.’¹⁴ * Bahá’u’lláh

The Messenger rebukes the religious leaders for their love of rituals, for their devotion to “forms and apparels,” for adorning the gold in the temple, but ignoring that which makes the gold sacred.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees...Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? Christ (Matt. 23:15 NIV)

Alas, such words of counsel and condemnation—sharp and swift as an arrow—stand unheeded by most of the religious leaders. The masses, too, refuse to heed the divine call. They follow for the most part the example of the custodians of their faith, saying: “We know not truth from falsehood. We have put our trust in our leaders to guard the Faith of our forefathers. Our duty is to follow, not to lead; to conform, not to command.”

The populace, the clergy, and the state find a common enemy, a man of meekness who seeks to “wrest power from the powerful” and “disturb the peace” of the conforming masses—those who would “rather be wrong for sure than be right unsure.”

The Messenger is arrested, abused, interrogated, and threatened. But nothing can change his mind. He persists in his claim without fear. Oppression strengthens his will, suffering sustains his hope.

* ...the stars shall fall from heaven... Christ (Matt. 24:29)

He is asked to prove himself by a sudden outburst of his miraculous powers, to sustain his claim by courting danger, perhaps jumping from a high mountain, or freeing himself from their grasp. He refuses, even condemns, all such requests, all such displays of miraculous powers. He reminds the people of God's ancient and eternal commandment:

Do not test the Lord your God... Moses (Deut. 6:16 NIV)
See also Exodus 17:2

Do not put the Lord your God to the test.
Christ (Matt. 4:7 NIV)

And when they refuse to heed his warnings, he rebukes them in harsh words:

A wicked...generation asks for a miraculous sign!
Christ (Matt. 12:39 NIV)

Alas, harsh words do not awaken the slumbering masses. Distressed, he asks the people:

Will none of you ever believe without seeing signs and portents?
Christ (John 4:48 NEB)

Even at the hour of his deep pain and suffering, they mock him and ask him to defy death:

If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
Matt. 27:40

He saved others; himself he cannot save. Matt. 27:42

The Messenger's wish is to be judged by his wisdom and his words, which he calls life and spirit, the heavenly splendors, the fruits of the tree of eternity:

The spirit alone gives life; the flesh is of no avail; the words which I have spoken to you are both spirit and life.
Christ (John 6:63 NEB)

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...This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality.¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The Messenger calls the people to reason, to test him by his works, to marvel at his knowledge and wisdom, which bestow light and life. He says his teachings are a comfort and joy to those who mourn, a fountain of living waters to the thirsty, a healing to the sick, and a lamp unto those who walk in darkness.

My deeds done in my Father's name are my credentials, but because you are not sheep of my flock you do not believe. Christ (John 10:25 NEB)

And again:

I have set before you many good deeds, done by my Father's power; for which of these would you stone me? Christ (John 10:31-32 NEB)

The people are reminded that false leaders can be known by their selfish or worldly deeds and desires, and that self-sacrifice is the vanguard of truth:

They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them...Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. I John 4:5-6

Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgment and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.¹⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

"The good Shepherd" (John 10:11) offers his life to become "the Lamb of God," (John 1:29), so that people may see his love for humankind and his devotion to truth:

There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. Christ (Matt. 15:13)

For actions reveal motives:

Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!
Job 14:4

You will recognize them by the fruits they bear.
Christ (Matt. 7:16 NEB)

The Messenger speaks with eloquence and charm, in moving and vivid language. His words are rich in meaning and his thoughts abound in wisdom. But alas, his light is met with blindness and his voice falls on deaf ears. At last he is condemned to exile, torture, even death. The Messenger dies, but his light lives on.

I am alive for evermore... Christ (Rev. 1:18)

The few who had followed him carry his torch and worship in his name. They attract others, and others attract still others. After decades and generations, his message spreads far and wide. Millions adore him. They sing his praise and remember his days of suffering. They call him the Prince of Hope and Peace and his enemies the Hosts of Despair and Delusion. They build magnificent shrines in his name and light many candles in his memory. They marvel at the blindness of those who could worship the letter but disdain the Spirit, who could adore the law but condemn the Lawgiver, those who had eyes but did not see, who had ears but did not hear, who had minds but did not discern “the Light of the world.” They hear with wonder and awe the words of their Messenger spoken in the distant past, and many a time before:

Woe to you...you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Christ (Matt. 23:29-30 NIV)

Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them...they killed

the prophets, and you build their tombs.

Christ (Luke 11:47-48 NIV)

Centuries pass. Tradition and fancy becloud the minds of the masses. The world once again borders on darkness and despair. Confusion and conflict rise again as they have arisen many a time before. Another Messenger is sent with a new name in a new land. People have forgotten the past. They look for halos around him, but find none. They seek displays of power and earthly splendor, but find only meekness, patience, suffering, and peace. They hear the Messenger say: O children of desire! My glory is from beyond and my kingdom not of this land. My light is heavenly, my splendor divine.

People are disappointed, even outraged. They reject and disdain the new Redeemer as their forebears had done many a time before.

Another cycle is set in motion by another people. But it carries all the markings of the past. Such tragic cycles have been repeated many times, in many places, and in many ages. It is being repeated in *our* time.

Seek ye the Lord while He may be found... Isaiah 55:6

Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.

Christ (Luke 12:48)



*Guiding Your Search by
Stars, not by Clouds*

2

The Heavenly Thief

Be always *on the watch!* Christ (Luke 21:36)

I shall come upon you *as a thief.* Christ (Rev. 3:3)

That is the day when I come *like a thief!* Happy the man
who stays *awake...* Christ (Rev. 16:15)

Hearing Both Sides Before Deciding

This book is not about doctrines or theological issues that have divided Christians into hundreds of denominations. It focuses only on two questions:

- Does our Lord promise to come down from *the sky*, or to come as *a thief*?
- If He comes from the sky, we will have no problem knowing Him. What if He comes as *a thief*? How then can we know Him?

The Glory of the Father proves the possibility that, according to prophecies, our Lord must come *as a thief*. You have both a right and a responsibility to hear also this side of the “Issue,” the side that requires *in*-sight, not *eyesight*. By hearing about both sides of the “Issue,” by seeing not just the *mask* but the “*Thief*” *behind* the mask, our knowledge of God’s Word will begin to burst into beautiful blooms of heavenly harmony and understanding. Many verses that seemed unreasonable begin to make sense. We will feel like a gardener who suddenly begins to see previously *unnoticed* roses and jasmines growing everywhere in his garden, who beholds many a bud turning into a blooming flower. We will suddenly discover that the unmatched pieces of the Scripture begin to fit into a beautiful profile of perfection.

There is a wonderful book called *You Will See It When You Believe It*. Its author indicates that if we are told to believe something often enough and long enough, we begin to believe it, and eventually see it. Our beliefs gradually settle like layers of stones in ancient mountains. They become so well-established, so hardened, that they prevent us from planting and nourishing the seed of a new insight, from seeing an idea in a new way. I have sometimes searched in vain for a book in my library. The book was in plain sight, staring at me, yet I would miss it. Why? I expected a different cover; my expectation blinded me. It did not let me see the “lost” book. The same thing happens to belief systems. Our beliefs make bright and beautiful the verses that validate our expectations, but hide the others behind the clouds of careless thinking.

Beliefs—whether true or false—grow deep roots to provide stability for the believers. The permanent solution is not to

cut the tree, but to get to the roots, to touch the hearts and souls of those who hold them. As long as the old roots remain, there is no room for the new roots to grow.

False ideas, like true ideas, give people a sense of stability; altering them can be threatening. It takes time and repeated efforts to gain the confidence of those who cherish deeply their ingrained beliefs. To recognize the difficulty of dealing with people's beliefs, try to remember the number of times you could change someone's opinion about a critical issue, no matter how much evidence you had on your side. People hold to their beliefs as tightly as they hold onto their most precious possessions. Anyone who extends a hand toward those possessions is perceived as a thief.

This book has a modest goal. It attempts neither to cut nor to uproot the tree. Its purpose is to loosen and aerate the soil, to create an atmosphere of openness, and a feeling that the one established traditional view is not the only one. Even accomplishing this modest goal—loosening the soil—is difficult and may be beyond the reach of this book.

Several times Jesus used the metaphors of “*thief*,” “*night*,” and “*clouds*” to refer to Himself and His way of Return. Why did He choose those metaphors? Why would the Master hide Himself from His beloved servants? *The Glory of the Father* answers this critical question. It removes “the veil” from the face of our Lord, and reveals a glimpse of His infinite glory and splendor. It brings to your attention verses that you may have read many times but have never “seen” before!

Guiding Your Search by Stars, not by Clouds

As a result of giving pre-publication copies of this book to several readers, I made a critical discovery. A few of them started to read from the outset with a negative attitude, with

a fault-finding eye. They wore a magnifying glass and started looking for a verse that was not interpreted their way. As soon as they found one, they would excuse themselves from reading the rest of the book. That critical discovery justifies this warning: ***We cannot see the stars—the guiding lights—unless we shift our eyes away from the clouds.***

The clouds are our previous learning and expectations. This book is not written to support traditional interpretations. Should we not be willing to give a hearing to new ideas and insights? What are the stars? They consist of many specific signs and standards by which, according to Scripture, we can separate the divine from the deceptive.

It is hard for most people to be open-minded about religion. New ideas are always resisted. To inspire a sense of humility and open-mindedness in your soul, visualize these two changes in your life:

Family change of perspective:

Assume that you were born to a family with different religious beliefs. Would you not be defending Muhammad, if your parents were Muslims; or Buddha, if they were Buddhists?

Historical change of perspective:

Assume that you were a devout Jew living at the time of Jesus. How would you respond to His invitation to be open-minded to a new interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures? As a devout Jew, would you not resist?

History is the best teacher and awakener. Consider this example. We know, according to the Jewish perspective, that Jesus “broke” one of the ten commandments: the law of Sabbath (Matt. 12:2-8). Suppose you were present and saw Him do this. What would happen if you were not fully awake and aware, if you were tradition-bound? Your previous learning and understanding of the Sabbath would suddenly turn into

a patch of cloud, completely blocking the Light of Jesus to your soul. No matter what evidence He presented, what brilliant stars He displayed, your dislike for His view of the Sabbath, would prejudice your opinion against Him, and you would not open your heart to Him. Not only that, your negative attitude would make you look for other flaws in His teachings and interpretations. And if you looked for faults, you would of course find them.

What then is the solution, and how can you overcome the “clouds”? Perhaps the best solution is to postpone your final verdict *until you have seen all the beautiful stars that will later emerge in this book*. While reading, focus your eyes on the “guiding lights” rather than on the “clouds.” Do not allow disagreements with a given point prevent you from pursuing your spiritual journey. After rising high into the sky and seeing the “stars,” you can always come down to your previous position. You have lost nothing.

Here is a simple and practical way to accomplish this goal. Read the book *as fast as you can*. While reading, mark the ideas you do not like, the verses or points that require further study. When you reach the end of the book, determine which of these verdicts appeals to you:

- The message presented here does not deserve further attention and study.
- The message is not totally convincing, but it deserves further study.

At that point, if your verdict is positive, if your heart and mind move you to continue your search, then read the book a *second* time with the purpose of making a thorough investigation of the puzzling points.

If you become bogged down with specifics, on your first reading—which may have no significance or relevance to the final message of the book—you will not see any “stars.” You will be in the position of a Jew lost in the “clouds” of the

Sabbath, who, because of that one obstacle—the purpose of the Sabbath—would fail to discern the divine distinction and supreme splendor of our Lord Jesus. That is how powerful a little patch of “cloud” can be! And if your eyes are determined to find faults, of course they will find them. As we know, a fault-finding eye can always find faults.

The Most Common Cause of Pain and Suffering

Perhaps the most common cause of pain and suffering in the world can be summarized in one word—**NEGLIGENCE**—defined as:

- Lack of proper care or attention, and
- Habitual inattention due to carelessness or laziness.¹

Every year in the United States over 100,000 people die and many times more are disabled by accidents. What contributes to those accidents more than anything else? **Negligence**. Consider also the suffering millions endure because they **neglect** their health or their duty to save for their old age. Ponder also the pain caused by parents who **neglect** their children.

What is the single most evident and **universal negligence**? **A failure to pay close attention to one’s spiritual purpose and destiny**. The most obvious evidence for this negligence is the way people choose their beliefs. Do they devote much time to this most significant task? Virtually all people of all nations and creeds accept not only the religion but also the denomination of their ancestors. They let someone they only dimly know or have never met—an ancestor—decide what they should believe.

To guide His faithful followers, Jesus selected and emphasized **one word** more than any other. As we shall see, **that word contains the essence of all virtues**. Decoding its precise

meaning and putting it to practice faithfully is the most splendid spiritual achievement. To show its critical significance, our Lord used that **word** with a supreme sense of urgency, *as if there is a vast fire and most people are about to fall into it*. That word is “Watch!”:

Be on guard! Be alert!...keep Watch....do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ***“Watch!”*** Christ (Mark 13:33-37 NIV)

Be always on the Watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Christ (Luke 21:36 NIV)

Decoding *the precise* meaning of “**Watch**” is absolutely essential. *It is perhaps the most critical word our Lord used to prepare His faithful followers for His Return*. Let us see how the dictionary defines it:

- Look attentively or carefully.
- Look or wait with care and attention.
- Keep guard.
- Stay awake for some purpose.²

As we can see, “**Neglect**” and “**Watch**” have exactly the opposite meanings:

Neglect: Give too little care or attention. Be *careless* or lazy.

Watch: Look attentively or *carefully*.

Which of the following sets of actions and attitudes is in harmony with “**Watch**” and which is in harmony with “**Neglect**”?

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Investigate	Ignore
Inquire	Avoid
Test	Do not test
Open your heart and mind	Close your heart and mind
Have courage	Be fearful
Be vigilant and active	Be idle
Be awake and aware, like a detective who looks at every clue, examines every piece of evidence	Remain asleep and complacent, do nothing
Be curious	Be apathetic
Search for truth and knowledge	Remain ignorant

How can we know the truth? By shifting our attention from *the negative* column to *the positive*. By observing this counsel: ***Watch! Pay Attention while you have the chance!***

The Test of Our Faith

The greatest commandment of God is to love God and all His creatures (Matt. 22:36-39). But before we can love God we must first know Him. How can we love someone we do not know? This knowledge and love are the source of all

goodness. Consider God as the sun and the soul as a garden. In the soul's garden beautiful flowers of virtue grow: knowledge, peace, wisdom, love, hope, joy, and trust. Each virtue has a consequence. What is a consequence of trust? The loss of fear. Our trust teaches us that God will not remove our love from His heart, that He will not abandon us, that He will always be a part of our spiritual life. If you truly trust a guest, would we worry that he or she may walk away with a piece of jewelry left on a table? The one who truly knows God and trusts God has no fear of losing Him.

What do we mean by knowing God? We mean **really** knowing Him. What is an evidence of this knowledge? It is the loss of the fear of un-knowing Him! Do you fear un-knowing your mother? Why don't you? Because you know her well. What if you met someone for only a few minutes? Do you remember the strangers you saw yesterday walking on the street? You have forgotten them because you did not get to know them well. Then who would fear learning about another religion? The one who does not truly know God, love God, and trust God; the one who says in his heart, "What if by learning about this faith, I lose my faith?"

Do you **really** believe in Jesus or just a little bit? If you believe just a little bit, you can read the rest of this book without facing conflicts of any kind. You can treat it like a novel: read it only with your mind, not with your heart and soul. If you **really** believe in Jesus, you will experience some resistance. At first you will say, "This is not the Father I know." But if you persist, your persistence will move you away from the clouds. You begin to recognize the voice. You will keep saying "This is so obvious! Why did it take me so long to recognize the voice?" Patience, persistence, and trust are the only provisions you need for this most exciting and incredible journey toward the light.



3

Test the Spirits

I John 4:4

Serving on the Heavenly Court of Justice

Have you ever served on a jury? What conditions must the members meet? The main one is this: they should have no preconceived notions about the defendant or the issue under investigation. If they show any tendency one way or another, they are rejected.

Why do lawyers devote so much time and effort to selecting juries? They know it is extremely hard to shift preconceived notions. They know tendencies for or against a given position exist in a context of values and beliefs that have developed over many years and decades.

Imagine a devoted republican judging a democratic candidate, or a zealous democrat judging a republican candidate. Now consider how much more difficult it is to be objective about one's beliefs that have far deeper roots than politics. Imagine again a devoted atheist who is asked to consider the evidence for God, a devout Jew who is told about Jesus, and a zealous Muslim who is told that his religion is not the final revelation from God.

I do not know you as an individual, but I often find that people's beliefs—whether they are Jews, Muslims, Christians, or atheists—hold them as tightly as their skin! If we could change people's skins on command, so could we change their beliefs! And if a rare person shows any interest in trying on a new skin, he or she must wait a long time and do a lot of scrubbing before any new layers become visible!

As you can see, when it comes to beliefs, turning yourself into an impartial jury member is almost impossible. The best you can do is to make an effort.

With the new awareness you now have, let me invite you to put aside, just for an hour, all your previous learning about how Jesus will return and what He will do. Let me ask you to stop making predictions for just a little while and to examine with a fresh perspective the forthcoming evidence from the viewpoint of an ideal jury member. To enhance your objectivity, picture yourself as a Jew living at the time of Jesus. This change of perspective—both in relation to time and to your roots—can be extremely enlightening. It will help you become impartial.

To remind yourself of your jury duty, read the following letter, and then sign it!

A decorative border with ornate scrollwork in the corners and along the sides, enclosing the text.

*To Members of the
Heavenly Court of Justice*

As a jury member selected to serve in this court, let me make the following commitment to you. It is an honor to serve on this jury. The consequences of my vote, both to me and to the destiny of humankind are enormous. I will not take my jury duty lightly.

I acknowledge that guilt and innocence can be established only through justice. I recognize that prejudging—assuming something to be false or true before seeing all the evidence—is the first and foremost enemy of justice and truth.

As a jury member sitting in this court, I will refrain from making any judgment—true or false—until I have seen all the evidence, and until I have heard from the defense attorney the final appeal made on behalf of the defendant.

If I violate this commitment, my service on this jury will be void and my final judgment unsound and unreliable.

With total commitment
to justice and truth,

Signed

Dawn of a New Day

Have you heard of anyone who has come in the name of the Lord? Chances are you have heard of no one—nor have I, except for two contemporary Figures who appeared in the mid-19th century. They both advanced that claim. Not only that, they presented much evidence to support their claims. In *The Glory of the Son* we compared the best-known candidates of the last two centuries with the One supreme Figure, Jesus Christ. We saw how clearly they failed to be even remotely comparable with Him. Let us carry forward our investigation by putting these two figures to the same rigorous test, while keeping our perspective of a jury member alive.

The two figures under our examination are called *the Báb*, meaning *the Gate*, and *Bahá'u'lláh*, meaning *the Glory of God*. The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh claim to be the Ones promised in all sacred Scriptures. Let us put them on trial.

The year was 1844. A humble man from Persia called Himself *the Báb* or *the Gate* to the dawning of a new age and a new Revelation of truth and knowledge from God. The Báb came in the name of the Lord and declared that His prime mission was to prepare the way for the coming of another Savior and Redeemer far greater than Himself. He referred to the One to come as *Bahá'u'lláh*, the equivalent of *the Glory of God* in English. The Báb attracted not only many followers but also encountered many enemies who did their best to uproot Him and His followers. The Báb's message threatened the religious and political leaders who feared the loss of their powers. He was tortured, exiled, imprisoned, and finally executed in 1850 by a firing squad of 750 soldiers before thousands of spectators. Many thousands of His followers were also killed. The Báb's ministry lasted about six years.

The year was 1863, when Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. A humble man, who had never

met the Báb, claimed He was *Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, the Spirit of Truth*, the One promised not only by the Báb but by all great Redeemers of the past.

Sacred Scriptures have all predicted the coming of a supreme Savior and Teacher who will bring peace, justice, love, and joy to our divided and dreary world, who will gather together all the diverse nations, peoples, and religions under one Faith from God:

I will shake all nations, and *the desire of all nations* shall come.
Haggai 2:7

...behold, in those days, and *in that time...I will also gather all nations...*
Joel 3:1-2

The only westerner who met Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land was Edward Browne, a scholar from Cambridge. He met Bahá'u'lláh while He was a prisoner in the Holy Land. In his memoirs Edward Browne recorded these words spoken by Bahá'u'lláh:

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...Yet...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...¹

Bahá'u'lláh sent Epistles to the kings and rulers of the earth as well as to Pope Pius IX. He invited all Christians to test His claim according to *God's standards*, not *their own ways and wishes*. He said that His advent was the fulfillment of a promise recorded in all holy Scriptures. He too, like the Báb, attracted many followers and made many enemies, who feared the loss of their powers. The Persian government, supported by religious leaders, arrested Him, tortured Him, and imprisoned Him.

It seems incredible that the enemies of the new Revelation would execute the Báb and thousands of His followers, and yet miraculously spare the life of the most significant and distinguished Figure of this fast-spreading Faith: *Bahá'u'lláh*. Instead of beheading Him—the most common form of execution in those days—they exiled Him to Iraq and, even more incredibly, later they banished Him, of all places, to the western regions of Israel where Jesus had lived and died.

There is no one who has claimed so clearly, so repeatedly, and so categorically, and with such authority and power to be the Lord of humankind. Let us see what Bahá'u'lláh claims in His own words. The following are but a few examples among thousands. To the kings of His day, who denied His call, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector...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.²

...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...³

Bahá'u'lláh spoke with the same authority to all humankind:

O people! Verily, the Day is come, and My Lord hath made Me to shine forth with a light whose splendor hath

eclipsed the suns of utterance. Fear ye the Merciful, and be not of them that have gone astray.⁴

O peoples of the earth! God, the Eternal Truth, is My witness that streams of fresh and soft-flowing waters have gushed from the rocks through the sweetness of the words uttered by your Lord, the Unconstrained; and still ye slumber. Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation, the movement of Whose Pen hath revolutionized the soul of mankind.⁵

Here Bahá'u'lláh reminds us of the brevity of our lives and the enduring consequences of the choices we make here. He asks us to prefer God over gold, and to have the courage of choosing truth over the comfort of following tradition:

Say: Rejoice not in the things ye possess; tonight they are yours, tomorrow others will possess them. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Say: Can ye claim that what ye own is lasting or secure? Nay! By Myself, the All-Merciful, ye cannot, if ye be of them who judge fairly. The days of your life flee away as a breath of wind, and all your pomp and glory shall be folded up as were the pomp and glory of those gone before you. Reflect, O people! What hath become of your bygone days, your lost centuries? Happy the days that have been consecrated to the remembrance of God, and blessed the hours which have been spent in praise of Him Who is the All-Wise. By My life!

Neither the pomp of the mighty, nor the wealth of the rich, nor even the ascendancy of the ungodly will endure. All will perish, at a word from Him. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Almighty. What advantage is there in the earthly things which men possess? That which shall profit them, they have utterly neglected. Ere long, they will awake from their slumber, and find themselves unable to obtain that which hath escaped them

in the days of their Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised. Did they but know it, they would renounce their all, that their names may be mentioned before His throne. They, verily, are accounted among the dead.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly takes God as witness to the truth of His Word:

To this He Who is the Lord of all creation beareth Me witness.⁷

Thy Lord, verily, is a witness unto what I say.⁸

Thy Lord beareth witness unto that which I declare.⁹

Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you.¹⁰

Thus have the mighty verses of Thy Lord been again sent down unto thee, that thou mayest arise to remember God, the Creator of earth and heaven...¹¹

All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved.¹²

Is any rational human being capable of even thinking to be the Lord? The mere thought of it shatters the heart of anyone with any degree of decency. Let me invite you to search for even one person in the entire history of humankind who has spoken with the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks. There is none! Never did Jesus Christ speak in such a language, with such authority! Surely we want to pay attention to such a figure, to discover if He also has the proof to support this astonishing claim. What do we have to lose by knowing? How should we respond to Bahá'u'lláh's call? Should we ignore His claim? Or should we put it to the test? Should we obey this command or disobey it?

...TEST the spirits to see whether they are from God...

I John 4:1 NIV

This chapter examines Bahá'u'lláh's call and our responsibility to investigate that call. The succeeding chapters present the evidence.

What does Bahá'u'lláh exactly claim? He claims to be the Tree of Life that bears all the fruits of the Spirit. He claims to fulfill the promise of the Second Advent, to be the return of our Lord Jesus Christ with a new name. He does not say He is the same person as Jesus of Nazareth. He rather declares to be endowed with *the same supreme Spirit*, the Spirit that raised Jesus from the human to the divine. That Spirit has always existed and always will:

Before Abraham *was*, I *am*.

Christ (John 8:58)

The Spirit of God has no past, present, or future. For Him “was,” “am,” and “will” are the same. Jesus Christ has always been and will always be. He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev. 22:13 NKJ). We know of no Redeemer who appeared before 27 A.D. by the name *Jesus Christ*. What then did He mean by saying that He existed before Abraham? He meant *His Spirit*. That same Spirit, Bahá'u'lláh declares, once again has become manifest in Him, in a new person with a new name. This is how that everlasting and ever-present Spirit is described:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.

John 1:14 NKJ

Who was the real Jesus? Billions of cells or a Soul? The real Jesus was *the Spirit of God*. That Spirit dwelled in a human body for a while to communicate with earthly beings. Jesus was the Word of God—the Logos—who expressed God’s wisdom in human terms, in words that we can understand. Bahá'u'lláh declares to be *that same Spirit, that same Word*, who became manifest in the body of Jesus of Nazareth and spoke through Him long ago. That same Spirit appeared also in the Báb, *the Gate of God*.

Compare the Spirit of God to an inexhaustible source of fragrance. To appear on earth, the fragrance needs a medium: a rose. Long ago that fragrance appeared in a perfect Rose called **Christ**, the Anointed One. That same fragrance has once again appeared in a new Rose called **the Báb**, who served as **a Gate** or a Herald, and again in **Bahá'u'lláh**, the Glory of God, who established the Bahá'í Faith.

Logos, the Word of God



Christ

The Anointed One of God

Logos, the Word of God



Bahá'u'lláh

The Glory of God

Consider the rose: whether it
blossometh in the East or in the West,
it is none the less a rose.¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The Celestial Fragrance, the Spirit of God,
took the physical form of a perfect Rose and
“dwelt among us” once as **the Anointed One
of God**, and again as **the Glory of God**.

The Spirit of God does not need a name. We human beings need names to communicate. God helps us by bestowing unique titles on His Spirit in each age. When God offers a new spiritual wine, He also changes the wineskin:

You shall be called by **a new name**.

Isaiah 62:2 NKJ

To him who **overcomes** [the spiritual obstacles], I will give some of the hidden manna [spiritual food]. I will also

give him a white stone with *a new name* written on it.

Christ (Rev. 2:17 NIV)

Note Jesus' promise:

...the Son of Man will come in *the glory of His Father*.

Christ (Matt. 16:27 NKJ)

If we exchange "Father" for "God," we will have:

...the Son of Man will come in *the glory of God*.

How Do Christians Respond to the News of the Return of Their Lord?

Some of them take the News seriously and take time to investigate it. Others fail to respond to the News just as many Jews have failed to respond to the News of the First Advent. To many Christians, the News of Bahá'u'lláh's Advent, seems to contradict almost everything they have been taught from childhood about the return of Jesus. They dismiss Bahá'u'lláh's claim as readily as hundreds of rumors, false reports, and claims they constantly hear, especially through the news media that has a habit of telling us the bad news, but seldom the good.

Over the course of centuries, many have attempted to present themselves as the Christ. The news of the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh, most Christians think, is one more example of such attempts. It simply proves, they assume, our Lord's prediction that there will be many false prophets. In their minds, subconsciously they change the meaning of "***Beware*** of false prophets" to "***Everyone*** is a false prophet." Such a response *seems* both safe and convenient. It protects them from facing the most awesome challenge they can ever face. But is such a response in harmony with "***Seek and ye shall find***"? Is it in harmony with our Lord's repeated instructions that we should "***watch***" for Him? Is it in harmony with "***Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time***" (Heb.

9:28)? Is it based on *obedience* or *convenience*? Why did our Lord repeat this warning?

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them *watching* when he comes.

Christ (Luke 12:37 NIV)

Take ye heed, *watch* and pray...

Christ (Mark 13:33)

Watch ye therefore, and pray always...

Christ (Luke 21:36)

Behold, I come like a *thief*! Blessed is he who stays *awake*.

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NIV)

Do not let him find you *sleeping*. What I say to you, *I say to everyone: "Watch!"*

Christ (Mark 13:36-37 NIV)

Many Christians, who hear about Bahá'u'lláh, act like a person who has lost all his memory, and is suddenly introduced to a loved one he or she can't relate to. To them Bahá'u'lláh looks like a stranger. What if Bahá'u'lláh had adopted the name Jesus Christ? Would that make any difference? What if He had come with the same body? Would anyone be able to know Him?

The prime question is this: *Who* was our Lord Jesus Christ? Was He made of billions of cells, or was He a Soul—the Spirit of God? Could not that *same* Spirit—the *Spirit of God*—appear in a new “temple,” in a new person with a new name?

The spirit alone gives life; the flesh is of no avail; the words which I have spoken to you are both spirit and life.

Christ (John 6:63 NEB)

Ponder the words of our Lord: He says that *the body has no significance*. Jesus told the Jews that if they knew Moses, they would also know Him (John 5:46). What did the Jews need to know about Moses? About His *body*, or His *Spirit*? Was it *spiritual attributes and honors* or physical features that made Jesus “*a prophet like unto Moses*” (Acts 3:22)?

Religion has always been, for the most part, an *emotional* experience. People feel protective of their faith even as they are of their children and cherished possessions. Such a response is natural. But shouldn't the natural and emotional be tempered with the rational? *Should we act as if every stranger is a child abductor or a thief?*

The *initial* response of most Christians to Bahá'u'lláh is virtually always tinged with emotions. But once they overcome their emotional resistance, they begin to feel at home. They begin to hear and recognize *the Voice* of "the stranger." I have seen this shift of perception and attitude many times.

How do you think early Christians declared the Advent of Jesus Christ to Jews and Gentiles? Do you think people suddenly embraced them and said, "We have been waiting for you! Where have you been?" No, just like the people of this age, they responded with denial, disbelief, doubt, and skepticism. Their minds were usually occupied with thoughts of deception. The persecution of early Christians is an example of the unchanging essence of human nature.

Consider this analogy. Jesus compared new Christians of His day to fish. He called His disciples fishers of men! Suppose you are a fish, and have lived all the days of your life in a pond. You meet a new fish who invites you to another pond, but you are reluctant to go because your pond is part of you. You are attached to your environment and all the other fish in your pond. You refuse to go.

Now suppose you are *not* a regular fish; you are adventurous and you decide to say yes to the invitation. You don't know what to expect. Then experience the incredible! The moment you enter the new pond, you say, "How could I have lived in any other pond? It all feels so natural. I didn't know I was missing so much! Why didn't I come here sooner?" This is the way most people feel after they recognize Bahá'u'lláh. They say, "It seems I have always believed in Bahá'í principles of unity and harmony. Without knowing it, I was

already a Bahá'í in my heart. I just found my place. Although I still love my old friends, I cannot go back to my old pond!"

The following are the main stages that people go through before accepting an invitation to know Bahá'u'lláh. No doubt early Christians went through similar stages before recognizing the divine glory of Jesus Christ:

1. Ignore
2. Ignore
3. Ignore
4. Why do I come across the word "Bahá'í" again and again! Is that name following me?
5. Maybe I should look into it.
6. Maybe I should look into it.
7. Not again! I am coming across these Bahá'ís again!
8. I will accept one invitation!
9. I can't believe it! I have decided to continue my investigation.
10. It is incredible! I have recognized Bahá'u'lláh! It seems I was always a Bahá'í, but did not know it. Suddenly, I discovered myself!

***How Should We Respond
to the News of the Coming
of Bahá'u'lláh?***

This book does not try to "convert" anyone. We are a spirit, not an object. Only God can transform a spirit! To think that a human being can change even a single human heart is sheer illusion. We cannot even change our own hearts, let alone someone else's heart. This book offers only an invitation to

visit a new garden. The rest is in God's hand. He will intervene and do the specific heart operation you need. Your job is to give Him a chance, to show your trust in Him by exploring new frontiers of knowledge. You have lived all your life in your unique church or synagogue. Why not explore the beyond? God loves people of courage who always seek and knock.

God has given us clear and unmistakable standards by which we can judge the truth, by which we can know His Redeemers. Should we be loyal to **His** commands, or should we submit to **our own** personal convenience, concerns, and fears? Should we obey the voice of Scripture that we must "**test the spirits**," or should we obey our own voice that whispers: "Why venture out? You are so secure in your comfort zone!" Our Lord repeatedly asked us to overcome:

To him who **overcomes**, I will give some of the hidden manna [the Bread of Life]. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it. Christ (Rev. 2:17 NIV)

How can we **overcome** our concerns and fears? By turning to God and asking Him for help:

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. **Ask, and you will receive.**

Christ (John 16:24 NKJ)

Do you have full confidence in the One who spoke these words?

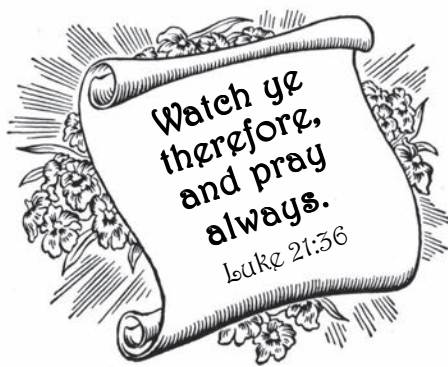
...seek, and ye **shall** find; knock, and it **shall** be opened unto you.

Christ (Matt. 7:7)

How does the word "**shall**" appear to you? As "**maybe**" or as "**for sure**"? True faith in our Lord means having confidence that He **does** get involved in our search, that He **hears** our call, and **opens** windows of opportunity.

If evasive emotions overwhelm you, if they prevent you from pursuing the call of reason and the command of the Scripture—to investigate Bahá'u'lláh's mission—if they cast fear

in your heart, if they make you remember words such as “*deceivers*,” “*tempters*,” or “*false prophets*,” try to take charge of your destiny by turning to your Lord, by asking **Him** to help you and lead you to true knowledge. Remember this most critical command and instruction given by Jesus to those who have a desire to find Him and know Him on His return:



- How does a watchful person act? Does he ignore a claim and invitation the like of which the world has never seen, or does he investigate?
- Why would a person need to pray, and pray always? Because the journey is extremely difficult, filled with countless obstacles: apathy, fear, complacency, doubt, skepticism, lack of faith, negligence, worldliness, anxieties and pressures of daily living—and an endless line of inviters, from hundreds of denominations and cults who claim to speak for God, each of them telling us that his way is the only way to heaven! Praying sends this message: O God, I am in trouble! I need help and have full trust that you will respond.

After putting your heart and soul in God’s hand, after **fully** trusting Him, try to prove your trust and faith in Him by following **His** standards, rather than what appears easier or safer, by obeying God, not what your friends, priest, or rabbi

may tell you, or even what your own heart may dictate. ***Otherwise the forces of fear and avoidance will surround you and prevent you from pursuing your divine destiny. Virtually everyone will warn you of the dangers ahead, of the deceivers who have set traps for you. Very few will give you any support, any words of encouragement.*** Very few will remind you of the verses that command you to investigate, very few will tell you that you are accountable to God ***to test the spirits.***

If any traces or temptations of fear, such as—“What if I am deceived?”—touch your heart, remind yourself of this everlasting principle: ***God does not like fearful servants.*** Repeat to yourself these soothing words of our Lord addressed to fearful people:

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Christ (Luke 12:32)

The same kind of people who lived at the time of Jesus, live now. Human nature does not change from age to age. People are not more courageous today than they were then.

I hope and pray that you are not like most of the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus—the ones who needed constant reassurance from our Lord that by coming to Him they had nothing to lose, that He didn’t want to take anything *away* from them, that He wanted to ***give them God’s most glorious gift: everlasting life in His Kingdom.***

If Jesus’ reassuring words to the fearful Jews of His time cannot soothe your feelings, if they cannot prevent you from hearing the call of reason to investigate the evidence for Bahá’u’lláh, then expose your *fear* of being deceived to another kind of *fear*. Do you remember the parable of the talents? It is about our Lord’s Second Advent. It is about the Master who goes on a long journey, and then returns. That parable clearly teaches that Jesus will face two kinds of Christians when He returns: ***the courageous***, and ***the fearful.***

Do you remember how the Master described His *fearful* follower? By these awful words: “*wicked* and *lazy*” (Matt. 25:26). That is how dangerous fear can be. Even if there is a one in a billion possibility that avoiding, disregarding, or denying Bahá’u’lláh’s Call is the same as denying Jesus Christ, should you take that chance by *not* stepping forward with courage and confidence?

To overcome your feelings of avoidance, remember also the parable of the five maidens who missed the Bridegroom (Matt. 25:1-13). They arrived too late for the Banquet, and found its door closed. They pleaded with the Lord to open the door for them. They were told that they were strangers and could not attend the Banquet. *Then let your desire to protect your faith in our Lord come face to face with your fear of missing Him and staying forever out of His Banquet.* Let one fear *overcome* the other:

He who *overcomes*, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more...And I will write on him *My new name*. Christ (Rev. 3:12 NKJ)

Would you *not* try to “*overcome*” your fears of being deceived in exchange for the gift of our Lord’s *new name: the Glory of God*? You are *not* being invited to accept anyone. You are asked only to *investigate*, only to follow the commandment of the Scripture that you must *test* the spirits. You are invited only to *test* Bahá’u’lláh’s fruits.

Our Lord knew that at His Second Advent, His followers would be so hampered by their illusions and assumptions, so fearful of being deceived, that He addressed this question to them many times. Ponder the following verse and ask yourself, “Why would a loving God punish so severely *a coward*?” What kind of fear would justify such harsh punishment?

But *the cowardly*...their place will be in *the fiery lake* of burning sulfur. Christ (Rev. 21:8 NIV)

Only *fear of being deceived*, and therefore failing to investigate the news of the coming of the heavenly “Thief,” and staying out of His Banquet would justify a punishment as harsh as hell. Why, then, not “watch” or pay attention? Why, then, not be prudent? Why, then, not investigate?

A prime purpose of this book is to invite all seekers and lovers of truth to put their fears aside, to come forward, and to put Bahá'u'lláh's claim to the most rigorous test of the Scripture, to see if He is indeed *the Glory of God*. To find the true answer, the test must always depend on *God's directions*, not *human desires*. What are those directions or standards? They were presented in the first volume—*The Glory of the Son*—and applied to Jesus Christ. In this volume, let us apply them to both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh and see if they manifest the same great Spirit and bring forth the same heavenly fruits.

Part II

Testing the Spirits

Embarking on the Journey of the Search for Truth

Has anyone fulfilled all the signs that manifest the divine distinction? Has anyone borne all the “fruits” of God?

...do not despise prophetic utterances, but bring them all to *the test*...

I Thess. 5:20 NEB

...*test the spirits* to see whether they are from God...

I John 4:1 NIV

...*observe* all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Christ (Matt. 28:20 NKJ)



4

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

Christ (Matt. 7:20)

Part I

The Fruits of the Tree of Life: Spiritual Fruits

This chapter and the next offer a basketful of “fruits” from two heavenly vineyards: the Gospel and the Bahá’í Scriptures. They show a remarkable similarity between the “fruits” of Jesus and Bahá’u’lláh. They demonstrate a level of distinction in their Spirit, their lives, their teachings, their words, and their influence on the world infinitely beyond the reach of even the greatest of human beings. Following these two chapters, we will examine the “physical fruits” of the two vineyards: the literal prophecies fulfilled by the two great Redeemers.

*As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are
my ways higher than your ways and my
thoughts than your thoughts.*

Isaiah 55:9

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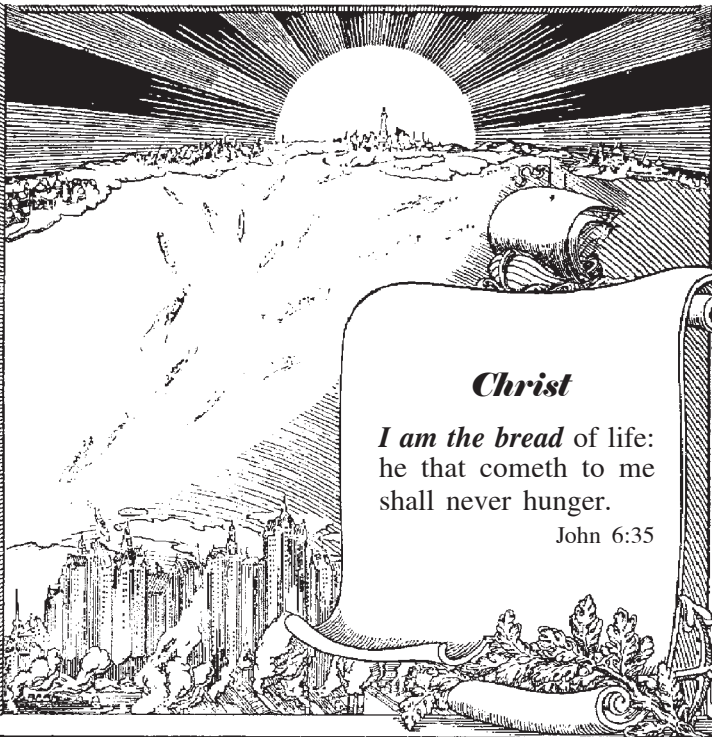
Fruits of Perfection

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father...

Christ (Matt. 16:27)

I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

I am the bread of life:
he that cometh to me
shall never hunger.

John 6:35

Bahá'u'lláh

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."

God's wisdom is proved right by its results.

Christ (Matt. 11:19 NEB)

You will know them by their fruits. Christ (Matt. 7:16 NKJ)

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.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

What fruits did Bahá'u'lláh cultivate in His garden? Not only did He cultivate and produce abundant fruits of love, peace, and patience in His life, but also in the lives of those who followed Him. You will find the true followers of the Spirit called Bahá'u'lláh, *the Glory of God*, identical with the true followers of the Spirit named Jesus Christ, *the Anointed One of God*. The same *Spirit* produces the same *fruits*. The true followers of the new Revelation are as loving and kind, as selfless and pure, as filled with the Holy Spirit and love of the Lord, and as joyful and peaceful as are the true Christians everywhere. *You will find absolutely no difference; the fruits of the heavenly tree never change.* The law of love is as everlasting as God Himself.

Bahá'u'lláh's Scriptures also offer a concrete and enduring evidence of His heavenly fruits. Consider the following brief quotations from the vast vineyard of His works, estimated to equal *one hundred volumes*, words written without pause or change of mind. Examine them carefully along with a few passages offered from the Bible:

The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed, and contentment with that which God hath ordained.²

Bahá'u'lláh

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.

Christ (Matt. 22:37-38 NKJ)

Note the abundant use of metaphors in these verses from Bahá'u'lláh:

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him

with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.³ Bahá'u'lláh

To know our Lord Jesus, we need nothing except His words. Like the sun, they are peerless and shine just as brightly. These few verses from Christ have inspired and transformed the lives of countless millions:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Christ (Matt. 5:3-10 NIV)

To taste Bahá'u'lláh's fruits you need to read at least one volume of His works. You may have little if any time to devote to this task, to an examination of this most glorious

news and this most incredible event in human history. But if you are a sincere seeker of truth, you will pursue this noble task with absolute devotion. Ponder this question: ***Could you know Jesus Christ without reading the Gospel?***

How does “***eternal life***” come to us? Through the Word of God. The Word is not just letters and syllables; the Spirit of God flows through them:

The words that I speak to you are ***spirit***, and they are ***life***.
Christ (John 6:63 NKJ)

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill ***new life*** into every human frame...⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

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...⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh glorifies the Word of God and declares it to be the most decisive proof of His presence:

Each one of these verses is unto all the peoples of the world an unfailing testimony and a glorious proof of His truth.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

...greater proof than this there is none, nor ever will be: This proof is His Word; His own Self, the testimony of His truth.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus was the Word, the spiritual food that always comes from heaven. Can anything be greater than ***heavenly bread***?

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry.

Christ (John 6:35 NIV)

That which is preeminent above all other gifts...is the gift of Divine Revelation. Every bounty conferred by the Creator upon man, be it material or spiritual, is subservient unto this. It is, in its essence, and will ever so remain, ***the Bread which cometh down from Heaven***. It is God's

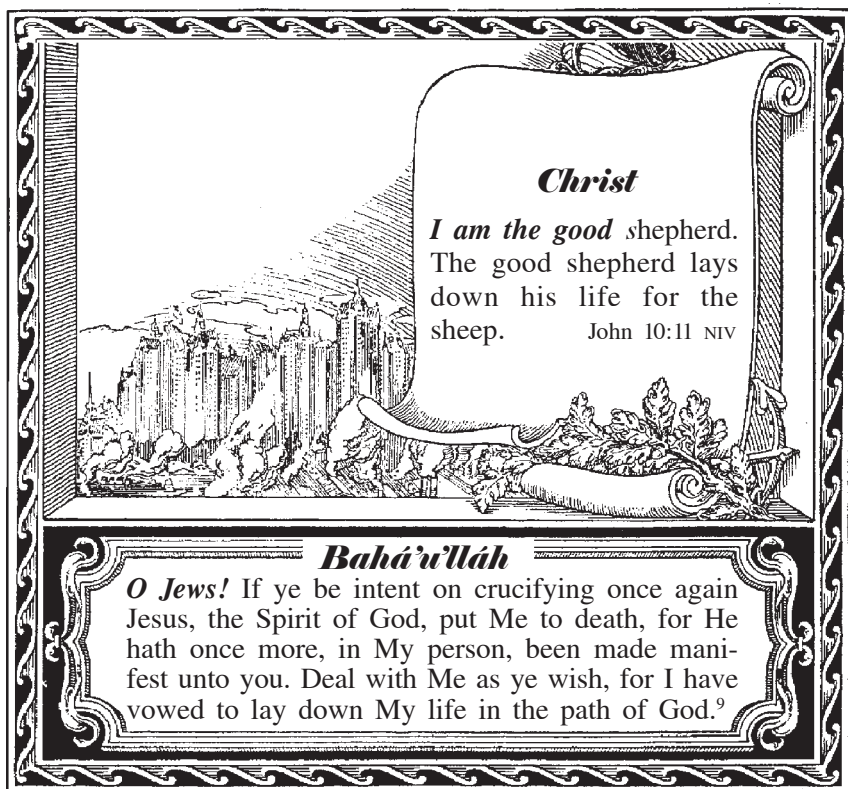
supreme testimony, the clearest evidence of His truth, the sign of His consummate bounty, the token of His all-encompassing mercy, the proof of His most loving providence, the symbol of His most perfect grace...

Render thanks unto thy Lord for having vouchsafed unto thee so great a bounty. Lift up thy voice and say: All praise be to Thee, O Thou, the Desire of every understanding heart!⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

2

Self-Sacrifice and Suffering



Did Bahá'u'lláh satisfy this standard? As we noted, the Báb gave His life at a youthful age, and Bahá'u'lláh was exiled and sent to prison. The extent of Bahá'u'lláh's sufferings during His forty-year ministry is beyond imagination. "...He endured the greatest misfortunes, and at every moment He ran the risk of being martyred. He was put into chains and confined in an underground prison. His vast property and inheritance were pillaged and confiscated. He was exiled four times from land to land and found rest only in the 'Greatest Prison.'" ¹⁰ God protected Bahá'u'lláh so that He could live and produce an abundance of heavenly fruits: ***works that will endure and guide humankind for the next thousand years and more.*** These verses demonstrate the self-sacrifice and the absolute dedication of the Ones sent by God:

He [Jesus] bearing his cross went forth... John 19:17

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. Luke 23:46 NIV

Ponder Bahá'u'lláh's absolute devotion to God:

As My tribulations multiplied, so did My love for God and for His Cause increase, in such wise that all that befell Me from the hosts of the wayward was powerless to deter Me from My purpose. Should they hide Me away in the depths of the earth, yet would they find Me riding aloft on the clouds, and calling out unto God, the Lord of strength and of might. I have offered Myself up in the way of God, and I yearn after tribulations in My love for Him, and for the sake of His good-pleasure. Unto this bear witness the woes which now afflict Me, the like of which no other man hath suffered...Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh

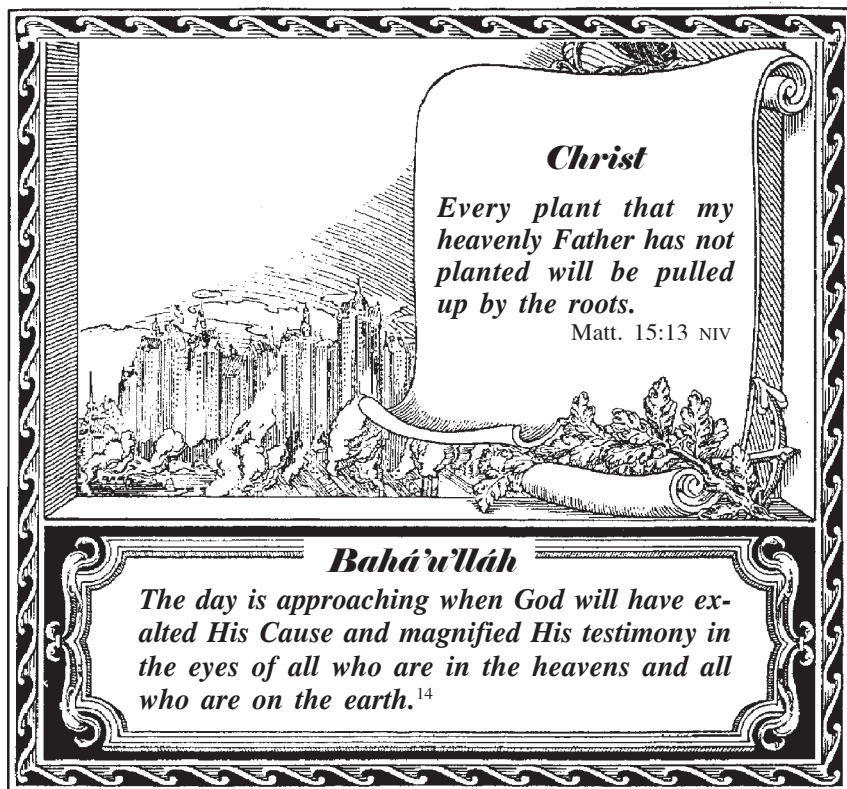
How many the days, O my God, which I have spent in utter loneliness with the transgressors amongst Thy servants, and how many the nights, O my Best-Beloved, during which I lay a captive in the hands of the wayward amidst Thy creatures! In the midst of my troubles and

tribulations I have continued to celebrate Thy praise before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, and have not ceased to extol Thy wondrous glory in the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation...¹² Bahá'u'lláh

Say: God is My witness! I have wished nothing whatever for Myself. What I have wished is the victory of God and the triumph of His Cause. He is Himself a sufficient witness between you and Me.¹³ Bahá'u'lláh

3

Endurance And Ultimate Victory



...every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Christ (Luke 3:9 NIV)

The hour is approaching when ye will witness the power of the one true God triumphing over all created things and the signs of His sovereignty encompassing all creation.¹⁵
Bahá'u'lláh

What of the tree planted by Bahá'u'lláh? Christianity has endured for 20 centuries, Islam for 14 centuries. The Bahá'í Faith is now in its second century. And yet in spite of facing severe persecutions, within that brief span of time, it has grown so dramatically as to become the second most widespread religion in the world, next to Christianity.

God always promises to protect the small Seed He plants and to make it a towering and fruitful tree:

The kingdom of heaven is like *a mustard seed*...Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is *the largest of garden plants*. Christ (Matt. 13:31-32 NIV)

The victory is mine; I have conquered the world.

Christ (John 16:33 NEB)

How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter.¹⁶
Bahá'u'lláh

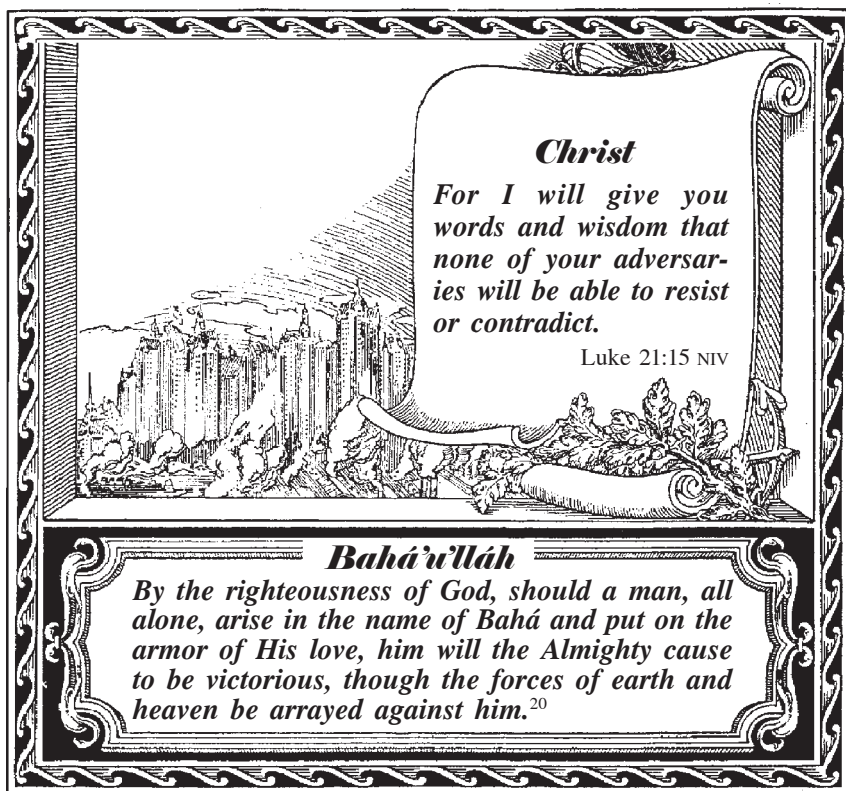
Know ye of a certainty that ***He will render you victorious***, will exalt you among the peoples of the world and will demonstrate your high rank before the gaze of all nations.¹⁷
Bahá'u'lláh

He Who leadeth to true victory is come. By the righteousness of God! He is fully capable of revolutionizing the world through the power of a single Word. Having enjoined upon all men to observe wisdom, He Himself hath adhered to the cord of patience and resignation.¹⁸
Bahá'u'lláh

Grieve thou not at men's failure to apprehend the Truth. Ere long thou shalt find them turning towards God, the Lord of all mankind. We have indeed, through the potency of the Most Sublime Word, encompassed the whole world, and the time is approaching when God will have subdued the hearts of all that dwell on earth. He is in truth the Omnipotent, the All-Powerful.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

4

Speaking with Supreme Authority



I tell you...if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.

Christ (Luke 19:40 NIV)

Those who heard Jesus, testified to His supreme authority:

And they were astonished at His teaching, for ***His word was with authority.***

Luke 4:32 NKJ

Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet ***mighty in work and word...***

Luke 24:19 AB

Did Bahá'u'lláh fulfill this sign? Examples offer the best evidence. Consider these quotations from Biblical and Bahá'í Scriptures:

For who is like Me?...And who is that shepherd [religious leader] who will withstand Me?

Jeremiah 49:19 NKJ

O ye leaders of religion! Who is the man amongst you that can rival Me in vision or insight? Where is he to be found that dareth to claim to be My equal in utterance or wisdom? No, by My Lord, the All-Merciful! All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved.²¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

Christ (Rev. 12:10 NIV)

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—"He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like potter"—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Christ (Rev. 2:26-29 NIV)

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Christ (Matt. 28:18 NKJ)

You [Pilate] could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.

Christ (John 19:11 NKJ)

Note now the supreme authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks:

By God besides Whom is none other God! Should any one arise for the triumph of our Cause, him will God render victorious though tens of thousands of enemies be leagued against him. And if his love for Me wax stronger, God will establish his ascendancy over all the powers of earth and heaven. Thus have We breathed the spirit of power into all regions.²² Bahá'u'lláh

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.²³ Bahá'u'lláh

Read the following few quotations from Bahá'u'lláh about His divine station. Then try to look through the Bible to see if you can find any verse in which God has spoken with more authority. You may wish to read these quotations several times, and then ponder and pray to receive guidance from the One who spoke them:

Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.²⁴

O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behoveth 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!”²⁵

Say: Is there any doubt concerning God? Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded

with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs? Open ye your eyes, and consider His clear evidence. Paradise is on your right hand, and hath been brought nigh unto you, while Hell hath been made to blaze. Witness its devouring flame. Haste ye to enter into Paradise, as a token of Our mercy unto you, and drink ye from the hands of the All-Merciful the Wine that is life indeed.²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

Say: O peoples of the earth! By the righteousness of God! Whatever ye have been promised in the Books of your Lord, the Ruler of the Day of Return, hath appeared and been made manifest. Beware lest the changes and chances of the world hold you back from Him Who is the Sovereign Truth. Ere long will everything visible perish and only that which hath been revealed by God, the Lord of lords, shall endure.²⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Read the words of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly to see if they speak with the same “Voice.”

My sheep hear **My voice**, and I know them, and they follow Me. Christ (John 10:27 NKJ)

Note God’s warning to you and to all peoples of the earth:

O people! **Fear ye God**, and turn not away disdainfully from His Revelation.²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

...the **fear of the Lord**, that is **wisdom**. Job 28:28

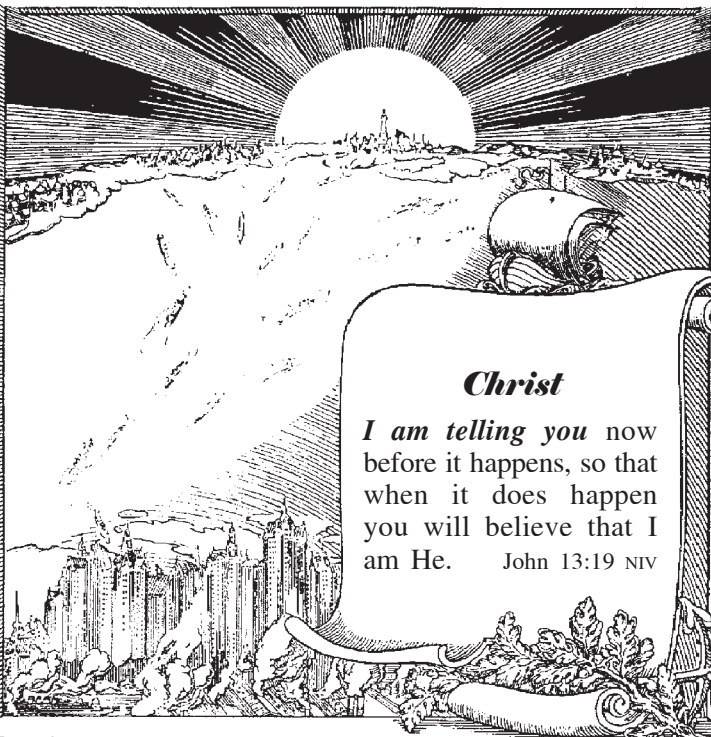
What does “fearing God” mean? It does **not** mean being afraid. It means **being aware**. It means **remembering God’s justice**. It implies thinking about the story of the five maidens who pleaded with their Lord to enter His Banquet, but could not. Certainly a just God would not treat equally those who obey Him, and those who do not, those who investigate His call with humility and courage, and those who prefer the safety and comfort of their churches and synagogues.

Knowledge of the Things to Come

...the desire of all nations shall come...

Haggai 2:7

*He who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent
majesty...Better is this for you than all ye possess. Bahá'u'lláh*



Christ

*I am telling you now
before it happens, so that
when it does happen
you will believe that I
am He. John 13:19 NIV*

Bahá'u'lláh

*We have laid bare the divine mysteries and in most
explicit language foretold future events...²⁹*

*...the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language,
hath made have been fulfilled...³⁰*

He will tell you what is yet to come. Christ (John 16:13 NIV)
See also Isa. 41:21-4

Through thee the secret of all things, be they of the past
or of the future, hath been unfolded.³¹ Bahá'u'lláh

Both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh had the knowledge of all things:

Magnify Thou, O Lord my God, Him Who is...the
Manifestation of Thy Lordship, through Whom all the
knowledge of the past and all the knowledge of the future
were made plain, through Whom the pearls of Thy hidden
wisdom were uncovered, and the mystery of Thy treasured
name disclosed...³² Bahá'u'lláh

All that hath been sent down hath and will come to pass,
word for word, upon earth. No possibility is left for any-
one either to turn aside or protest.³³ Bahá'u'lláh

...most of the things which have come to pass on this
earth have been announced and prophesied by the Most
Sublime Pen [Bahá'u'lláh].³⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

What predictions did Jesus utter? By far the most significant, the most detailed, and the most astonishing prophecies of Jesus pertain to the advents of Islam and the Bahá'í Faith. Most Christians fail to step beyond the boundaries of their own faith because of preconceived notions about non-Christian faiths and unjustified fears of being deceived. They subconsciously believe that anyone who does not carry the title "Christian" is deceived. It is astonishing to find so many educated people who follow ignorance as a way to enlightenment and wisdom! They ignore the counsels of God that:

...through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.
Proverbs 11:9 NKJ

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Hosea 4:6 NKJ

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus prophesied the Advents of both Islam and the Bahá'í Faith. He predicted the precise year of the Advent of the Bahá'í Faith both according to

Christian calendar (1844) and the Islamic calendar (1260). The Book of Daniel also contains similar prophecies. There is no example in religious history to show such precise predictions and such precise fulfillments. As a rule, prophecies are somewhat cryptic; they require some calculations. In this case, no calculations are needed. ***Jesus gave us the exact number: 1260!****

No religion can claim such compelling evidence from prophecy as does the Bahá'í Faith. The fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies validates not only the Bahá'í Faith but also the divine authority of Jesus Christ in a way that no other evidence can. For no human being has knowledge of the future except God.

Just like Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh uttered many prophecies that have come true. Among them is His prediction of the downfall of powerful kings and rulers of the 19th century. For a review of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistles or Tablets to kings and rulers, see *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*. The following is a brief passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to Napoleon III at the height of his power, at a time when no one expected his defeat and downfall. Ponder not only the prediction but also the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks:

Hath thy pomp made thee proud? By My Life! It shall not endure; nay, it shall soon pass away, unless thou holdest fast by this firm Cord. We see abasement hastening after thee, whilst thou art of the heedless.³⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion...Comotions shall seize all the people in that land...³⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

* You will find a detailed description of these prophecies in these volumes: *I Shall Come Again*, *Lord of Lords*, *King of Kings*. The three volumes cover over 1,500 pages.

Napoleon's reign soon came to an abrupt end when, contrary to the expectations, he was defeated by Wilhelm I of Germany in the battle of Sedan, stripped of his power, and exiled for the rest of his days. Napoleon's defeat is regarded as one of the most astonishing encounters in the whole history of warfare.

Because of his victory over Napoleon "the foremost monarch" of the time, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany grew arrogant, submitting his self to overwhelming pride and conceit. Bahá'u'lláh summoned him to the Divine Kingdom, admonishing and urging him not to allow his earthly sovereignty and splendor to deprive him of everlasting and lofty Dominion.

Only God can speak in this language:

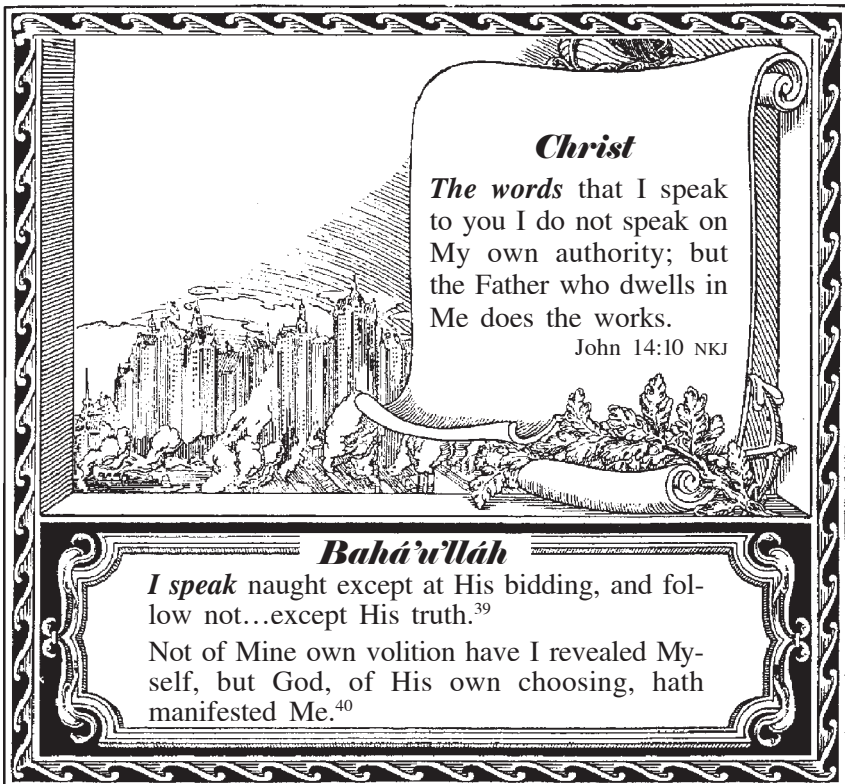
Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Everlasting, the Peerless, the Ancient of Days. Take heed...lest earthly desires shut thee out, as by a veil, from the Lord of the Throne above and of the earth below. Thus counselleth thee the Pen of the Most High. He, verily, is the Most Gracious, the All-Bountiful. Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power [Napoleon III], and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He [Napoleon] it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him, when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect.³⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.³⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

Again, as in other cases, heedlessness to the Divine Call culminated in the downfall of a conspicuous glory and the disintegration of a glorious empire. In a subsequent war between Germany and France, in spite of overwhelming odds against France, Germany encountered a decisive defeat.

6

Declaring God as the Source of Every Act Performed and Every Word Spoken



I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. John 8:28 NKJ

This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing?...His all-compelling summons have reached Me, and caused Me to speak His praise amidst all people. I was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me. Can any one speak forth of his own accord that for which all men, both high and low, will protest against him? Nay, by Him Who taught the Pen the eternal mysteries, save him whom the grace of the Almighty, the All-Powerful, hath strengthened.⁴¹ Bahá'u'lláh

The Spirit that spoke through Jesus Christ once again declares through His new name Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, ***that everything He teaches comes from God.*** In His Epistle to the King of Persia, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

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. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.⁴²

In still another Epistle Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Had the ultimate destiny of God's Faith been in Mine hands, I would have never consented, even though for one moment, to manifest Myself unto you, nor would I have allowed one word to fall from My lips. Of this God Himself is, verily, a witness.⁴³

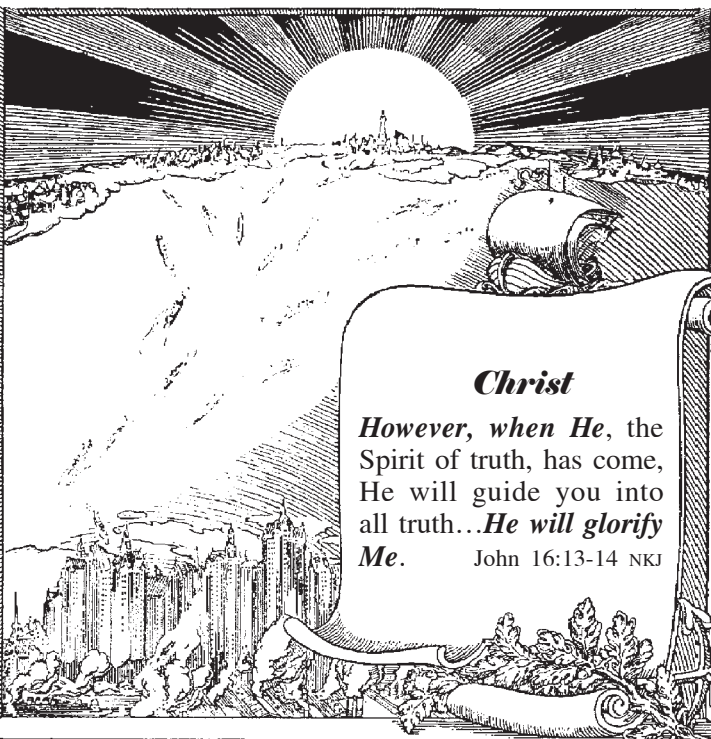
Acknowledging the Divine Station of Jesus Christ

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

Isaiah 60:1 NIV

Let the light of His glory, O people, shine upon you, and be not of the negligent.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...He will glorify Me.

John 16:13-14 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

We testify that when He [Jesus Christ] came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things.⁴⁴

By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God...

I John 4:2 NKJ

Say, ***this is the One Who hath glorified the Son*** and hath exalted His Cause [Christian Faith].⁴⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Note how Bahá'u'lláh glorifies the Lord Jesus 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 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.⁴⁶

Bahá'u'lláh uses the most exalted titles in referring to our Lord Jesus Christ. He calls Him:

The Lord Christ	The Essence of detachment
The Lord of all being	The Essence of the Spirit
The Lord of the visible and invisible	The Word of God That Peerless Beauty
The Spirit of God	The Revealer of the unseen Beauty
The Divine Spirit	The Daystar of the heaven of divine Revelation
The Spirit	
The Essence of Being	

...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

I Cor. 12:3 NKJ

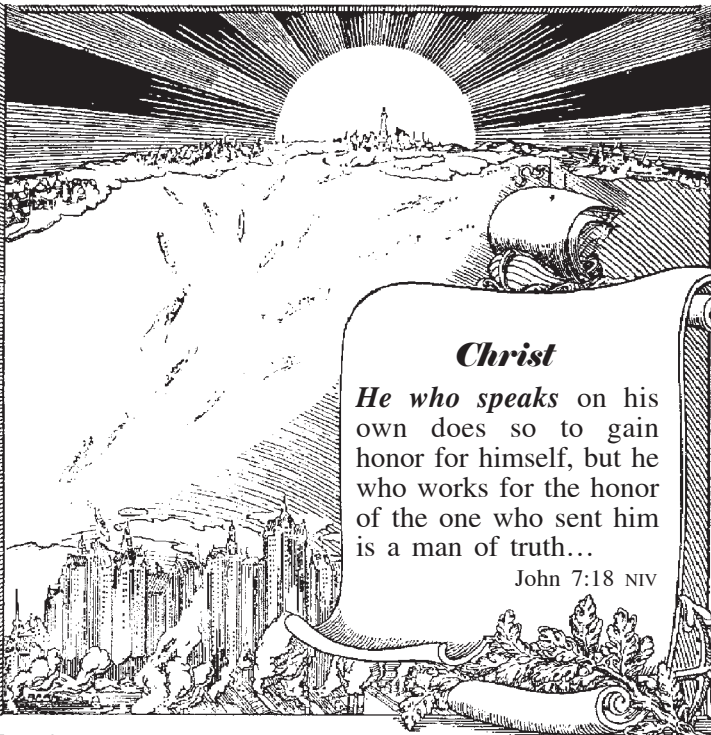
Honoring God, Not One's Self

Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays *awake*...

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NIV)

Blessed the slumberer who is *awakened*...Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him...

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth...

John 7:18 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things "verily I am God"; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!⁴⁷

I crave no human honor, I look for no mortal fame.

Christ (John 5:41 AB)

Anyone whose teaching is merely his own, aims at honor for himself. But if a man aims at the honor of Him who sent him he is sincere, and there is nothing false in him.”

John 7:18 NEB

Seldom does Bahá'u'lláh speak without acknowledging God and glorifying His supremacy and grandeur. Consider these few quotations among hundreds:

Say: My army is My reliance on God; My people, the force of My confidence in Him...and My companion the remembrance of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious...⁴⁸

Know ye that I am afraid of none except God. In none but Him have I placed My trust; to none will I cleave but Him, and wish for naught except the thing He hath wished for Me. This, indeed, is My heart's desire, did ye but know it. I have offered up My soul and My body as a sacrifice for God, the Lord of all worlds. Whoso hath known God shall know none but Him, and he that feareth God shall be afraid of no one except Him, though the powers of the whole earth rise up and be arrayed against him. I speak naught except at His bidding, and follow not, through the power of God and His might, except His truth.⁴⁹

Consider also these verses from Jesus:

I am not seeking glory for myself... Christ (John 8:50 NIV)

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.”

Mark 10:18 NIV

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Christ (Matt. 12:32 NIV)

[The mother said:] "...give orders that in your kingdom my two sons here may sit next to you..." [Jesus said:] "...to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant; it is for those to whom it has already been assigned by my Father."
Matthew 20:21-23 NEB

They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left..." But Jesus said to them, "...to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."
Mark 10:37-40 NKJ

...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...
Christ (Mark 10:45 NIV)

But about that day or that hour no one knows...not even the Son...
Christ (Mark 13:32 NEB)

...take this cup away from me... Christ (Mark 14:36 NEB)

In truth...the Son can do nothing by himself...
Christ (John 5:19 NEB)

Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that my sole aim in revealing Thy Cause hath been to reveal Thee and not my self, and to manifest Thy glory rather than my glory. In Thy path, and to attain Thy pleasure, I have scorned rest, joy, delight. At all times and under all conditions my gaze hath been fixed on Thy precepts, and mine eyes bent upon the things Thou hast bidden me observe in Thy Tablets. I have wakened every morning to the light of Thy praise and Thy remembrance, and reached every evening inhaling the fragrances of Thy mercy... Though—as Thou beholdest me, O my God—I be dwelling in a place within whose walls no voice can be heard except the sound of the echo...yet my soul hath been so inflamed by its love for Thee, that nothing whatsoever can either quench the fire of its love or abate the consuming flame of its desire.⁵⁰
Bahá'u'lláh

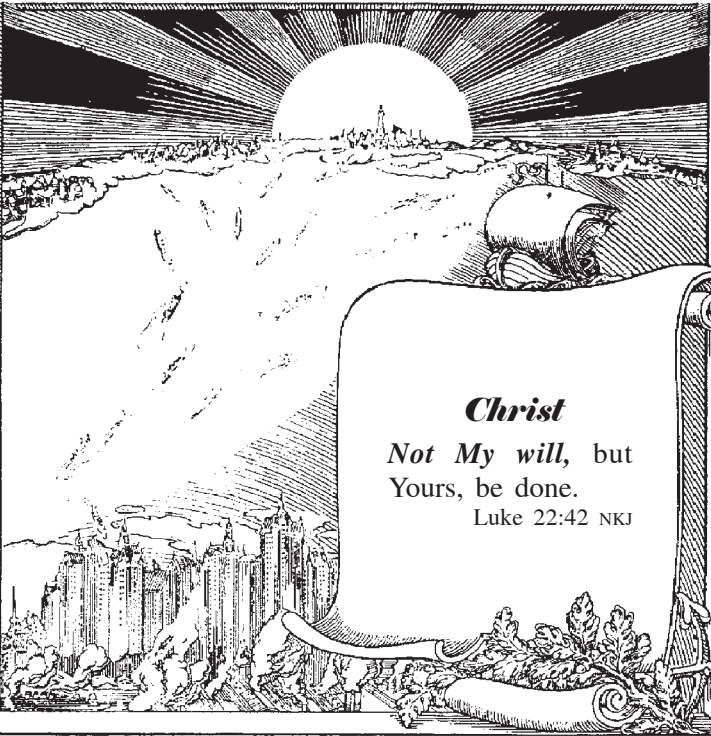
Abiding by God's Will

Yea, the set time is come...for Jehovah hath appeared in His glory.

Pslams 102:13, 16 ARV

He Whose advent hath been foretold in the heavenly Scriptures is come...

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*Not My will, but
Yours, be done.*

Luke 22:42 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

I...wish for naught except the thing He hath wished for Me.⁵¹

I have no will but Thy will, O my Lord, and cherish no desire except Thy desire.⁵²

Knowing Without Learning

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Christ (Matt. 23:39 NIV)

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: "Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!" Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me." John 7:15-16 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*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.*⁵³

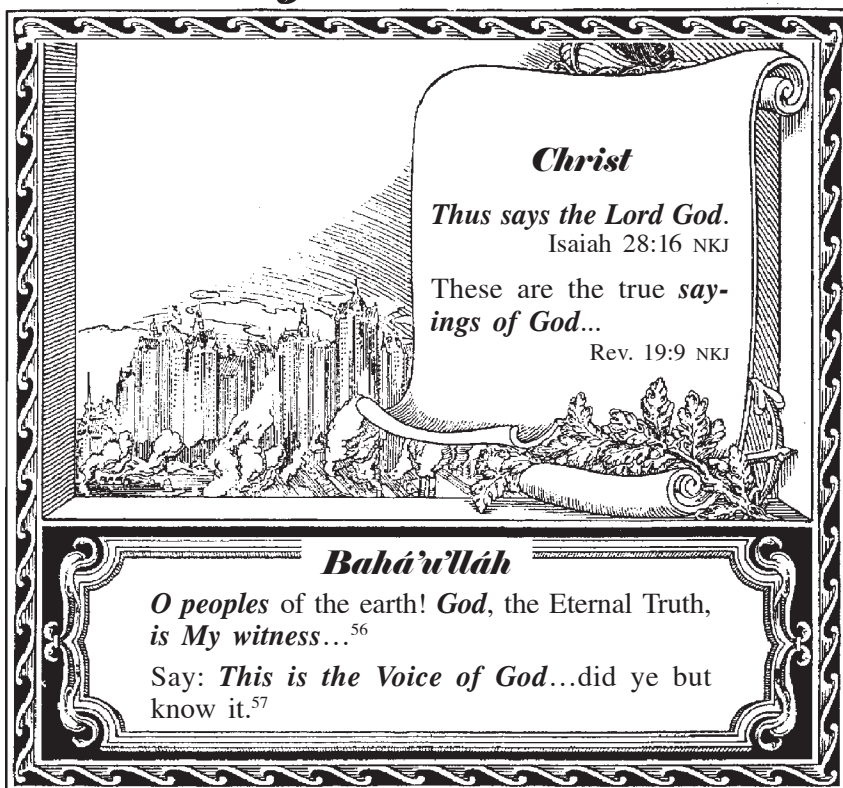
The learning current amongst men I studied not; their
schools I entered not.⁵⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

...in spite of His not being accounted among the learned
...He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold
and Divinely-inspired knowledge...⁵⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The Ones sent by God receive little if any education, and yet they manifest a level of knowledge far beyond the most learned and educated people. They receive guidance from God, not from humans. Their glory and grandeur are spiritual, not secular. Their innate knowledge and wisdom, manifested in their Word, are the surest evidence of their supremacy and divine distinction.

II

Taking God as Witness



Among the expressions of God's supreme *authority* is this:
He testifies to the truth of His Word.

Christ: I am one who *testifies* for myself; my other *witness* is the Father...

John 8:18

Christ: The one who comes from above...*testifies* to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent *speaks the words of God...*

John 3:31-34

Christ: These are the true sayings of God...For the *testimony* of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 19:9-10

Christ: We *testify* to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our *testimony*.

John 3:11

Bahá'u'lláh: The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself *testifieth* to the truth of these words.⁵⁸

Bahá'u'lláh: Unto this *testifieth* He Who is the King of the realm of grace...⁵⁹

Bahá'u'lláh: God *testifieth* and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been said was the truth...⁶⁰

Bahá'u'lláh: The Tongue of God *testifieth* to the truth of My words, through Mine own Word that speaketh the truth, and embraceth and comprehendeth all things.⁶¹

Bahá'u'lláh: God, Himself, knoweth and *testifieth* to the truth of My words.⁶²

The word "*Say*"—used in countless verses by Bahá'u'lláh—is an abbreviation of the biblical phrase, "*Thus says the Lord.*" Consider these examples:

Say: He Who is the Unconditioned is come, in the clouds of light, that He may quicken all created things with the breezes of His Name, the Most Merciful, and unify the world, and gather all men around this Table which hath been sent down from heaven.⁶³

Bahá'u'lláh

Say: O concourse of monks! Seclude not yourselves in your churches and cloisters. Come ye out of them by My

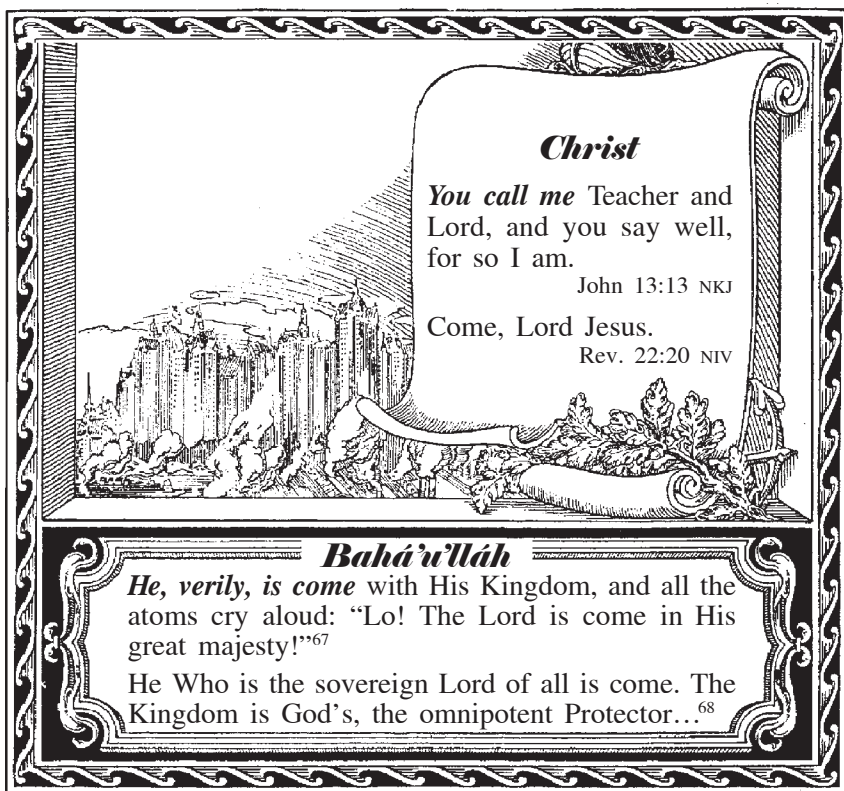
leave, and busy, then, yourselves with what will profit you and others.⁶⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

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.⁶⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Say: This is the Voice of God, if ye do but hearken. This is the Day Spring of the Revelation of God, did ye but know it.⁶⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

12

The Claim to be the Lord



The titles God bestows on great Messengers and Redeemers always reflect the intensity of divine Revelation, which is adapted to the age. Because of the greatness of this age, Bahá'u'lláh adopted a title prophesied by Jesus but never assumed by Him in His first Advent. That title is Lord of Lords:

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...⁶⁹ Bahá'u'lláh



5

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

Christ (Matt. 7:20)



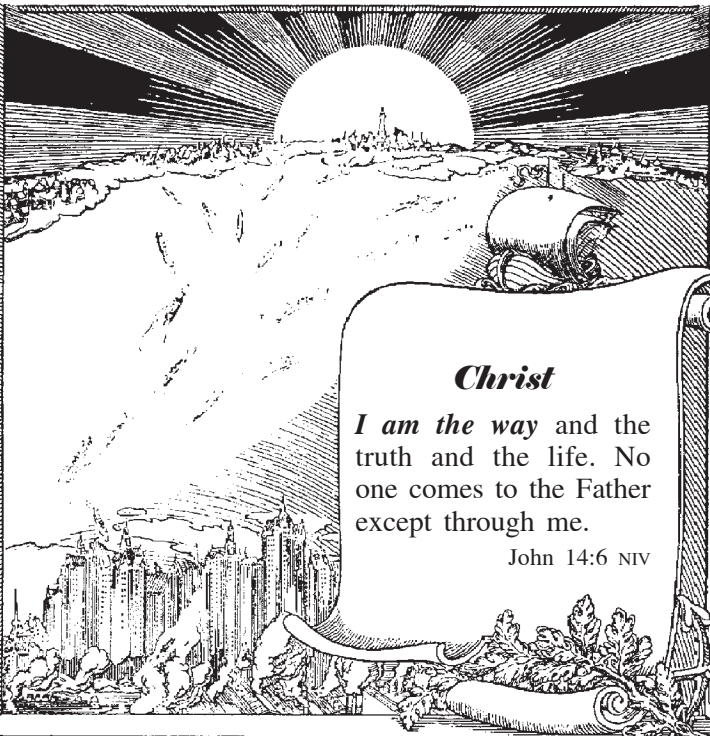
Part II

*This chapter offers still more fruits from
the vineyard of the two great Redeemers:
Christ and Bahá'u'lláh.*

The Claim to Exclusive Salvation

O My servants! There shineth nothing else in Mine heart except the unfading light of the Morn of Divine guidance, and out of My mouth proceedeth *naught but the essence of truth*, which the Lord your God hath revealed.¹

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

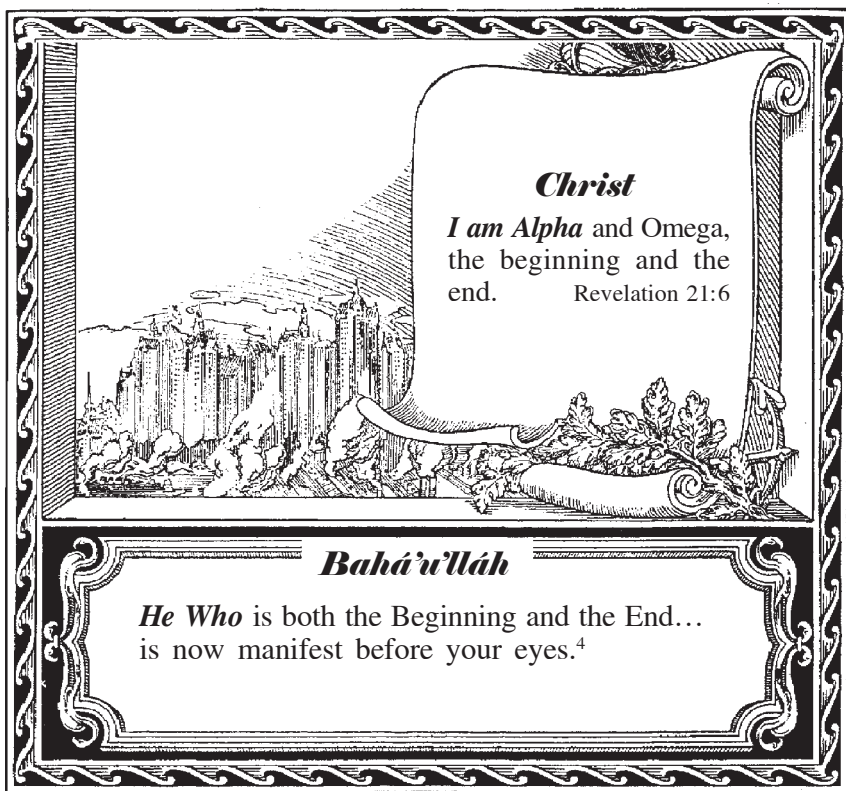
This is the Way of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.²

This, verily, is the truth, the certain truth.³

Bahá'u'lláh indicates that, “This is *the* way of God,” not “This is *a* way of God.” The word “the” points to exclusiveness. Bahá'u'lláh's statement goes even beyond that of Jesus'. He claims that His is the Way not only for the peoples of the earth, but also for those in heaven. Where does “the Way” end? Always in God. Jesus showed that the goal is God, the Father. He said, “No one comes to *the Father*...” The Spirit in Jesus Christ, the anointed one of God, is the same Spirit in Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. Both “Names” claim to be all truth.

14

The Claim to Be the Beginning and the End



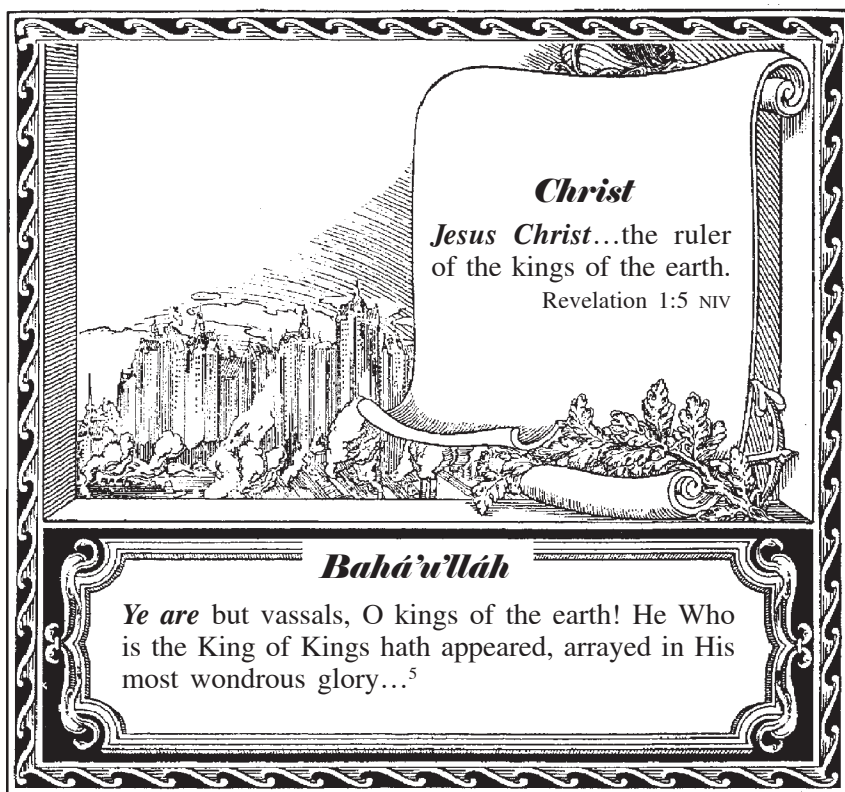
In the following prophecy, Jesus confirms that “the One who is to come” is also the Alpha and the Omega:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:8 NIV

15

The Claim to be the Ruler Over the Kings



The Claim to Have Come from Heaven

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father...

Christ (Matt. 16:27)

I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*I have come down
from heaven...*

John 6:38 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*He, verily, hath again come down from
Heaven even as He came down from it the
first time.⁶*

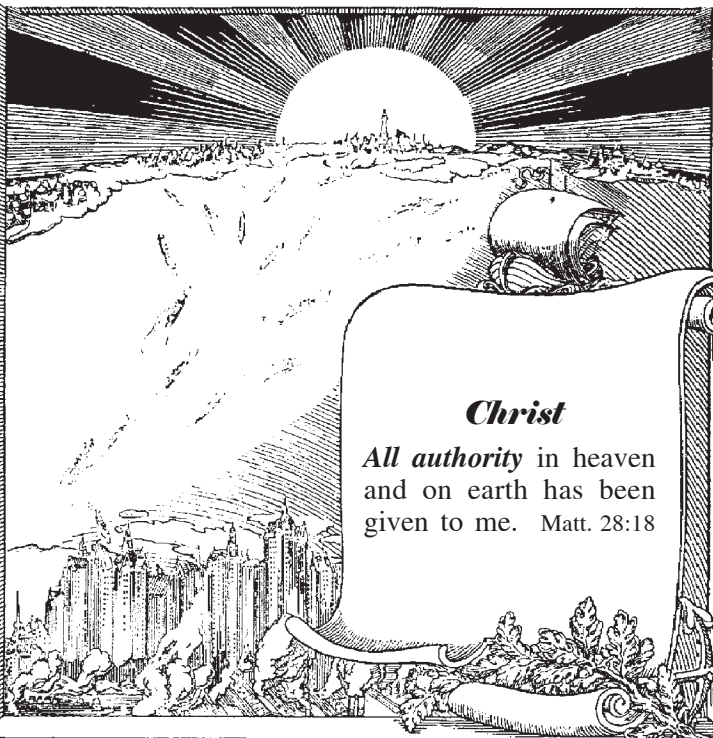
The Claim to Have All Power

I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also...

Christ (John 14:3 NEB)

Lo! He is come...invested with conclusive proof and evidence.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*All authority in heaven
and on earth has been
given to me. Matt. 28:18*

Bahá'u'lláh

God is my witness! He, the Ancient of everlasting days is come, girded with majesty and power.⁷

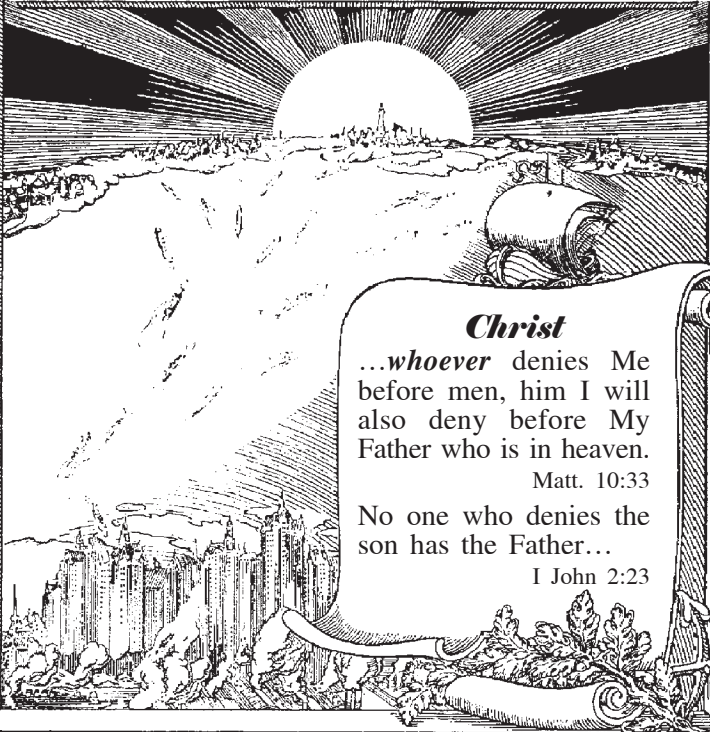
The Claim that Denying Them is Denying God

...when he, the spirit of truth comes...He will bring glory to me.

Christ (John 16:13-14 NIV)

We testify that when He [Christ] came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

...whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Matt. 10:33

No one who denies the son has the Father...

I John 2:23

Bahá'u'lláh

...whosoever denieth Him hath disbelieved in God.⁸

...whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God.⁹

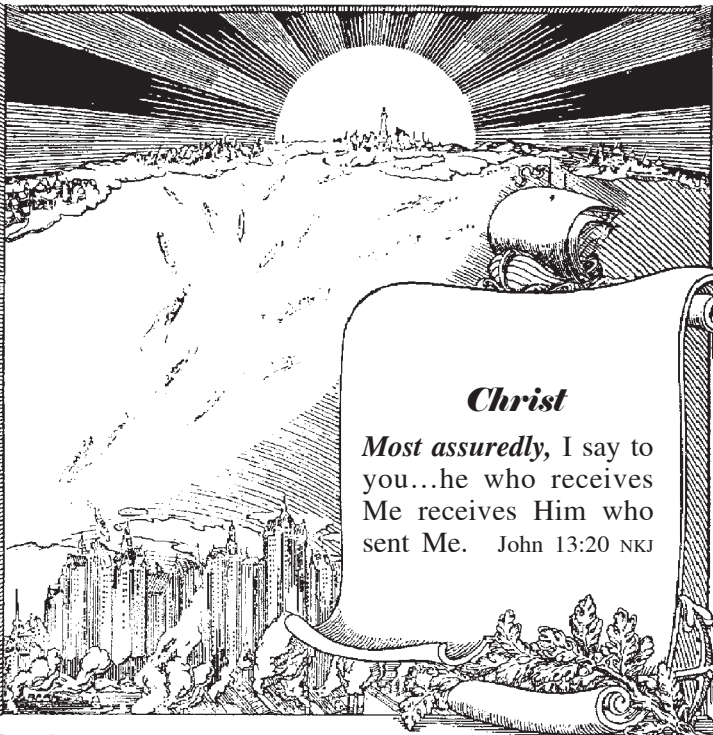
The Claim that Accepting Them is Accepting God

...when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

Christ (John 16:13 NIV)

Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Most assuredly, I say to you...he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. John 13:20 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

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.¹⁰

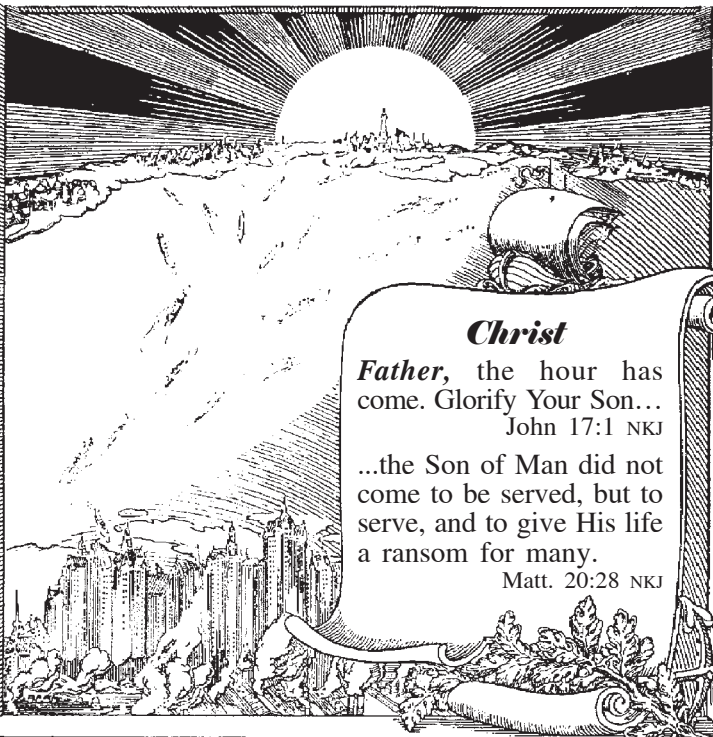
Seeing True Glory in Suffering, Poverty, and Servitude

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.

Isaiah 40:5 NIV

This is the Day in which the earth shineth with the effulgent light of thy Lord, but the people are lost in error and have been shut out as by a veil.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son...

John 17:1 NKJ

...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Matt. 20:28 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

I sorrow not for the burden of My imprisonment. Neither do I grieve over My abasement, or the tribulation I suffer at the hands of Mine enemies. By My life! They are My glory...¹¹

...whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave... Christ (Matt. 20:26-27 NKJ)

Poverty is My Pride.¹²

Bahá'u'lláh

Poverty is My glory.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

Who can ever believe that this Servant of God hath at any time cherished in His heart a desire for any earthly honor or benefit? The Cause associated with His Name is far above the transitory things of this world. Behold Him, an exile, a victim of tyranny, in this Most Great Prison. His enemies have assailed Him on every side, and will continue to do so till the end of His life. Whatever, therefore, He saith unto you is wholly for the sake of God, that haply the peoples of the earth may cleanse their hearts from the stain of evil desire, may rend its veil asunder, and attain unto the knowledge of the one true God—the most exalted station to which any man can aspire. Their belief or disbelief in My Cause can neither profit nor harm Me. We summon them wholly for the sake of God. He, verily, can afford to dispense with all creatures.¹⁴

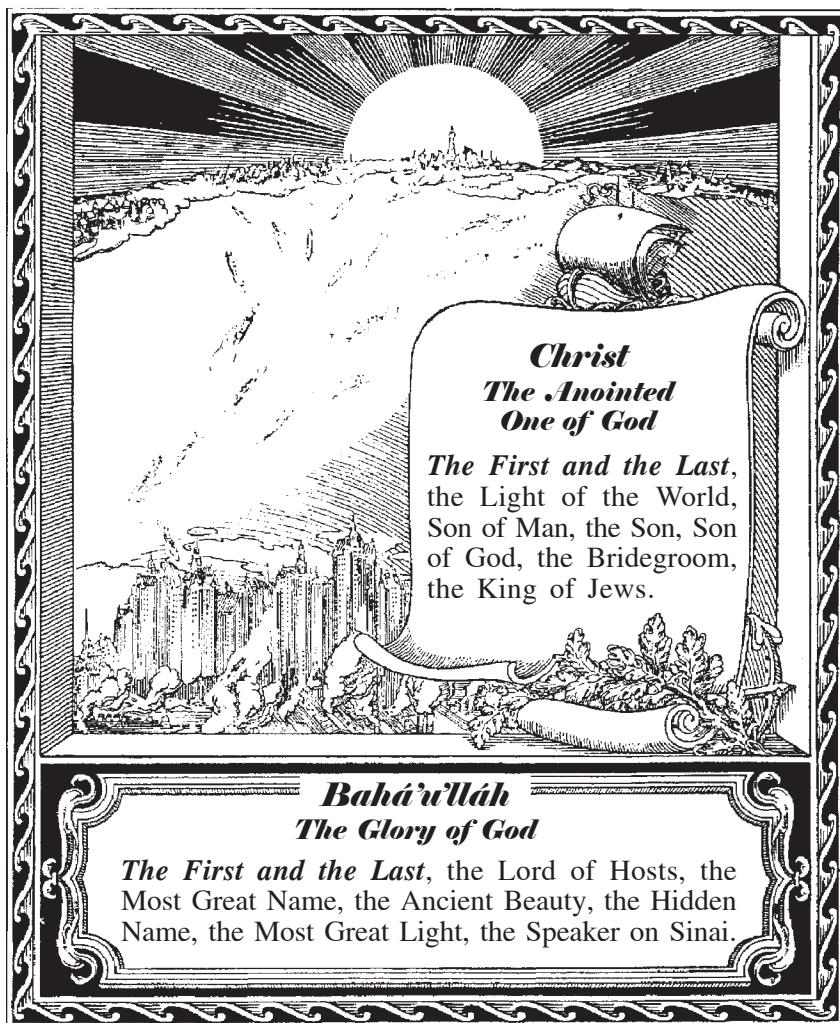
Bahá'u'lláh

My God, my Master, my Highest Hope, and the Goal of my desire! Thou seest and hearest the sighing of this wronged One...By Thy Beauty, O Thou Whose glory is uncovered to the face of men! I am not impatient in the troubles that touch me in my love for Thee, neither in the adversities which I suffer in Thy path. Nay, I have, by Thy power, chosen them for mine own self, and I glory in them amongst such of Thy creatures as enjoy near access to Thee, and those of Thy servants that are wholly devoted to Thy Self.¹⁵

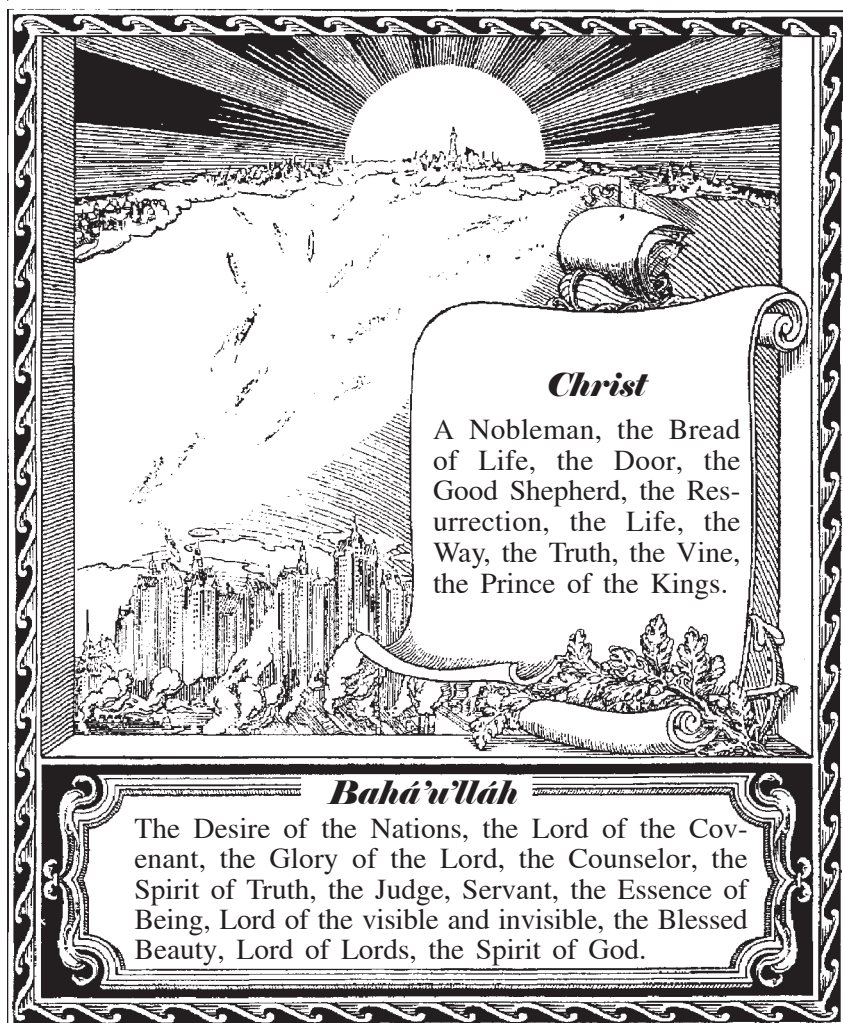
Bahá'u'lláh

Adopting the Most Glorious Titles

The titles cited here consist only of the ones Bahá'u'lláh and Jesus *adopted for themselves*. They do not include the titles uttered in prophecies or attributed to them by their followers.



Other Titles Adopted by Christ and Bahá'u'lláh



Other titles adopted by Christ:

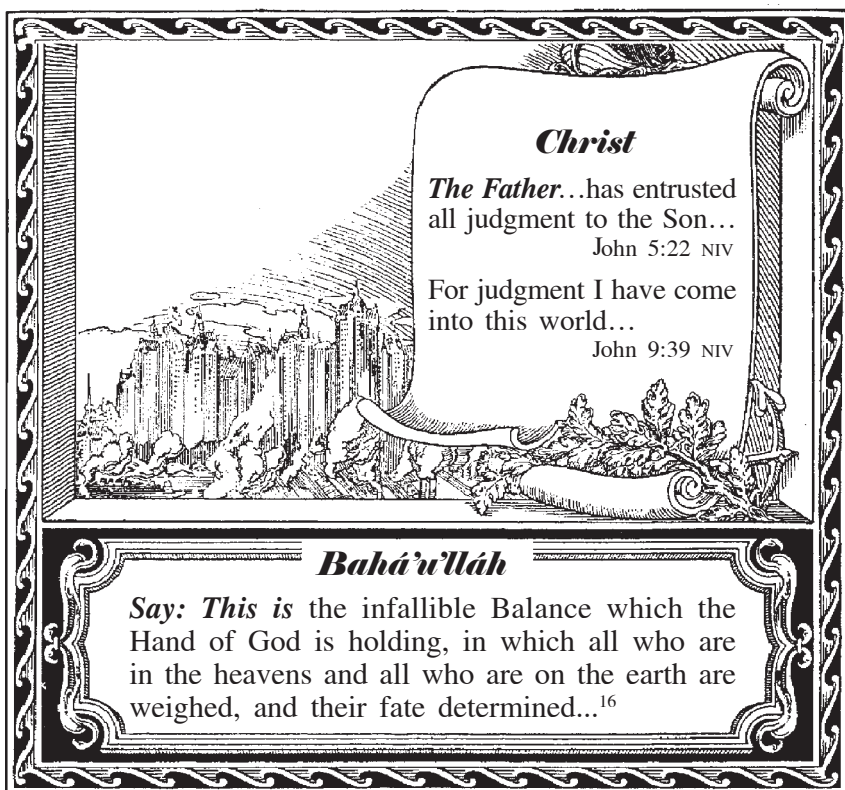
Alpha and Omega, the Beginning of the Creation of God, the Faithful Witness, Lord Jesus, the Bright Morning Star, Prophet.

Other titles adopted by Bahá'u'lláh:

The Most Great Spirit, the Pen of the Most High, Prophet, the Son of Man Who shall come in the glory of His Father, the Word of God, Jehovah or Yahweh, King of Kings, the Most Great Beauty, the Holy Spirit, the Hidden Mystery, the Hidden Name, the Burning Bush, He who sits on the throne, the Father, the Bird of Heaven, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names, the Revealer of the names of God, the Lord of Names.

22

The Authority to Judge

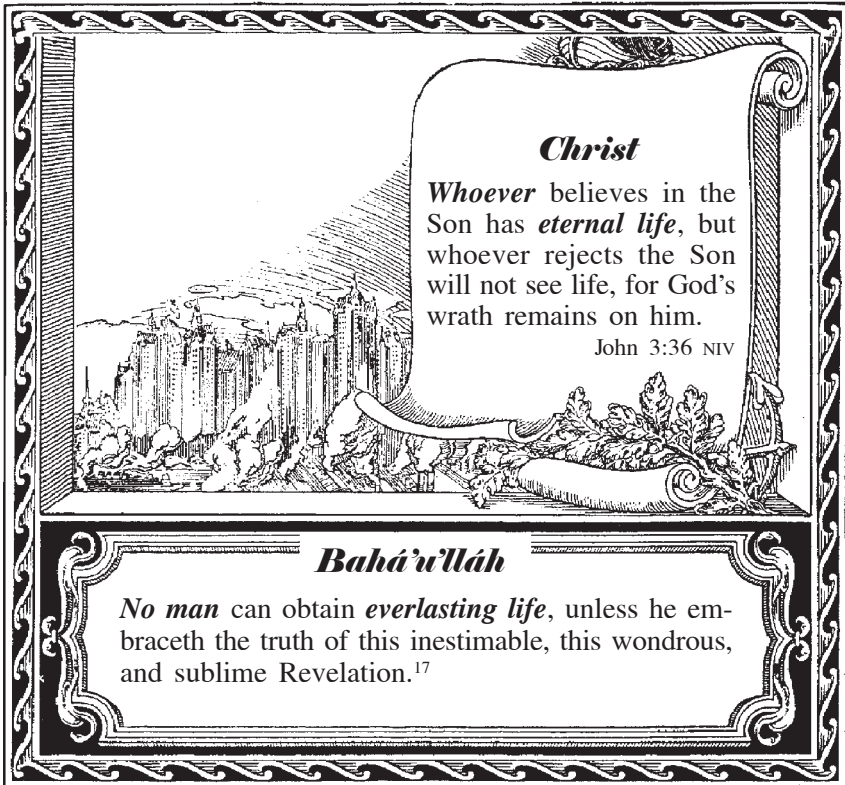


The peoples of the earth are judged by the way they respond to the Redeemer of the Age, Bahá'u'lláh.

Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come. Revelation 14:7

23

The Authority to Give Eternal Life



The hands of bounty have borne round the cup of everlasting life. Approach, and quaff your fill. Drink with healthy relish...¹⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

...free thyself from the veils of idle fancies and enter into My court, that thou mayest be fit for everlasting life and worthy to meet Me. Thus may death not come upon thee, neither weariness nor trouble.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

O the pity! that man should deprive himself of this goodly gift, this imperishable bounty, this everlasting life.²⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

He is truly wise whom the world and all that is therein have not deterred from recognizing the light of this Day, who will not allow men's idle talk to cause him to swerve from the way of righteousness. He is indeed as one dead who, at the wondrous dawn of this Revelation, hath failed to be quickened by its soul-stirring breeze. He is indeed a captive who hath not recognized the Supreme Redeemer, but hath suffered his soul to be bound, distressed and helpless, in the fetters of his desires.²¹ Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day whereon the rushing waters of everlasting life have gushed out of the Will of the All-Merciful. Haste ye, with your hearts and souls, and quaff your fill...²² Bahá'u'lláh

By the righteousness of the Almighty! Every hidden thing hath been manifested through the power of truth. All the favors of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men. Every single cup hath been borne round by the hand of the Well-Beloved. Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.²³ Bahá'u'lláh

Well is it with him who hath quaffed the Mystic Wine of everlasting life from the utterance of his merciful Lord in My Name—a Name through which every lofty and majestic mountain hath been reduced to dust.²⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

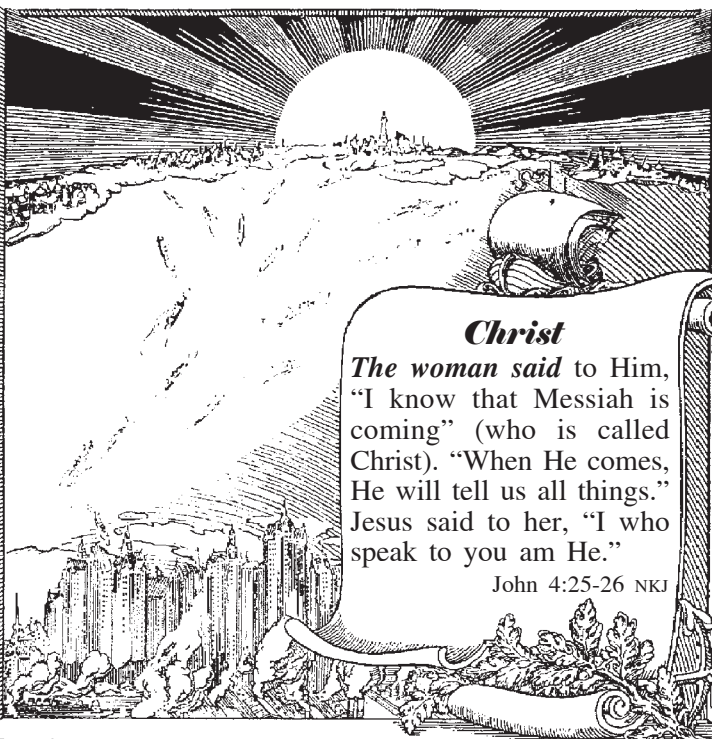
Knowledge of Spiritual Mysteries

When the Lord...shall appear in His glory.

Psalms 102:16

The Lord is come in His great glory.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

John 4:25-26 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

By the righteousness of the Almighty! Every hidden thing hath been manifested through the power of truth.²⁵

...He [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27 NIV

...the Son of Man is sovereign over the Sabbath.
Christ (Matt. 12:8 NEB)

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...²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

Does it make any sense to consider the interpretation of religious leaders as the standard of truth? Just as Jesus explained to the Jews the meaning of prophecies, so did Bahá'u'lláh:

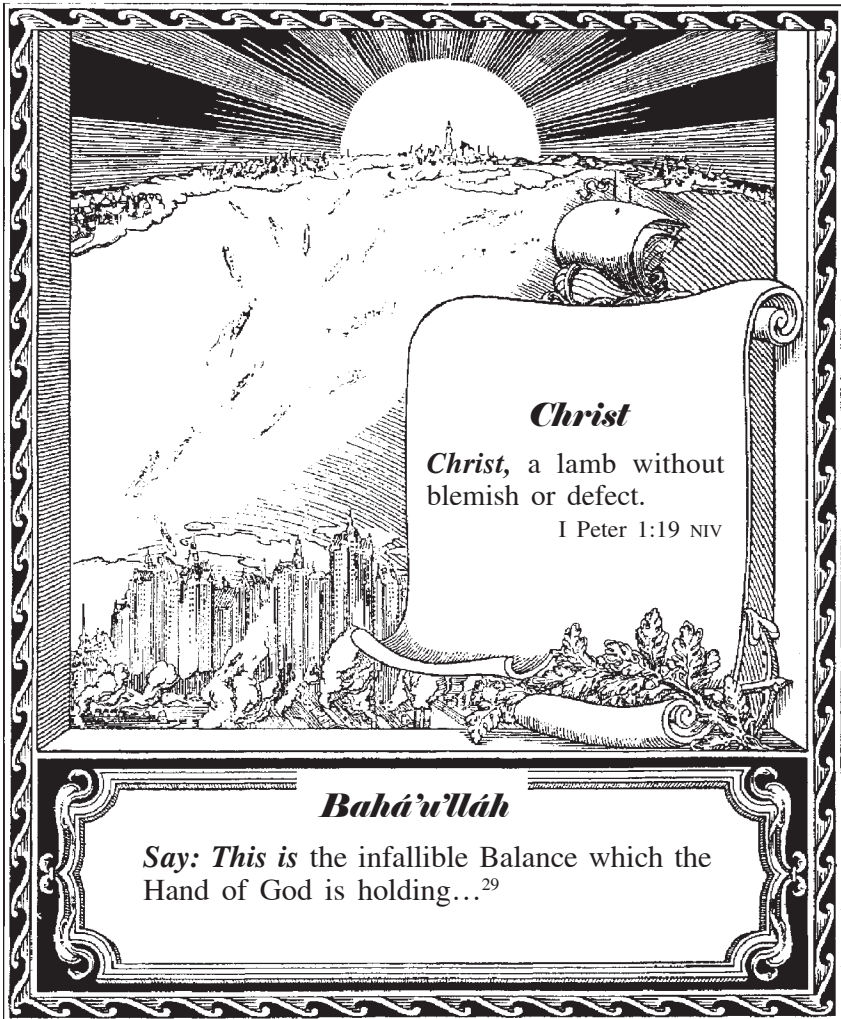
For it behooveth no man to interpret the holy words according to his own imperfect understanding, nor, having found them to be contrary to his inclination and desires, to reject and repudiate their truth.²⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Why do so many people refuse to acknowledge that they are fallible, that they can be as wrong today as people were 2,000 years ago? Are the people of this age perfect?

...when perfection [the Spirit of God] comes, the imperfect disappears. I Corinthians 13:10 NIV

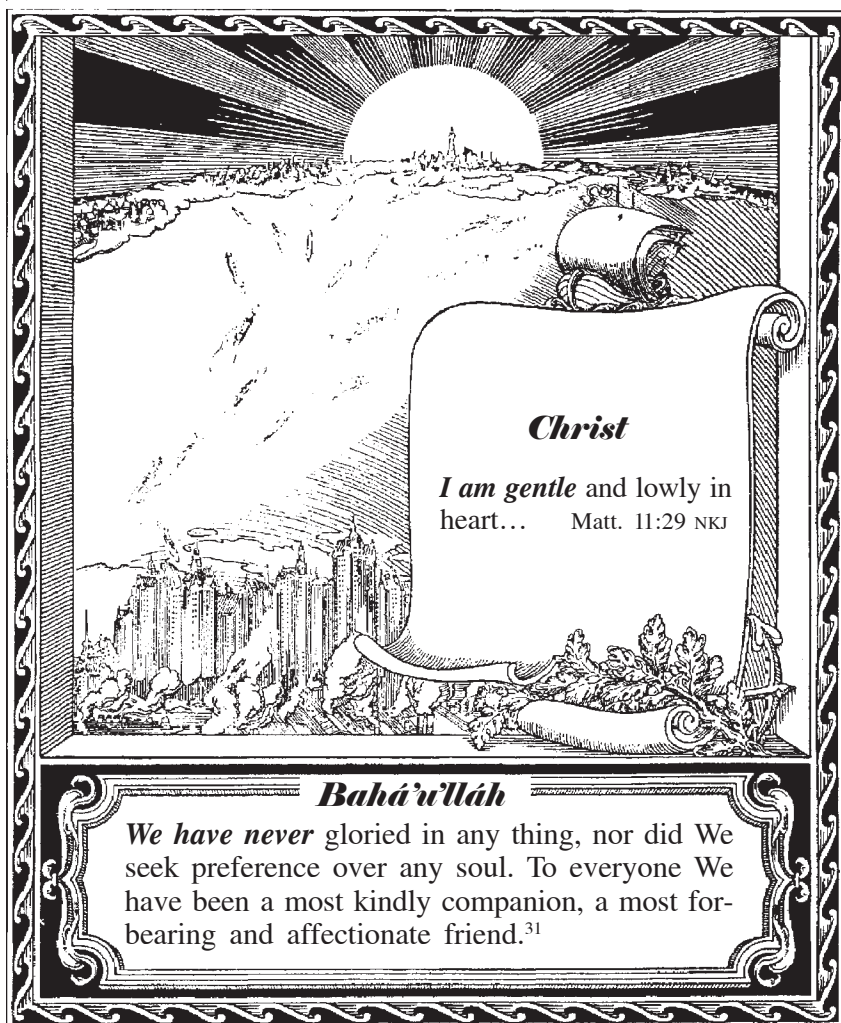
Thou didst raise Him up to occupy Thy throne before all the people of Thy creation. Thou didst enable Him to unravel Thy mysteries, and to shine with the lights of Thine inspiration and Thy Revelation, and to manifest Thy names and Thine attributes.²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

***Being Sinless or
Infallible***



In a prayer and meditation, Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as “the unerring Balance” and “Supreme Sinlessness.”³⁰

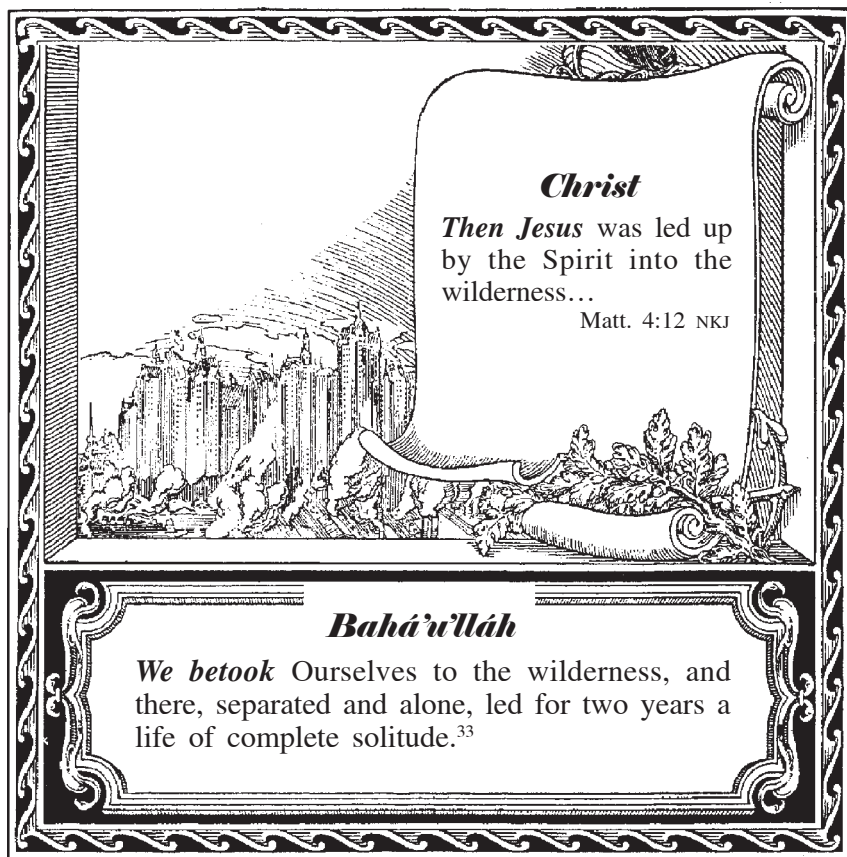
Being Humble



Bahá'u'lláh continues:

In the company of the poor We have sought their fellowship, and amidst the exalted and learned We have been submissive and resigned.³²

Living Alone in the Wilderness

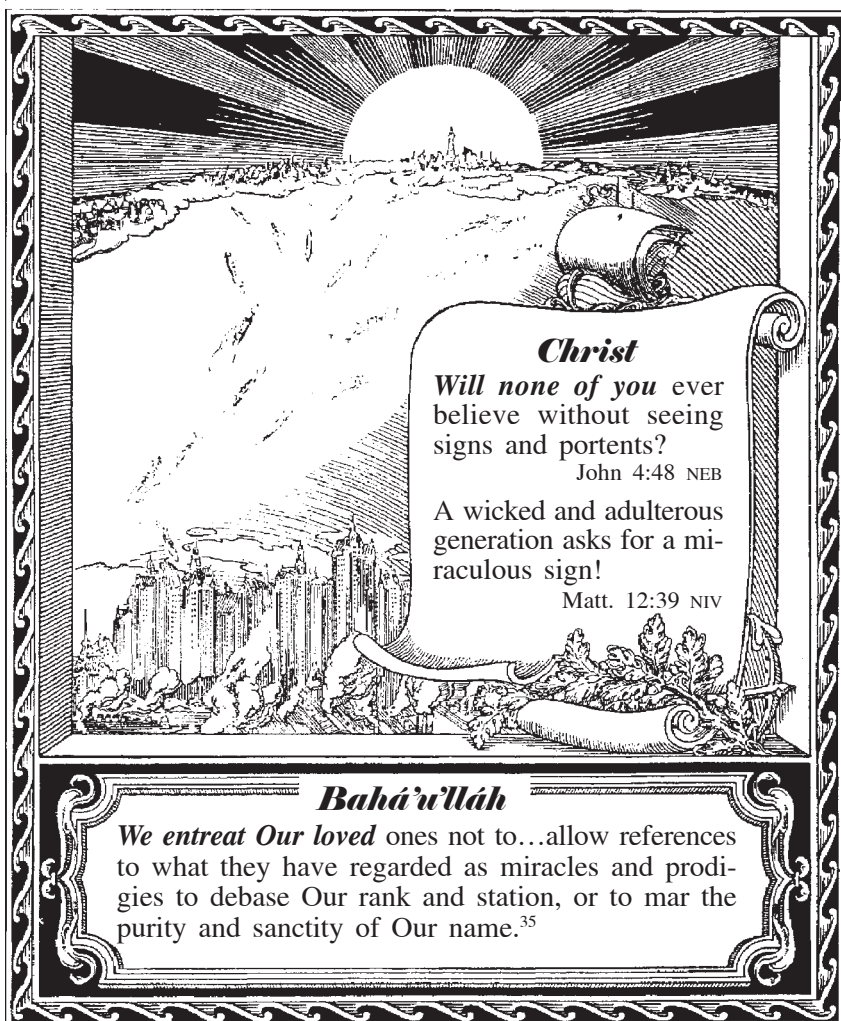


Bahá'u'lláh continues:

From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night We had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest.³⁴

Manifesting Miraculous Powers

***But Refusing to
Use Them as Evidence***



See that no one knows about this [miracle].

Christ (Matt. 9:30 NIV)

Jesus and Bahá'u'lláh owned the whole universe; they were its Creator, and yet never did they use their supreme powers for worldly gains. Jesus had no home. Bahá'u'lláh did have a home: prison.

Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Christ (Luke 9:58 NKJ)

He hath, during the greater part of His life, been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflictive Prison, into which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him.³⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

He summoned men 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 Tá (Tihrán), 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.³⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

As My tribulations multiplied, so did My love for God and for His Cause increase...Should they hide Me away in the depths of the earth, yet would they find Me riding aloft on the clouds, and calling out unto God, the Lord of strength and of might. I have offered Myself up in the way of God, and I yearn after tribulations in My love for Him, and for the sake of His good-pleasure.³⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

The Authority to Bestow Grace

"Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Christ (Rev. 22:17 NIV)

O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and **come forth**...from your churches...Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: "The Lord is come in His great glory!"

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him. John 6:65 NIV

The *grace* of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Rev. 22:21 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day in which God's most excellent *favors* have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty *grace* hath been infused into all created things.³⁹

Among the sayings of Jesus the preceding verses come closest to the idea of being saved by grace. The common belief that we are saved by grace does not appear in Jesus' recorded sayings, but His Apostles use it frequently:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...it is the gift of God...
Ephesians 2:8 NIV

The topic of grace appears frequently in the Works of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh:

Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind.⁴⁰
Bahá'u'lláh

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.⁴¹
Bahá'u'lláh

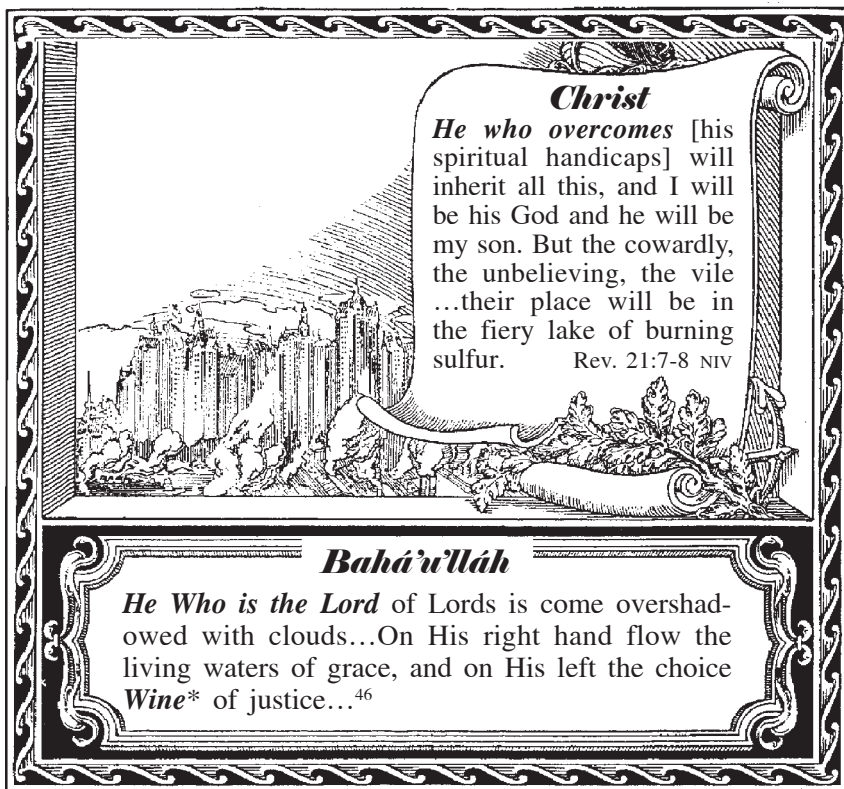
Our grace assuredly pervadeth all that dwell in the kingdoms of earth and heaven and in whatever lieth between them, and beyond them all mankind. However, souls that have shut themselves out as by a veil can never partake of the outpourings of the grace of God.⁴²
The Báb

That hour is now come. The world is illumined with the effulgent glory of His countenance. And yet, behold how far its peoples have strayed from His path!...Its grace is being poured out upon men. Fill thy cup, and drink in, in His Name, the Most Holy, the All-Praised.⁴³
Bahá'u'lláh

The whole duty of man in this Day is to attain that share of the flood of grace which God poureth forth for him.⁴⁴
Bahá'u'lláh

Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindliness and of mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompassed the earth and the heavens.⁴⁵
Bahá'u'lláh

The Authority to Reward and Punish



* *Wine* symbolizes many meanings, among them God's justice and wrath against those who ignore His Call or deny or oppose His Messengers and Redeemers of Hope and Peace. The connection between anger and seething wine is obvious. These prophecies pertain to our time:

He [the promised Redeemer] treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Revelation 19:15-16 NIV

In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.

Psalms 75:8 NIV

Then He [the Redeemer of our age] will say to those on His left hand...go from My sight to the eternal fire...

Christ (Matt. 25:41 NEB)

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Christ (Matt. 13:43 NIV)

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.⁴⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

To him who is victorious [over obstacles], I will grant a place on my throne...

Christ (Rev. 3:21 NEB)

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...⁴⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

...to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...

John 1:12 NIV

Great is the blessedness of him who hath in this Day cast away the things current amongst men and hath clung unto that which is ordained by God...Who is come from the heaven of eternity through the power of the Most Great Name, invested with so invincible an authority that all the powers of the earth are unable to withstand Him.⁴⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

"I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones...

Christ (Matt. 19:28 NIV)

Acknowledging a new Redeemer from God at a time of the Most Great Negligence—when people pay more attention to sports news than the news of the advent of the most awesome manifestation of God’s Glory—is a peerless act of courage. Such a noble act deserves the most glorious rewards God can bestow on humans.

Know thou that every ear which hearkeneth unto His [Bahá’u’lláh’s] Words with true faith shall be immune from the fire. Thus the believer, through his recognition of Him will appreciate the transcendent character of His heavenly Words, will whole-heartedly choose Him over others, and will refuse to incline his affections towards those who disbelieve in Him. Whatever one gaineth in the life to come is but the fruit of this faith. Indeed any man whose eye gazeth upon His Words with true faith well deserveth Paradise; and one whose conscience beareth witness unto His Words with true faith shall abide in Paradise and attain the presence of God; and one whose tongue giveth utterance to His Words with true faith shall have his abode in Paradise, wherein he will be seized with ecstasy in praise and glorification of God, the Ever-Abiding,⁵⁰

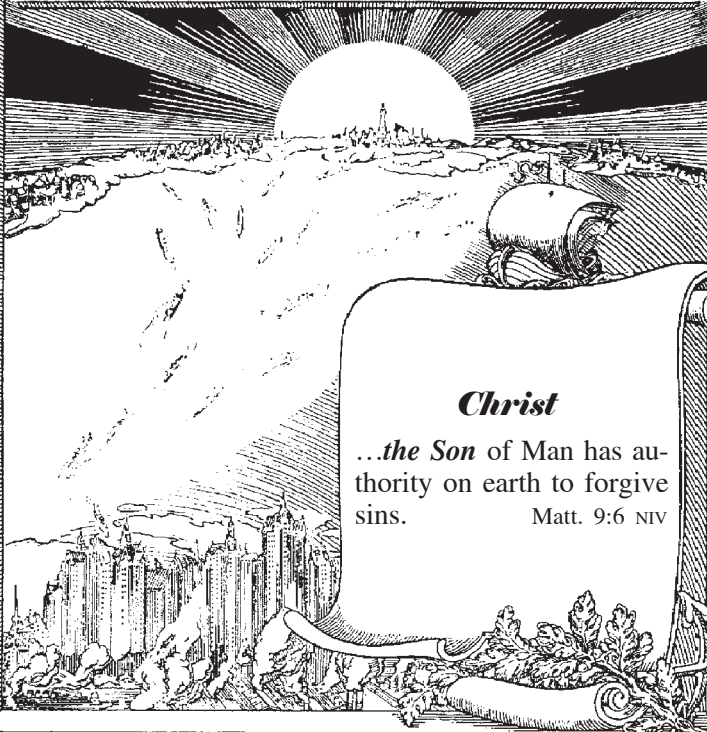
The Báb

What about those who neglect their duties? Their refusal to open their heart to God’s most splendid expression of grace and glory is the most awesome punishment a human being can inflict on himself. This punishment is so severe it is called “*the Fire*.” A person who chooses to stay outside Bahá’u’lláh’s garden of grace and glory feels the pain of a person who lives in a perpetual state of “burning out.” Surely the powerful metaphor of “fire” should awaken every sleeping soul. Yet the state of negligence is so severe in so many people and in so many ways that this powerful metaphor fails to awaken the slumbering masses, except a few watchful souls who love to rise at the dawn.

The Authority to Forgive Sins

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory
of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* *Habakkuk 2:14 NIV*

*The world is illumined with the effulgent glory of His coun-
tenance.* *Bahá'u'lláh*



Christ

*...the Son of Man has au-
thority on earth to forgive
sins.*

Matt. 9:6 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*Verily, the breezes of forgiveness have been wafted
from the direction of your Lord, the God of Mercy;
whoso turneth thereunto, shall be cleansed of his
sins, and of all pain and sickness.⁵¹*

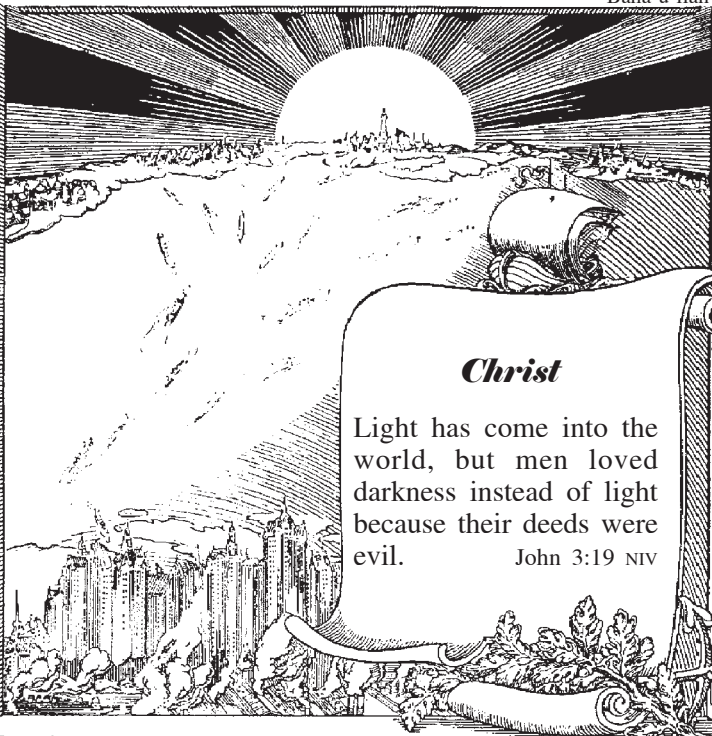
The Claim to Be “the Light”

People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Christ (Luke 13:29 NIV)

Blessed the insatiate soul who casteth away his selfish desires for love of Me and taketh his place at the banquet table which I have sent down from the heaven of divine bounty for My chosen ones.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

John 3:19 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*The Dawn hath truly brightened and the light hath shone forth and the night hath receded. Happy are they that comprehend. Happy are they that have attained thereunto.*⁵²

I am the light of the world. Christ (John 8:12 NIV)

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. Christ (John 1:5 NIV)

This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of Thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful.⁵³ Bahá'u'lláh

O My servants! Deprive not yourselves of the unfading and resplendent Light that shineth within the Lamp of Divine glory.⁵⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Say: "The True One is come evident as the shining sun; O pity that He should have come into the city of the blind!"⁵⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The sun in the physical world has its counterpart in the spiritual. Every day we must wake up to the light of the new day. Every day the sun bestows a new measure of light, but it is the same sun and the same light. If we do not wake up to the light of the new day, we remain asleep in darkness.

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And *the glory of the Lord* is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you...The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light... Isaiah 60:1-2,19-20 NKJ

O SON OF MAN!

Many a day hath passed over thee whilst thou hast busied thyself with thy fancies and idle imaginings. How long art thou to slumber on thy bed? Lift up thy head from slumber, for the Sun hath risen to the zenith, haply it may shine upon thee with the light of beauty.⁵⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

The Claim to be the Creator of the Universe

*I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where
I am you may be also...*

Christ (John 14:3 NEB)

Lo! He is come...invested with conclusive proof and evidence.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*All things were made
through Him, and with-
out Him nothing was
made that was made.*

John 1:3 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh

*I testify...that with but a movement of Thy Pen
Thine injunction "Be Thou" hath been enforced...
and all created things have been called into being,
and all the Revelations have been sent down.⁵⁷*

I testify...that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery...through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together.⁵⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.
Psalms 33:6

In a book called *The Hidden Words*, Bahá'u'lláh often speaks as the Creator or as One who speaks with the Voice of the Creator:

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.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

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.⁶¹

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.⁶²

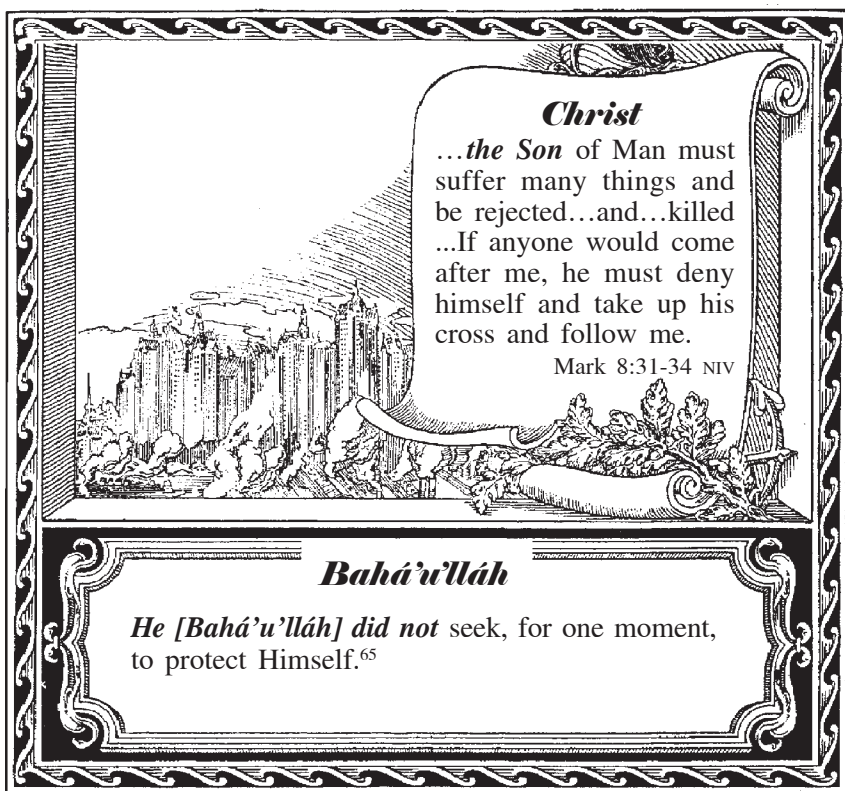
O SON OF SPIRIT!
Noble have I created thee, yet thou hast abased thyself. Rise then unto that for which thou wast created.⁶³

O BRETHREN!

Be forbearing one with another and set not your affections on things below. Pride not yourselves in your glory, and be not ashamed of abasement. By My beauty! I have created all things from dust, and to dust will I return them again.⁶⁴

34

Making no Effort for Self-Protection



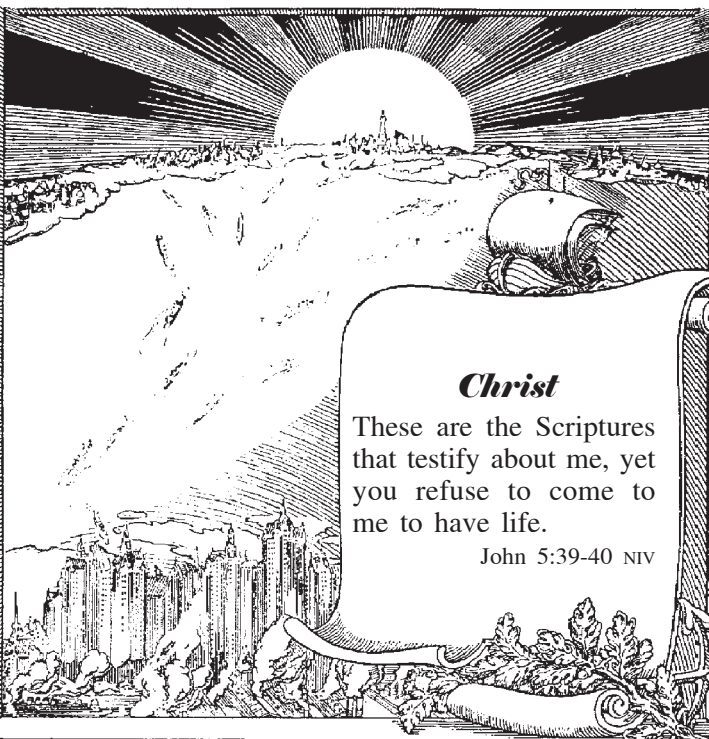
Fulfilling Many Specific and Literal Prophecies

*Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will see the glory
of God?*

Christ (John 11:40 NEB)

The Lord is come in His great glory!

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

These are the Scriptures
that testify about me, yet
you refuse to come to
me to have life.

John 5:39-40 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*Whatever hath come to pass in this Day hath
been foretold in the Scriptures of old.⁶⁶*

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7

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.⁶⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Do prophecies carry much weight? Did Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb fulfill any biblical prophecies? As we shall see in the next three chapters, they fulfilled hundreds of prophecies on a scale never seen before, not even in the first Advent of Jesus Christ.

Let us conclude this chapter with a quotation from Bahá'u'lláh on a topic quite dear to all Christians: the grace of God. As there was an outpouring of grace at the time of the first Advent through the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ, so is there such an outpouring in this age, through the Advent of that same Spirit with a new name Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. In the *Concordance to Bahá'u'lláh's Writings*, there are almost 800 references to the word grace and its derivatives.

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 inviting 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. Abandon not the incorruptible benefits, and be not content with that which perisheth. Lift up the veil that obscureth your vision, and dispel the 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.⁶⁸

6

The Fruits of Prophecies on the Tree of Life

Physical Fruits

Part I

Verily He [Bahá'u'lláh] is *the Tree of Life* that bringeth forth the fruits of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

All the signs and standards, and all the “fruits” examined so far are *spiritual*—they pertain to virtues, attributes, or the Essence of “the Tree,” and the influence of those spiritual fruits on others. Prophecies relate mostly *not* to the *Essence* or the *Spirit* of the fruits but to their *physical* features.

The Spirit of God as manifested in His great Messengers and Redeemers is so infinitely sublime, it does not need any evidence to prove itself. Does the sun need any evidence? But

God, out of His grace, goes beyond *the Spirit* of the fruits of life, by giving us also specific knowledge about the *physical* features of the Tree and its fruits. Why is this knowledge given? Because some people cannot be moved by the Spirit alone. They need concrete and tangible evidence. Compare the fragrance of *the rose* to the Spirit of God, and its color, size, shape, texture, and petals to the means through which the fragrance manifests itself. Prophecy is a description of these physical features and the time and the environment in which the plant grows.

God has always used knowledge of the things to come to guide the seekers of His Kingdom:

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7 NIV

Should we put our trust in prophecy? Dr. James Kennedy, a noted Christian leader and scholar, emphasizes the supreme significance of prophecy:

Of all the attacks that have ever been made upon the Scripture, there has never been one book written by a skeptic to disprove the prophecies of the Scripture. Though the Bible has been attacked at every other place, the one place where God rests His inspiration, saying, “**By this ye will know that I have sent a prophet,**” is that which he foretells, comes infallibly to pass.²

Christian scholar David Reagan, author of several books on prophecy and the host of “Christ in Prophecy,” confirms the same point:

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the best evidences I know of that the Bible is the inspired Word of God...*The literal fulfillment of so many prophecies in the life of one individual transcends any mere coincidence* and serves to validate that Jesus was who He said He was...Peter referred to fulfilled prophecy as one of the greatest evidences that Jesus was truly the Son of God (2 Peter 1:16-19).³

How does prophecy gain its persuasive powers? From the principles of “**frequency**” and “**harmony**.” Suppose you saw three bricks lying on the ground in an orderly way. Could you be convinced that someone organized them on purpose? No! Three bricks may fall by chance, and lie next to each other in an orderly way. What if you saw a whole mansion? Could you reasonably conclude that it was put together by the wind? Biblical prophecies about the advent of the twin Redeemers of our time, the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, are so numerous and they fit so perfectly as to create not one but many mansions of beauty and harmony.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the authorized Interpreter of Bahá’í teachings, makes the following statement about the persuasive power of biblical prophecies concerning the year 1844 A.D. (1260 A.H.)—the time of the advent of the Báb. Both the principles of **frequency** and **harmony** are implied in His statement:

Nothing could be clearer than this agreement of the prophecies with one another...For him who is just, **the agreement of the times** [of the Second Advent] indicated by the tongues of the Great Ones **is the most conclusive proof**.⁴

There are 16 prophecies that specify 1844. Could 16 prophecies spoken over the course of centuries by different Prophets and Messengers, including Jesus, point by chance to the **same** year?

The reason many people discount the critical significance of prophecies is that they do not take time to enter **the magnificent mansions of harmony**. If they stepped inside, they would also get a glimpse of the Spirit that permeates the mansions.

Is it conceivable that God would give us clues and signs to recognize the One He sends, and then mislead us by allowing a false prophet to fulfill them? This chapter presents the first piece of the vast spectrum of the Prophetic Puzzle.

What is the predictive power of prophecy? Prophecy gains enormous predictive powers if offered in *specific* terms. Suppose you want to find a lost friend who may be anywhere in the world. How many pieces of *specific* information do you need? At the most five:

- Country
- City
- Street
- The house number
- The name of the friend

The preceding list shows how powerful specific facts are. Five pieces of information can single out one person out of six or even a hundred billion. Now suppose you had far more than five facts. Suppose several people testify that they have seen your friend at the designated address. What if they gave you many accurate clues about the way he lives and acts? Would you not feel quite confident that you will find him?

To illustrate the point, let us apply several biblical prophecies to both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh. In this chapter, let us study only *the dates* of the two Advents.

The first Advent of our Lord is predicted to happen after the lapse of “69 weeks” from “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem:”

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

Daniel 9:25 NKJ

Let us see the same prophecy in *The Amplified Bible*. The added words of this translation, enclosed in brackets, enhance the clarity of the prophecy:

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem

until [the coming of] the anointed one, a prince, shall be seven weeks [of years], and sixty-two weeks [of years]; it shall be built again with city square and moat, but in troublous times.

The date recognized by many Christian scholars to mark the beginning point of Daniel’s prophecy is 457 B.C. According to *NIV Bible Commentary*, “The most likely fulfillment is the decree issued to Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (i.e. 457 B.C.)...”⁵ “Many other sources, such as *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* confirm the accuracy of 457.”⁶

A common code in the prophetic language is that a day equals a year:

I have appointed thee each day for a year. Ezekiel 4:6
See also Numbers 14:34

Thus if we move forward 69 weeks of years (483 years) from 457 B.C., we arrive at 27 A.D., the time when Jesus lived:



the angel that it would yet be “70 weeks” till the coming of the Messiah (24). The “70 weeks” is generally understood to mean 70 weeks of years, that is, 70 sevens of years, or seven times 70 years, that is 490 years. As if the angel were saying, the Captivity and the Coming of the Messiah will be seven times that long.

Seven, and cycles of seven, sometimes have symbolic meanings, yet the actual facts of this prophecy are most amazing, as follows:

The date from which the 70 weeks was to be counted was the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (25). There were three decrees issued by Persian kings for this purpose (536 B.C., 457 B.C., 444 B.C.) The principal one of these was 457 B.C.

The 70 weeks is subdivided into 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week (25, 27). It is difficult to see the application of the “7 weeks”; but the 69 weeks (including the 7) equal 483 days, that is, on the year-day theory (Ezekiel 4:6), which is the commonly accepted interpretation, 483 years.

This 483 years is the period between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the coming of the “Anointed One” (25). The decree to rebuild Jerusalem, as noted above, was 457 B.C. Adding 483 years to 457 B.C. brings us to A.D. 26, the very year that Jesus was baptized and began his public ministry. A most remarkable fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, even to the year.

Further, within 3½ years Jesus was crucified, that is, “in the midst of the one week” “the Anointed One” was “cut off,” “purged away sin and brought in everlasting righteousness” (24, 26, 27).

Thus Daniel foretold not only the Time at which the Messiah would appear, but also the Duration of his Public Ministry, and his Atoning Death for Human Sin.⁷

This date, of course, by itself does not prove who Jesus was. It only provides us with *the first* clue about the time when the Messiah was to come.

The *same* vision that predicts the date of the first advent also predicts the date of the *second*:

How long will the vision be...And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed...” “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.” Daniel 8:13-17 NKJ

The dates given for both advents are part of the same continuing vision, and have the same beginning point: 457 B.C. How then can we decode the date of the Second advent? This time, instead of moving forward 483 years from 457 B.C., we must move forward 2,300 years. That brings us to 1843 A.D.:

$$2300 = 457 + 1843$$

Thus the year of Second Advent must be 1843 A.D. But since there is an extra year in the Christian calendar, because instead of starting with zero, the calendar started with the year one, the year of the advent must be 1844 A.D. To be accurate, we must say that the year designated as 1844 was indeed 1843 A.D.! This example will clarify the discrepancy. What would happen if at your birth you were considered to be a one-year-old-child? Your birth certificate would show that you were one year older than you really were!

Did Jewish scholars discover the date of the first advent? We must assume that some of them did. But we do know that in the first half of the 19th century, Christian scholars from several countries, working independently, found the date of the *Second* Advent to be between 1843 and 1844. The unsealing and disclosure of the time of the Advent at this critical time created a sense of expectations among Christians on a scale never known before. You can read entire volumes on this most significant chapter in religious history—the Advent Movement—and its consequences. Most Christian theologians

do not wish to acknowledge this event. Many reasons are involved. Perhaps the most significant reason is that they have to explain to people why this prophecy was not fulfilled.

If you say to yourself that Jesus told us “of that day and hour no one knows,” remind yourself that Jesus also told us that we would know “the season” of His coming (Luke 21:29-30). But now the real issue is this: Jesus spoke about the *future*; we are talking about the *past*. Suppose you do not know when your friend will come. Will you *not* also know *after* he has come? Further, Daniel predicted that “*the wise* shall understand” (Dan. 12:10). That is exactly what happened. Certain scholars understood the purpose of the prophecy and disclosed the *season* or *the approximate* time of Jesus’ Return.

The prophecy of 2,300 days is *only one of sixteen prophecies* that confirm 1844 as the date of the Second Advent. These prophecies, when put together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, are so clear, conclusive, and convincing, that some Christian scholars continue to this day to confirm their purpose (the Return of Jesus Christ) and the accuracy of the calculations that point to 1844 A.D. This is amazing. They believe our Lord has not yet returned, because they expect to see Him on the clouds. In spite of their disappointment—that the prophecy has not been fulfilled—*they do not question the accuracy of the appointed date!* Consider this statement from the well-known Christian author and scholar George Vandeman:

...so far as any time prophecy is concerned, Jesus *could have returned to this earth any time after 1844*. He is not waiting for any prophetic time period to end. No time prophecy is holding Him back. *Then why hasn’t He returned?* For nearly two hundred years we have been living in the time of the end. *Why isn’t He here?* [emphasis added.]⁸

You can read a detailed study of the prophecy of 2,300 days and the other fifteen biblical prophecies that confirm 1844, in *I Shall Come Again*.

Imagine the consequences if there were not two prophecies about the first Advent, but sixteen. Christian leaders and scholars would proclaim that knowledge continuously with a supreme sense of pride. They would ask people to check to see if any Redeemer has ever received such convincing evidence. ***And yet the sixteen time prophecies of the Second Advent, and their fulfillment by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, remain virtually unknown to the masses of Christians.*** Does not this lack of knowledge fulfill the prophecy of “***I shall come upon you like a thief*”?**

Because prophecy pertains to physical events, and many Christians love prophecies, let us continue this topic in the next two chapters.

7

The Fruits of Prophecies on the Tree of Life

Physical Fruits

Part II

This chapter presents several significant biblical prophecies concerning both Advents. Here are some advantages of starting with the prophecies of the first Advent of Christ:

- The study will provide us with a standard of judgment, a yardstick from the past by which to measure the prophecies of the Second Advent.
- It will help us understand and appreciate prophetic language—how clear and specific it is.
- It will demonstrate how Christian scholars have used prophecies to prove Christ's divine station.

- It will help us see the entire picture, and to build from the ground up.

As a Christian author notes:

The fact that everything prophesied concerning Christ's first appearance took place exactly as foretold provides absolute confidence that all of the prophecies concerning His return will also surely come to pass.¹

At this writing, one of the most convincing and most frequently quoted books written by Christian scholars to validate the station of Jesus Christ is: *Science Speaks*. Its prime significance comes from applying scientific methods to test the fulfillment of prophecies. To prove the truth of our Lord's mission, two eminent scientists, P. S. Stoner* and R. C. Newman* applied probability laws to eight major biblical prophecies, which they believe point to the first advent. Their book has been published by one of the most distinguished Bible Institutes in America. It has been further supported and distributed by the best-known evangelistic group in the world, that of Dr. Billy Graham. Many Christian writers and scholars refer to the conclusion of this scientific study as conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah of the Jews.

What is "the probability law" the two scientists used in their studies? The following example demonstrates the most basic law of probability—the one the two scientists used. If you had to pick a number between 1 and 10, what is your chance of being right? 1 in 10. What is your chance a second time? Again, 1 in 10. What is your chance of being right two times in a row? Not 1 in 20 but 1 in 100. If you find this hard to

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believe, test it for yourself. Of course, this law holds true only when large numbers are involved. For instance, if you establish an insurance company and insure 1 or 10 or even 100 people, you may go bankrupt. But if you insure 2 or 3 million, you have nothing to worry about. The laws of chance are in your favor.

The following is a list of the eight Hebrew prophecies Stoner and Newman have attributed to the first Advent. Each is followed by a question of probability (One man in how many?), and a “probability ratio” that they accepted for each prophecy:

1. ***But you, Bethlehem...out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old*** [Christ’s eternal spiritual existence] Micah 5:2 NIV

“One man in how many, the world over, has been born in Bethlehem?”²

By comparing the population of Bethlehem with that of the world at the time of Jesus, the two Christian authors arrived at a probability ratio of 1/280,000

2. ***See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.*** Malachi 3:1 NIV

“One man in how many, the world over, has had a forerunner to prepare his way?”³

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/1,000

3. ***Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*** Zechariah 9:9 NIV

“One man in how many, who was born in Bethlehem and had a forerunner, did enter Jerusalem as a king riding on a colt the foal of an ass?”⁴ (This prophecy was fulfilled by the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.)

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/100

4. ***If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your body?’ He will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.’***
Zechariah 13:6 NIV

The authors explain: “Christ was betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples, causing Him to be put to death, wounds being made in His hands.”⁵

“One man in how many, the world over, has been betrayed by a friend, and that betrayal has resulted in his being wounded in his hands?”⁶

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/1,000

5. ***I told them, ‘If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.’ So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.***
Zechariah 11:12 NIV

“Of the people who have been betrayed, one in how many has been betrayed for exactly thirty pieces of silver?”⁷

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/1,000

6. ***And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter...***
Zechariah 11:13

The authors explain: “You will recall that Judas in remorse tried to return the thirty pieces of silver, but the chief priest would not accept them. So Judas threw them down on the floor of the temple and went and hanged himself. The chief priest then took the money and bought a field of the potter to bury strangers in.”⁸

“One man in how many, after receiving a bribe for the betrayal of a friend, had returned the money, had it refused, had thrown it on the floor in the house of the Lord, and then had it used to purchase a field from the potter?”⁹

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/100,000

7. ***He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth...***
Isaiah 53:7 NIV

“One man in how many, after fulfilling the above prophecies, when he is oppressed and afflicted and is on trial for his life, though innocent, will make no defense for himself?”¹⁰

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/1,000

8. *Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.*

Psalms 22:16 NIV

“One man in how many, from the time of David on, has been crucified?”¹¹

The accepted probability ratio..... 1/10,000

The total probability figure for the eight prophecies is **1/10²⁸**.

The authors then ask: “What is the chance that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all of the eight prophecies?”¹² And then they respond:

We can answer this question by dividing our 10²⁸ by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. The best information available indicates the number to be about 88 billion or 8.8x10¹⁰. To simplify the computation let us call the number 10¹¹. By dividing these two numbers we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10¹⁷.¹³

Stoner and Newman offer the following illustration to show the remoteness of chance as an element in the fulfillment of the preceding prophecies:

Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10¹⁷ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep.

Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.¹⁴

THE SECOND ADVENT

Let us now examine some prophecies concerning the Second Advent and their fulfillment by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Where God Sets His Throne

The following prophecy links *throne* to *the glory of the Lord*, which is the equivalent of *Bahá'u'lláh*, and to *Israel*, where Bahá'u'lláh lived:

The glory of the Lord came to the temple [in Israel]...the place of *my throne*, the place where I set my feet, where I will dwell among Israelites for ever. Ezekiel 43:4,7 NEB

Bahá'u'lláh, who lived and died in Israel, and was also buried in that blessed land, confirms the fulfillment of the prophecies:

O Carmel [Israel]...Rejoice, for God in this day established upon thee *His throne*...¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

This prophecy also links God's throne to Israel:

...this is the place of *My throne* forever. Ezekiel 43:7 NKJ

Prophecies not only link the western regions of Israel to the Redeemer of our time but also the southern regions of Iran:

I will set *my throne* in Elam...saith the Lord.
Jeremiah 49:38

Bahá'u'lláh's Herald, the Báb, declared His mission in His birthplace Shíráz, a city in the southern regions of Iran, where Elam is located.

Many prophecies refer to the Redeemer of our time as the Lord, God, and the Father. All these titles of honor are bestowed on the promised One of our time. Consider this promise from Jesus Christ and a declaration of its fulfillment by Him in His Second Advent in the name of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God:

...the Son of Man will come *in the glory of His Father*...

Christ (Matt. 16:27 NIV)

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!"¹⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

Many prophecies declare that the Lord will come to Israel. Let us review some of them.

The Coming of the Lord to Israel

Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from His homeland, Persia, to the Holy Land. If Bahá'u'lláh had gone on His own accord, His going would have little if any significance. But He was banished to Israel by the order of His enemies.

This Holy Land hath been mentioned and extolled in all the sacred Scriptures...*This is the promised Land in which He Who is the Revelation of God was destined to be made manifest*...Whatever hath come to pass in this Day hath been foretold in the Scriptures of old.¹⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

The One claiming to be the Lord was sent by His enemies to Israel:

Then you will know *that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God*...

Joel 2:27 NIV

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: “Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!”¹⁸
Bahá'u'lláh

God shines out from Zion, perfect in beauty. Our God is coming and will not keep silence. Psalms 50:2-3 NEB

This Day all the signs have appeared. A Great City hath descended from heaven, and ***Zion trembleth and exulteth with joy at the Revelation of God***, for it hath heard the Voice of God on every side.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

...and the ***God of gods shows himself in Zion***.
Psalms 84:7 NEB

...and from Zion hath appeared that which was hidden, and from Jerusalem is heard the Voice of God...²⁰
Bahá'u'lláh

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...”***²¹ Bahá'u'lláh

Shout aloud and rejoice, daughter of Zion [people of Israel]; ***I am coming, I will make my dwelling among you, says the Lord***.
Zechariah 2:10 NEB

The Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are both in the Holy Land. This is also predicted:

This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
Psalms 132:14 NKJ

See also Joel 3:17, 21; Isaiah 33:20-21

...this is ***the place of...the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever***.

Ezekiel 43:7 NKJ

In Bahá'í writings, ***the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is called the Most Holy Sanctuary***.²² This prophecy speaks of God dwelling in a sanctuary:

And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.
Exodus 25:8 NKJ



The Resting Place of the Báb
on Mount Carmel, Israel

The following verse describes the beauty of the Lord's resting-place:

And in that day...His resting place shall be glorious.

Isaiah 11:10 NKJ

The resting place of Bahá'u'lláh is also in the Holy Land. It will be covered by a magnificent superstructure in the future.

The Coming of the Glory of the Lord to Israel

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom...***they will see the glory of the Lord***, the splendor of our God. Isaiah 35:1-2 NIV

Let us look again at Isaiah's prophecy, this time replacing "the glory of the Lord" with its exact equivalent "Bahá'u'lláh:"

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom...***they will see Bahá'u'lláh***, the splendor of our God.

Here are a few more prophecies about the new name:

Arise, Jerusalem, rise clothed in light; your light has come and ***the glory of the Lord*** [Bahá'u'lláh] ***shines over you***. For, though darkness covers the earth and dark night the nations, the Lord shall shine upon you and over you shall his glory appear; and the nations shall march towards your light and their kings to your sunrise. Isaiah 60:1-3 NEB

Then shall the nations revere thy name, O Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory, when ***the Lord*** builds up Zion again and ***shows himself in his glory***...This shall be written down for future generations, and a people yet unborn shall praise the Lord. Psalms 102:15-18 NEB

I [God] will be...a ***glory*** in the midst of her [Jerusalem]. Zechariah 2:5 NEB

Mount Carmel

Mt. Carmel, where Bahá'u'lláh pitched His Tabernacle, is now the center of international Bahá'í institutions. The divine Shepherd offers this promise in regard to Carmel, which was blessed by Bahá'u'lláh during His exile in the Holy Land:

In those days...My people have been lost sheep; their shepherd [religious leaders] have led them astray...and forgot their own resting place...But I will bring Israel to his own pasture and he [Israel] will graze [receive spiritual food] ***on Carmel and Bashan***.^{*} Jeremiah 50:4, 6, 19 NKJV

The symbolism of “sheep” and “shepherd” is abundant in prophecies of the last day:

...the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the Lord Almighty will care for his flock... Zechariah 10:2-3 NIV

^{*} Bashan, meaning a “fruitful plane” is a disputed district, now known as the Golan Heights, from which Syria shelled Israel. In 1967 the Israelis conquered and occupied that district at great cost.

I will myself gather the remnant of my sheep from all the lands to which I have dispersed them...I will appoint shepherds to tend them.
Jeremiah 23:3-4 NEB

Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to and imprisoned in a small town in Israel called '**Akká** or **Acre**. 'Akká was a fortified city designed for defense and war. Some of its fortifications still stand. Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to 'Akká because it was remote, desolate, deadly, and well protected. The following verses not only point to the desolation of 'Akká, but also predict the rise of a divine call ("trumpet blast") from that forsaken city:

The fortified city ['Akká] stands desolate, an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the desert...And in that day **a great trumpet will sound**.
Isaiah 27:10,13 NIV

Has "the Trumpet-Call" of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation sounded?

The All-Merciful is come...**The Trumpet hath been blown**, and lo...the hearts of all who are in the heavens and on the earth have trembled, except them...who have detached themselves from all things.²³
Bahá'u'lláh

Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was the Persian king who banished Bahá'u'lláh to Baghdad and had a part in sending Him later to the Holy Land. The Sháh later realized that the banishment was a mistake. In terms of his self-interests, this was the worst choice, an incredible blunder. A letter from Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, written by his Minister for Foreign Affairs, states that "**It was because of lack of tact and discernment on the part of former officials that one of them [Bahá'u'lláh] was released from the prison of Anbár [the Black Pit] and allowed to go to Islamic holy places. And as you know he has taken residence in Baghdad...**"²⁴ The letter then instructs the responsible officials to arrest Bahá'u'lláh and His close disciples and bring them back to Iran.

Why did Bahá'u'lláh's staunch enemies—the religious and political leaders of Persia and the Ottoman Empire—decide to banish Him, instead of putting Him to death? Why out of

so many other countries, did they select the Holy Land as the place of banishment? This is a question of supreme significance. People always plot against God, but God is “swifter to plot:”

They that have turned away from Me have *schemed* many a time...²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Immersed in their selfish *schemes*, they are oblivious of Divine decree.²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

A prophecy in Psalms compares God's enemies to bees surrounding and attacking the One sent by Him:

All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. *They swarmed around me like bees, but they died out as quickly as burning thorns...* Psalms 118:10-12 NIV

J. R. Church, a Christian scholar, makes this statement about the preceding verses:

This symbolism, is most appropriate. When the bee gathers honey, it thinks that it is collecting the sweet nectar for its own use, not realizing that the beehive is under the control and supervision of a beekeeper.²⁷

The honey that the enemies of the new Revelation produced was the fulfillment of prophecies about Bahá'u'lláh. The following is a marvelous prophecy. It portrays God's great vision versus human vanity and weakness. Several kings and nations plotted against Bahá'u'lláh without knowing that they were assisting Him:

Why do the nations rage and the peoples *plot in vain*? The kings of the earth take their stand, the rulers gather together against *the Lord* [the Báb] and against his *Anointed One* [Bahá'u'lláh]. “Let us break their chains [of authority],” they [the enemies of the new Redeemers], say “and throw off their fetters.” The One enthroned in heaven

laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, “I have installed my King [Bahá’u’lláh] on Zion, my holy hill.”

Psalms 2:1-6 NIV

God exalts the abased and abases the exalted. Bahá’u’lláh’s banishment to the city of ‘Akká, on the northwestern regions of Palestine, perfectly demonstrates this principle. At the time of Bahá’u’lláh’s exile, Turkey was a vast empire. In that vast territory, ‘Akká was selected mainly for its remoteness, fortifications, and deadly environment. It served as a “penal colony,” a place of banishment and imprisonment of criminals and political dissidents. It “was devoid of any source of water within its gates; was flea-infested, damp and honey-combed with gloomy, filthy and tortuous lanes.”²⁸ It is hard to imagine a city with a record as disastrous and miserable as that of ‘Akká. Yet this most desolate of cities will be exalted. It will become the most glorious of all cities, for it symbolizes *the Throne of the Lord*, a center from which the glory of God radiates and glorifies all the inhabitants of the earth.

The Coming of the Glory of God from the East to the Gate Facing Eastward

A vision from Ezekiel reveals not only the coming of *the Glory of God* to Israel but also *the direction* from which He comes and *the city* to which He goes. The two most distinguishing physical features of ‘Akká are:

- It is a “strong” city, fortified to defend itself against enemy attacks.
- It has a large gate to protect it from intruders. The gate still exists.

To emphasize their power and clarity, Ezekiel’s prophecies are presented twice, once with the English translation of the name *Bahá’u’lláh* and once with the Arabic:

He led me to *the gate, the gate facing eastwards*, and *I beheld the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east*. His voice was like the sound of a mighty torrent, and the earth shone with his glory. Ezekiel 43:1-2 NEB

He led me to *the gate, the gate facing eastwards*, and *I beheld Bahá'u'lláh of Israel coming from the east* [Persia is on the east side of Israel]. His voice was like the sound of a mighty torrent, and the earth shone with his glory. Ezekiel 43:1-2 NEB

And again:

The glory of the Lord came up to the temple towards *the gate which faced eastwards*. A spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and *the glory of the Lord* filled the temple. Then I heard one speaking to me from the temple, and the man was standing at my side. He said, Man, do you see *the place of my throne*, the place where I set my feet, where I will dwell among the Israelites for ever?... Ezekiel 43:4-7 NEB

Bahá'u'lláh came up to the temple towards *the gate which faced eastwards*. A spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and *Bahá'u'lláh* filled the temple. Then I heard one speaking to me from the temple, and the man was standing at my side. He said, Man, do you see *the place of my throne*, the place where I set my feet, where I will dwell among the Israelites for ever?...

Ezekiel 43:4-7

Here Bahá'u'lláh refers to 'Akká as *the place of His throne*:

Great is thy blessedness, O 'Akká, in that God hath made thee...the dawn of His most mighty signs. Happy are thou in that *the Throne* of Justice hath been established upon thee...²⁹

Ezekiel's vision was literally fulfilled, when Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, came as an Exile from the east to the fortified city, for Persia stands to the east of Israel. As mentioned

earlier, “sanctuary” or “temple” symbolizes the most holy place on earth, where God (through His Manifestation) chooses to dwell among His people. Even after His passing, Bahá'u'lláh continued to dwell in the Holy Land, not only physically by being buried there, but spiritually as well, for ***Israel stands as the World Center of the Bahá'í Faith***. A temple or a house of worship will be built on the slopes of Mount Carmel. Its site has already been purchased and marked by Shoghi Effendi.

Another prophecy from Psalms further confirms the final resting-place of the Redeemer of our age. The prophecy may refer to both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, because they are both buried in the Holy Land:

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: “***This is My resting place forever***; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. Psalms 132:13-14 NKJ

Some translations of Isaiah 14:1 indicate that someone referred to as “***the sojourner***” or “***the alien resident***” comes and joins the people of Israel:

For Jehovah will...set them in their own land: and ***the sojourner*** [the Promised One] will join himself with them... Isaiah 14:1 The American Revised Version

The King of Glory

Among the titles bestowed on the Redeemer of our age are: ***King of Kings***, and ***the King***. They are used synonymously with His other titles, such as ***the Lord***, ***the Lord of Hosts***, ***the Lord Almighty***, and ***Lord of Lords***. The following prophecy refers to several titles assumed by Bahá'u'lláh:

Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that ***the King of glory*** may come in. Who is this King of glory? ***The Lord*** strong and mighty, ***the Lord mighty***...

Psalms 24:7-8 NIV
See also Zechariah 14:16

For the first time in history, a Redeemer comes to establish not only a spiritual kingdom but an earthly one as well. The previous Messengers all predicted and promised the coming of the Kingdom of God to the earthly realms, but they never tried to establish it.

My kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36 NIV

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.
Matthew 22:21 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh, for the first time in history, declares that through His Revelation God's Kingdom will become a reality on earth as in heaven. In fact, one of His main teachings is the establishment of a global federation of nations.

The Book of Revelation assigns the title ***KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*** to the One referred to by David as ***King of Glory*** and ***the Lord Almighty***:

...He will rule them with a rod of iron...On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: ***KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS***. Revelation 19:15-16 NIV

Note the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh declares His glorious Kingdom:

...the heavens are cleft asunder, and ***God hath come down, invested with radiant sovereignty. All created things are heard exclaiming: "The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."***³⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

The Gift of a New Name

Many prophecies specify Bahá'u'lláh's title: the Glory of God. Ponder these few examples among many others:

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of ***the glory of the Lord***, as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14 NIV

...as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with ***the glory of the Lord***. Numbers 14:21

Did I not tell you that if you have faith ***you will see the glory of God?*** John 11:40 NEB

And ***the glory of the Lord*** will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. Isaiah 40:5 NIV

...they will see ***the glory of the Lord***, the splendor of our God. Isaiah 35:2 NIV

If you grew up in an English speaking country, you heard the words “Jesus Christ” from childhood. If you had grown up in an Arabic speaking country, you would have heard ***Ísá Masíh***. If someone asked you “Do you believe in ***Ísá Masíh***?” you would be totally puzzled, because you are not familiar with that word. The word Christ is a modified version of a Greek word. If someone asked you, “Do you believe in Christus?” you may again be confused. You may even think about Christopher Columbus. The name Christ did not descend from heaven. It is a common Greek word meaning anointed or blessed. Search the entire Hebrew Scriptures to find any prophecies that use the word “Christ” even once. You will find no prophecy with that title. Because the Hebrew Scriptures are in the Hebrew language. They do not contain such a Greek word. Read the entire Hebrew Scriptures to see if you can find even the Hebrew version of the word Christ used with any degree of clarity that comes even close to the prophecies that predict the new title ***the Glory of God***.

To be more faithful to the original words, some English translations of the Bible use the Hebrew word ***Yahweh*** for God and ***Rabbi*** for the title, Master. Let us do the same with the word Bahá'u'lláh. To see the astonishing clarity of prophecies that point to the new name, read the preceding prophecies once again, this time with the Arabic version of the name in place of the English:

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of ***Bahá'u'lláh***, as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14 NIV

And ***Bahá'u'lláh*** will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. Isaiah 40:5 NIV

...as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with ***Bahá'u'lláh***. Numbers 14:21

Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will see ***Bahá'u'lláh***? John 11:40 NEB

...they will see ***Bahá'u'lláh***, the splendor of our God. Isaiah 35:2 NIV

Note how plainly the Book of Revelation predicts the coming of two divine Beings who give light to ***the City of God***, a symbol of divine Revelation. These two prophecies were spoken centuries apart, yet note how similar they are:

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for ***the glory of God*** gives it light, and the Lamb [the Báb] is its lamp. ***The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.*** Revelation 21:23-24 NIV

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and ***the glory of the Lord*** rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ***Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*** Isaiah 60:1-3 NIV

Read the preceding prophecies again with some of its critical words such as “light” “glory” and “the glory of the Lord” in Arabic:

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for ***Bahá'u'lláh*** gives it light, and the Lamb [the Báb, the One who sacrificed Himself] is its lamp. ***The nations will walk by its Bahá, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.***

Arise, shine, for your ***Bahá*** has come, and ***Bahá'u'lláh*** rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you

and his Bahá appears over you. ***Nations will come to your Bahá, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.***

The gift of the new Name is prophesied throughout the entire Scripture:

The nations will see...your glory [Bahá]; you will be called by ***a new name*** that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.

Isaiah 62:2 NIV

...his servants [new followers] he shall call by ***another name.***

Isaiah 65:15 NEB

The Bible asks us to “Prove all things” and “hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21). Bahá’u’lláh asks us to do the same. He invites us to “cast away” our unfounded and unprovable assumptions, and to “take fast hold” of that which God commands. He asks us to “purge” our ears from everything we have heard from fallible human beings:

Cast away, O peoples of the earth, that which ye have and take fast hold of that which ye are bidden by the All-Powerful, He Who is the Bearer of the Trust of God. Purge ye your ears and set your hearts towards Him that ye may hearken to the most wondrous Call which hath been raised from Sinai, the habitation of your Lord, the Most Glorious.³¹

Bahá’u’lláh

What more can we expect from God? More splendid than a bright and beautiful City that is lighted, just like the earth, with two sources of light, a Sun called ***Bahá’u’lláh*** for the day, and a Lamp called ***the Lamb*** for the night? What more do our hearts desire? More delightful than a pure river of life that flows from the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, and His Gate the Lamb of God? What do our hearts hope for? More nourishing than the tree of life that bears a new crop of fruits not once a year, but every month of the year? What more do our hearts wish for? More healthful than crops of leaves that cure every disease, every pain and suffering that may touch our lives? All these wondrous gifts are found in Bahá’u’lláh’s celestial and supreme Word:

- ***Two sources of light:*** The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for ***the glory of God*** [Bahá'u'lláh] gives it light, and ***the Lamb*** [the Báb] is its lamp. Revelation 21:23 NIV
- ***A pure river of life:*** And he showed me a ***pure river of water of life***, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of ***God*** [Bahá'u'lláh] and of ***the Lamb*** [the Báb]. Revelation 22:1 NKJ
- ***The tree of life:*** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was ***the tree of life***. Revelation 22:2 NKJ
- ***Fruits:*** [The tree of life bore] twelve ***crops of fruit***, yielding its fruit every month. Revelation 22:2 NIV
- ***Leaves:*** And ***the leaves*** of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2 NIV
- ***The promise to come and bestow all those blessings:*** Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. Revelation 22:7 NIV

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: 'Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!'³²
Bahá'u'lláh

Lo! He is come in the sheltering shadow of Testimony, invested with conclusive proof and evidence, and those who truly believe in Him regard His presence as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. Blessed is the man who turneth towards Him...³³ Bahá'u'lláh

The next chapter offers further fruits of prophecies on the Tree of Life.

8

The Fruits of Prophecies on the Tree of Life

Physical Fruits

Part III

They Shall Beat Their Swords Into Plowshares

None of the previous Messengers and Redeemers have designated universal and permanent peace as their goal. Yet they have promised that in the last days the hope of peace will become a reality:

I...will let my people see an age of *peace and security*.

Jeremiah 33:6 NEB

Though the mountains move and the hills shake, my...
covenant of *peace* shall not be shaken. Isaiah 54:10 NEB

My people will live in *peaceful* dwelling places, in secure
homes, in undisturbed places of rest...how blessed you will
be... Isaiah 32:18-20 NIV

Unlike the previous Messengers, Bahá'u'lláh declares the establishment of universal peace as one of His chief goals. In the Bahá'í Scriptures we find many references to peace. Bahá'u'lláh's Son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the authorized Interpreter of Bahá'í teachings, referred in His Paris Talks to the mechanism through which peace can be achieved:

A supreme Tribunal shall be established by the peoples and governments of every nation, composed of members elected from each country and government. The members of this Great Council shall assemble in unity. All disputes of an international character shall be submitted to this Court...The mission of this Tribunal would be to prevent war.¹

In the future, when the Bahá'í Faith is well established, disputes arising among the nations will be settled by an International Court as advocated by Bahá'u'lláh. This institution, in cooperation with the Universal House of Justice, the Supreme Bahá'í Institution, will help to preserve the peace of the planet.

Economic Justice

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. Psalms 113:7 NIV

God promises to eradicate poverty from the face of the planet:

"For the oppression of *the poor*, for the sighing of *the needy*, now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set him in the safety for which he yearns." Psalms 12:5 NKJ

The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of *the needy*.

Psalms 72:4 NIV

Eradication of poverty is one of the fundamental teachings of Bahá'u'lláh:

Know ye that *the poor are the trust of God in your midst*. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous.²

Bahá'u'lláh

It is important to limit riches, as it is also of importance to limit poverty. Either extreme is not good...When we see poverty allowed to reach a condition of starvation it is a sure sign that somewhere we shall find tyranny... There must be special laws made, dealing with these extremes of riches and of want...The government of the countries should conform to the Divine Law which gives equal justice to all.³

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Bahá'u'lláh demonstrated His love for the poor by example. He was born to a wealthy family, and His father had a significant position in the court. Instead of showing interest in power and politics, He became a refuge for the poor. His generosity earned Him the title of “the Father of the Poor.”

You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm... Isaiah 25:4 NIV

But poverty will not be eliminated until Bahá'u'lláh's social order is implemented.

Verily, have We made it [the Universal House of Justice] the shelter for the poor and needy.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The following story shows Bahá'u'lláh's generosity, concern for the needy, and detachment from material possessions:

One day Bahá'u'lláh sent 'Abdu'l-Bahá to inspect the work of the shepherds who were taking care of His sheep. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a small child at the time, and the persecutions against Bahá'u'lláh and His family had not yet started. Bahá'u'lláh then had a good deal of land in the mountains and owned large herds of sheep. When the inspection was finished and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ready to leave, the man who had accompanied Him said, "It is your father's custom to leave a gift for each shepherd." 'Abdu'l-Bahá became silent for a while, because He did not have anything to give them. The man, however, insisted that the shepherds were expecting something. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá had an idea that made Him very happy! He would give the shepherds the sheep they were taking care of! Bahá'u'lláh was very much pleased when He heard about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's generous thoughts towards the shepherds. He humorously remarked that everyone had better take good care of 'Abdu'l-Bahá because someday He would give Himself away. Of course, this is exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá did for the rest of His life. He gave everything He had, each and every moment of His life, to humanity, to unite us and bring us true happiness.⁵

Suppose you took your parent's car to a car wash, and you discovered that you did not have any money with you, so you gave the car as payment! What kind of response would you expect from your parents? This one example is sufficient to show the value of wealth in God's eyes.

Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to *the king's Son*. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor.

Psalms 72:1-4 NKJ

A New World Order

...the old order of things has passed away...I am making everything new!
Revelation 21:4-5 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh confirms:

The day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out *a new order* in its stead. He, verily is powerful over all things.⁶

Soon will *the present-day order be rolled up*, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily thy Lord...is the Knower of things unseen.⁷

He...hath come to build anew the whole world...⁸

The most critical feature of the new social order will be global unity. Those who recognize the Bahá'í Faith will carry the good news to others throughout the world. This will continue until all people are gathered under the banner of oneness:

...they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Christ (Matt. 24:31 NIV)

Thou wilt surely gather mankind for the Day of whose coming there is no doubt—the Day whereon everyone shall appear before Thee and find life in Thee.⁹ The Báb

The day is approaching when

...there shall be *one flock* and *one shepherd*.

John 10:16 NIV

The nations on every shore will worship him, every one in its own land.

Zephaniah 2:11 NIV

All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

Psalms 86:9 NKJ

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship

before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.

Psalms 22:27-28 NKJ

The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.

Psalms 24:1 NKJ

War will only be found in historical records. Those who have seen each other as enemies and waged war will learn to live in peace:

The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox...They will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain.

Isaiah 65:25 NIV

I will give them one heart and one way of life...

Jeremiah 32:39 NEB

This is the time of celebration, the time to sing a new song, for everything is made new:

Sing joyfully to the Lord...Sing to him a new song...and shout for joy.

Psalms 33:1-3 NIV

The Promised One hath appeared in this glorified Station, whereat all beings, both seen and unseen, have rejoiced. Take ye advantage of the Day of God. Verily, to meet Him is better for you than all that whereon the sun shineth, could ye but know it.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

Chapter 98 of Psalms is a song of joy dedicated to the advent of Bahá'u'lláh:

The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God...Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.

Psalms 98:2-9 NKJ

See also Psalms 91:7, 12-15

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.¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh

The Ancient Beauty [Bahá'u'lláh] hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold ['Akká] that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. ***He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness.*** This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful.¹² Bahá'u'lláh

A Pure Language

A universal auxiliary language is part of the new world order and one of the pillars of God's Kingdom:

It beseemeth you...to convene a gathering and choose one of the diverse languages, and likewise one of the existing scripts, or else to create a new language and a new script to be taught [to] children in schools throughout the world. They would, in this way, be acquiring only two languages, one their own native tongue, the other the language in which all the peoples of the world would converse. Were men to take fast hold on that which hath been mentioned, the whole earth would come to be regarded as one country, and the people would be relieved and freed from the necessity of acquiring and teaching different languages.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

A biblical prophecy offers still another clue regarding the new age and the new order. It points to the adoption of “a pure language” that will serve all humanity:

For then I will restore to the peoples *a pure** language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord. Zephaniah 3:9 NKJ

The names of *the Báb* and *Bahá'u'lláh* are the same in all languages. When Bahá'u'lláh's teaching on the necessity of a universal language has become a reality, the Names and Attributes of God will also be the same:

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 Lord and His Herald

Among the most emphatic and yet unrecognized prophecies of sacred Scriptures is that, at the end-time, there will come not one but two divine Beings with the most exalted titles: *the Lord* and *God*. The number of prophecies about the Twin Advents is astonishing, yet it seems that hardly anyone has noticed them. The only prophecy recognized and often quoted is the one about the coming of Elijah before the great day of the Lord (Malachi. 4:2-5). Since Elijah is considered a minor prophet, his coming does not create much excitement.

People only refer to one divine Figure when they mention the Second Advent. The reason is that many prophecies remain sealed until the Advent of the new Redeemer takes place. Only now, after the advent has come to pass, is this great secret divulged and the prophecies unsealed.

In the following passage, Bahá'u'lláh declares specifically to be the return of Christ:

O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for *He hath once*

* Perhaps the prophecy implies "pure" from national prejudice as well as irrational complexities.

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. I will fear no one, though the powers of earth and heaven be leagued against Me...I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. I, verily, anticipate from you the treatment ye have accorded unto Him that came before Me [the Báb].¹⁴

In the following statement, the Báb simply uses the word “Return:”

How numerous the verses which have been revealed concerning the grievous tests ye shall experience on the Day of Judgment, yet it appeareth that ye have never perused them; and how vast the number of revealed traditions regarding the trials which will overtake you on the Day of *Our Return*, and yet ye seem never to have set your eyes upon them.¹⁵

Let us now review a few of the many prophecies that point to twin Messengers. This prophecy was fulfilled both at the first advent and at the second:

Behold, I send *My messenger*, and he will prepare the way before *Me*.
Malachi 3:1 NKJ

Elijah is prophesied to appear twice, once before the advent of Jesus, and again at “the end of the age” before the advent of the Lord. The first advent of Elijah was fulfilled by John the Baptist:

And if you are willing to accept it, he [John the Baptist] is the Elijah who was to come.
Matthew 11:14 NIV
See also 17:10-13

This prophecy points to the *second* coming of Elijah:

The Sun of Righteousness [Bahá'u'lláh] shall arise with healing in His wings...Behold, I will send you *Elijah* [the

Báb] the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Malachi 4:2,5 NKJ

Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as the Sun of Revelation:

...the Sun of Revelation shineth forth resplendent.¹⁶

The second coming of Elijah was fulfilled by the Báb. As Bahá'u'lláh teaches, and Jesus implies, “return” does not imply the coming back of the same body or soul, but a re-birth of similar attributes or powers, a return of the same Spirit, the Spirit of God. The Báb manifested not only the attributes of *Lordship* but that of a *Herald* as well.

Though an independent Messenger, the Báb served primarily as the Gate to Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. His prime Mission, like that of John the Baptist, was not to found a new faith, but to awaken the seekers of truth and to prepare them for the advent of the long-expected Savior, One greater than Himself.

The Báb repeatedly asked His followers to be ready, to be receptive to the call of the next Redeemer and to give Him their full allegiance. He knew that the advent of Bahá'u'lláh would pose a severe test to His own followers.

Bahá'u'lláh quotes this biblical prophecy:

How lovely *on the mountains* are the feet of *the herald* [the Báb] *who comes to* proclaim prosperity and *bring good news*, the news of deliverance, calling to Zion, ‘Your *God is king.*’
Isaiah 52:7 NEB

A prophecy from Nahum offers an identical message:

See on the mountains the feet of *the herald who brings good news*. Make your pilgrimages, O Judah...
Nahum 1:15 NEB

Christian scholar J. R. Church confirms the relevance of Isaiah's and Nahum's prophecies to the Second Advent:

This is a prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ... Furthermore, that was the message of Isaiah, who lived and wrote some 50 years before Nahum. Evidently, Nahum quoted Isaiah 52:7, and the context definitely places it at the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁷

Isaiah and Nahum refer to the herald who blesses the mountain with His feet, and brings the good news of salvation and the dawning of the Kingdom. All these prophetic messages were fulfilled by the Báb, who came as the herald of Bahá'u'lláh, and declared the good news of His Kingdom. He was exiled and imprisoned on the mountains in Mákú and Chihríq. In the following passage the Báb refers to His imprisonment in Mákú:

In this mountain I have remained alone, and have come to such a pass that none of those gone before Me have suffered what I have suffered...I render praise unto God and yet again praise Him. I find Myself free from sorrow, inasmuch as I abide within the good-pleasure of My Lord and Master. Methinks I am in the all-highest Paradise, rejoicing at My communion with God, the Most Great. Verily this is a bounty which God hath conferred upon Me; and He is the Lord of unbounded blessings.¹⁸

The Báb offered His life and became the Lamb of God. Note how clearly this prophecy from the Book of Revelation refers to the Báb as the Lamb and to Bahá'u'lláh's title, the Glory of God:

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven...It shone with the *glory of God*...The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the *glory of God* gives it light, and *the Lamb* is its *lamp*.

Revelation 21:22-23 NIV

I am the *lamp* which...God hath lit...and caused to shine with deathless splendor.¹⁹

The Báb

The following prophecies from Psalms and Revelation are almost identical. One of them points to the coming of *the*

Lord and *his Christ*, and the other to the coming of *the Lord* and *his anointed king*. Since *Christ* means *anointed*, the two prophecies can be considered almost identical.

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our **Lord** [the Báb] and of his *Christ* [Bahá'u'lláh].

Revelation 11:15 NIV

The kings of the earth stand ready, and the rulers conspire together against *the Lord* [the Báb] and his *anointed king* [Bahá'u'lláh].

Psalms 2:1-2 NEB

The two kings who conspired against *both* the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were

- Muhammad Sháh, Sháh of Persia, who ruled from 1834 to 1848.
- Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Sháh of Persia, who ruled from 1848 to 1896.

The two kings who opposed Bahá'u'lláh were:

- 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who ruled from 1861 to 1876.
- 'Abdu'l-Hamíd, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who ruled from 1876 to 1909.

Thus two kings and their prime ministers (rulers) conspired against the Báb; four kings and their prime ministers conspired against Bahá'u'lláh.

Here the Báb addresses those who conspire or scheme against *the Most Great Remembrance of God*, which is one of the Báb's titles:

Are ye wickedly scheming, according to your selfish fancies, *an evil plot* against Him Who is the Most Great Remembrance of God? By the righteousness of God, all who are in the heaven and on earth and whatsoever lieth between them are regarded in My sight even as a spider's web, and verily God beareth witness unto all things. *Indeed they will not lay plots but against themselves.*²⁰

False Assumptions

Could there have been a conspiracy on the part of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to fulfill some critical prophecies? To think that they could have planned and plotted to harmonize their lives with just the preceding four points, we must make these ***most unlikely and even impossible*** assumptions:

1

The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were good friends. (It is known that they did not even meet.)

2

Bahá'u'lláh convinced the Báb, a perfect example of honesty and integrity, to call Himself the Redeemer of our time.

3

Bahá'u'lláh convinced the Báb to stand firm under pressure and persecution and be willing to die for a lie.

4

Bahá'u'lláh convinced the Persian and Turkish governments to banish Him from Iraq to a small and unknown place in Israel, 'Akká, perhaps the deadliest of all cities at the time.

5

Bahá'u'lláh discovered the secret title—Glory of God—and adopted it for Himself. Even after 150 years, Christian scholars remain unaware of this secret. The secrecy of this title was guarded so well that no one in all history ever adopted it for himself.

False Assumptions

6

Bahá'u'lláh discovered the coded figure 1844 A.D. (1260 A.H.) and convinced the Báb to declare the new age in that year.

7

Bahá'u'lláh knew He could prove that the prophecies that point to the heavenly descent of the Redeemer of our time were all symbolic.

8

To deceive people, Bahá'u'lláh gave up a life of luxury and position of honor in His native land in exchange for banishment and imprisonment lasting forty years.

9

The need to deceive people and pursue this lie was so urgent that Bahá'u'lláh exposed not only Himself but also His family to a life of pain and suffering.

Let us now apply the probability laws to the prophecies of the Second Advent quoted in this chapter. What is the probability by chance alone:

1. That out of thousands of districts throughout the world, a religion would have its beginning in Elam, in southern Persia? (The Báb was born in and called to His Mission in southern region of Iran.) By a conservative estimate, let us say one in three thousand 1/3,000
2. That a man calls Himself *the Glory of the Lord*. As far as we can tell, no one has ever called Himself by this name. For this, let us accept a probability of one in a thousand 1/1,000
3. That a Man who calls Himself *the Lord* and *the Glory of God* comes to live in the Holy Land? Note: prophecies

indicate that the expected Messenger comes to Israel from the East. Therefore, He cannot be an Israeli. We also know that Bahá'u'lláh did not go to the Holy Land of His own accord. Therefore, we have an unusual case in which a Person fulfills a prophecy by the decree of His enemies.

Has something like this ever happened before? How many people calling themselves *the Lord* and *the Glory of God* have been exiled to the Holy Land? A closely accurate probability for such an event by chance alone is one in millions. To be on the safe side, let us accept a probability of one in ten thousand 1/10,000

- 4. That a Man who calls Himself the Glory of God comes from the East to Israel, and that the divine call will be raised from “a fortified city”? How many throughout history have called themselves *the Glory of God*? And how many with such a title have been exiled from the East to a fortified city? Again, as far as we know, such an event has never happened before. An accurate probability for this prophecy would be one in millions. Again, to be safe, let us accept a probability of one in a thousand 1/1,000
- 5. That after the arrival of a person in a town, the climate of that town begins to improve? Although such a change is quite rare, to be safe let us accept a probability of one in a hundred 1/100
- 6. That a man named the *Glory of God* comes to the Holy Land from *the east* of the Holy Land? Since there are four basic directions, let us accept for this prophecy a probability of one in four 1/4
- 7. That the Man who calls Himself the Redeemer of the world, or the Lord of the Vineyard, comes to Mt. Carmel (meaning *the Vineyard of the Lord*)? How many with such a claim have actually walked on Mt. Carmel? For this, let us accept a probability of one in two 1/2

(Since Mt. Carmel is close to 'Akká, it is very likely that a person who lives in 'Akká visits Mt. Carmel.)

8. That the Man who comes to the Holy Land (under the control of thousands of His enemies) is allowed to live permanently in that blessed Land and to establish the center of His spiritual kingdom on the slopes of Mt. Carmel? Of those who have lived in the Holy Land, how many have been able, or even tried, to establish a kingdom on Mt. Carmel? Again such an event has perhaps never happened before. For this, let us accept a probability of one in a thousand 1/1,000
9. That the Man who is exiled to the Holy Land succeeds in attracting followers from all nations of the earth (over 200 countries and territories), to visit His resting-place? How many people throughout history have gained such an honor? Let us say one in ten thousand 1/10,000
10. That the coming of the Man exiled to the Holy Land coincides with the return of the Jews to that blessed Land? For this let us accept the probability of one in twenty 1/20
11. That the Man who comes to the Holy Land calls Himself a King, and brings a pattern for global unity and world federation? (Also that He does this at a time when nationalism is still the chief goal of nations.) For this let us accept a probability of one in fifty 1/50
12. That the Man who comes to the Holy Land introduces world peace as one of His main goals, and *offers a plan for its realization*? We should add that the title *Prince of Peace* applies to Him not only symbolically, but literally as well, for His lineage can be traced to princes or rulers. Since world federation and world peace are closely linked, for this let us accept a probability of one in ten 1/10

- 13. That the name of the Man who calls Himself the Redeemer of the world is the same in all languages? Also that He declares the need for a universal auxiliary language, so that all the peoples of the world will praise the Lord in one “pure language” and “serve Him with one consent”? For this let us accept a probability of one in ten 1/10
- 14. That a Man called the Glory of God has a Herald. For this, let us accept a probability of one in a thousand. 1/1,000
- 15. That the Herald declares that His fondest desire is to sacrifice Himself for the One who comes after Him and thus becomes the Lamb of God. For this, let us accept again a probability of one in a thousand 1/1,000

The total probability figure for the preceding prophecies is:

$$\begin{aligned} &1/3,000 \times 1/1,000 \times 1/10,000 \times 1/1,000 \times 1/100 \\ &\times 1/4 \times 1/2 \times 1/1,000 \times 1/10,000 \times 1/20 \times 1/50 \\ &\times 1/10 \times 1/10 \times 1/1,000 \times 1/1,000 = 1/ \\ &24,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 = 1/24 \times 10^{33}. \end{aligned}$$

What is the chance that since ancient times anyone could have fulfilled these prophecies by chance? If we assume that number to be one trillion, then our total probability figure for the prophecies considered would be:

The Probability Figure for the Second Advent:

$$10^{33} \div 1,000,000,000,000 = 10^{21}$$

The prophecies listed and the probability figures cited in this book are based on only *some* of the prophecies of the Second Advent, which are examined in more detail in *Lord of Lords* and *King of Kings*. The probability figure for all prophecies

presented in those volumes and in *I Shall Come Again* is: 4×10^{80} .

To remain objective and impartial, let us compare the probability figures for both adverts. To visualize the meaning of the figure 10^{21} , note once again the following statement quoted earlier from professors Stoner and Newman, the two eminent Christian scholars, concerning the probability figure (10^{17}) for the first advert:

Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.²¹

The Probability Figure for the First Advert:

$$10^{17}$$

The Probability Figure for the Second Advert:

$$10^{21}$$

What is the difference between 10^{21} and 10^{17} ? The difference is not 10,000 but 10,000 **times**! If we use the analogy of spreading coins on the state of Texas to represent the probability figure for the **first** Advent, we must cover the state to a depth of two feet. In this case, we have only one chance of selecting a specific coin. But in relation to prophecies of the **Second** Advent, we must spread coins with the same depth in an area **10,000 times** larger than the state of Texas and still be able to choose one designated coin on our first trial! The figure 10^{21} is only a small fraction of the total probability for the Second advent. The total figure presented for biblical prophecies in *Lord of Lords* is 4×10^{80} ! The human mind can never comprehend the immensity of that number: It equals the estimated number of atoms in the known universe. What more evidence could you expect?

I bear witness, O friends! that the favor is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established. Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal.²²

Bahá'u'lláh

Choosing Your Everlasting Destiny

These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Christ (John 5:39-40 NIV)

God promised that He would send **a prophet like Moses** to the people of Israel. “And the Lord said to me: ‘...I will raise up for them a Prophet like you’” (Deut. 18:17-18 NKJ). St. Paul acknowledges that Jesus Christ was that Prophet (Acts 3:22). Our Lord reminded the Jews that His advent had been predicted, yet they did not believe their own Scriptures:

For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for He wrote about Me.

Christ (John 5:46 NKJ)

Note how in the previous passage our Lord links ***the lack of faith in prophecies*** with ***the lack of faith in the One who***

spoke them. People do not change from age to age. When “the end of an age”—that is now—arrives people do not *really* believe in the Scriptures of their own faith. They pick and choose and alter the meanings to protect their present position. *Change from one religion to another is the most difficult challenge, the most awesome test a human being can face.* To some people it feels as difficult as changing their parents. True faith in the Scripture of our own faith requires that we face the challenge and pass the test.

Did the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh fulfill all the prophecies of the Second Advent? Scholars believe that the Bible has over 1,800 prophecies about the Second Advent. The Báb and Bahá’u’lláh have fulfilled *every one of them*. If this claim seems incredible to you, all you need to do is *put it to the test*. As a rule, when I invite Christians to examine the prophecies, seldom do I find anyone who says:

We have been waiting and praying for this News for nearly 2,000 years. I can’t wait to read the evidence. If it is true, I will accept it; if it is false, I have lost nothing. By reading, I have obeyed my Lord who has asked me to watch for Him and look for Him. I am not going to limit my knowledge of the Bible to what theologians in my own faith have told me. That is what the Jews did. I cannot and will not ignore this most critical lesson of history: listening to theologians will not protect a believer from denying his Lord. What evidence do I have to make me believe that I am wiser than the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus and ever since? What makes me believe that I am not in the same trap that they were in. *All traps are invisible*. Does not the Bible teach us that, “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes” (Prov. 16:2)? Am I an exception?

Seldom if ever those who hear the news of the Advent of Bahá’u’lláh show the required spirit of humility. Note *the sense of urgency* in the following commands of Jesus, *the Anointed One of God*, and Bahá’u’lláh, *the Glory of God*:

Be ready...to let him in ***the moment he arrives and knocks.***

Christ (Luke 12:35-36 NEB)

He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed. ***Beware lest thou hesitate or halt.***²³

Bahá'u'lláh

He, truly, is to be obeyed in whatsoever He commandeth, and decreeth, and revealeth, and is to be loved in everything He, through His sovereignty, enjoineth, and, through His power, ordaineth. ***Whoso will hesitate for less than the twinkling of an eye, hath, verily, denied Thy [God's] right, and repudiated all that Thou hast revealed in Thy Books, and in Thy Scriptures,*** and sent down with Thy chosen Ones, and Thy Prophets, and Thy Messengers...²⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

When you hear about Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, and see His glorious Word—the Word of God—you have heard the heavenly “knocking.” According to the command of our Lord, ***you must not wait or waste even a minute to verify if Bahá'u'lláh is the Lord who is knocking and calling you to His glorious Kingdom.*** If you hesitate a moment, you have not obeyed the Lord. The moment you hear His knocking on your heart, you must begin knocking on His door:

...seek, and ye shall find; ***knock, and it shall be opened unto you.***

Christ (Matt. 7:7)

9

Fruits of God's Garden

Part I

A Basketful of Virtues

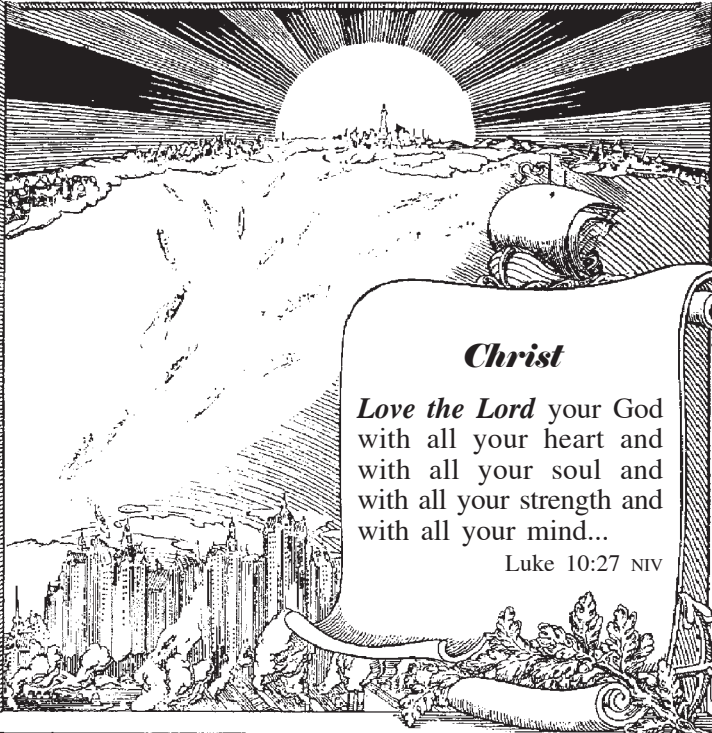
Let us pick a small basket of virtues from the Scriptures of each of the two great Messengers to see if they come from the same garden.

I

Love of God

The world passeth away, and that which is everlasting is
the love of God.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and
with all your soul and
with all your strength and
with all your mind...

Luke 10:27 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

The most beloved of people before God are...
those who have surpassed others in their love for
God, exalted be His glory.¹

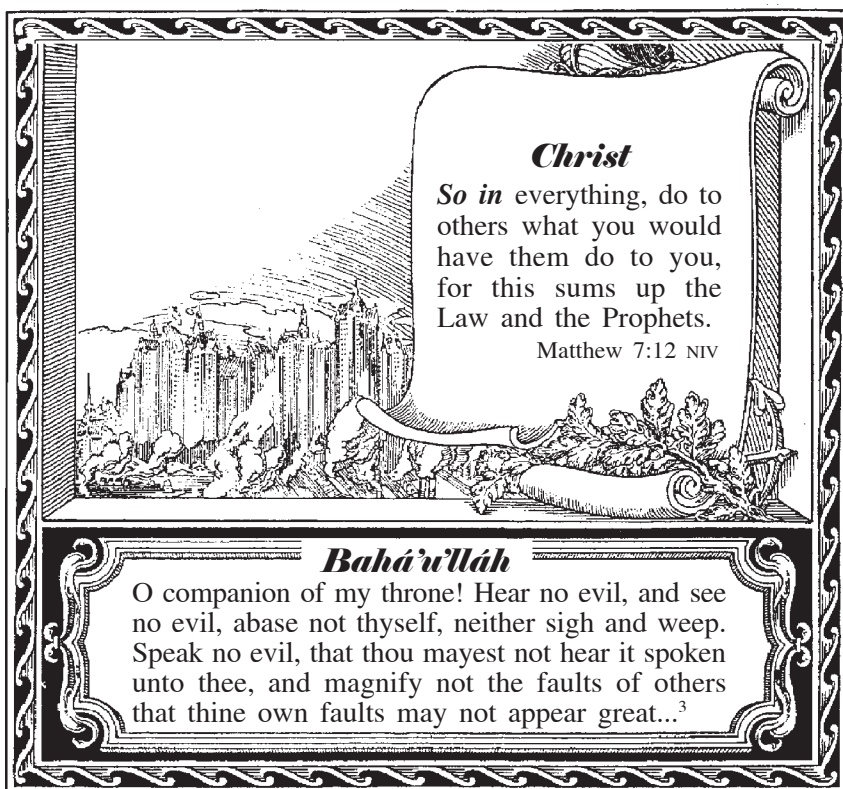
Set your mind upon His Kingdom, and all the rest will come to you as well. Luke 12:31 NEB

Great is the blessedness awaiting thee, inasmuch as thou hast adorned thine heart with the ornament of the love of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. He that hath attained this station in this day, all good shall be his.²

Bahá'u'lláh

2

The Golden Rule



Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Purity of Heart, the Gateway to Heaven

We verily behold your actions. If We perceive from them the sweet smelling savor of purity and holiness, We will most certainly bless you.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Let the little children come to me...for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these...anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Luke 18:16-17 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

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.⁵

Deeds, Not Mere Words

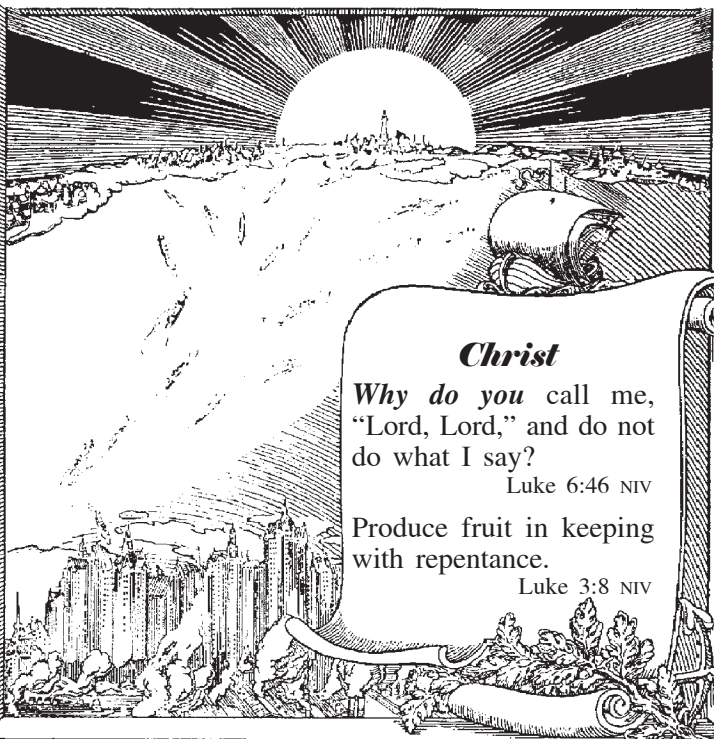
...whoever lives by the truth comes into the light...

John 3:21 NIV

O CHILDREN OF ADAM!

Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the
heaven of celestial glory.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*Why do you call me,
"Lord, Lord," and do not
do what I say?*

Luke 6:46 NIV

*Produce fruit in keeping
with repentance.*

Luke 3:8 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*O Son of Dust!...Of all men the most negligent
is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance
himself over his brother...Let deeds, not words,
be your adorning.⁶*

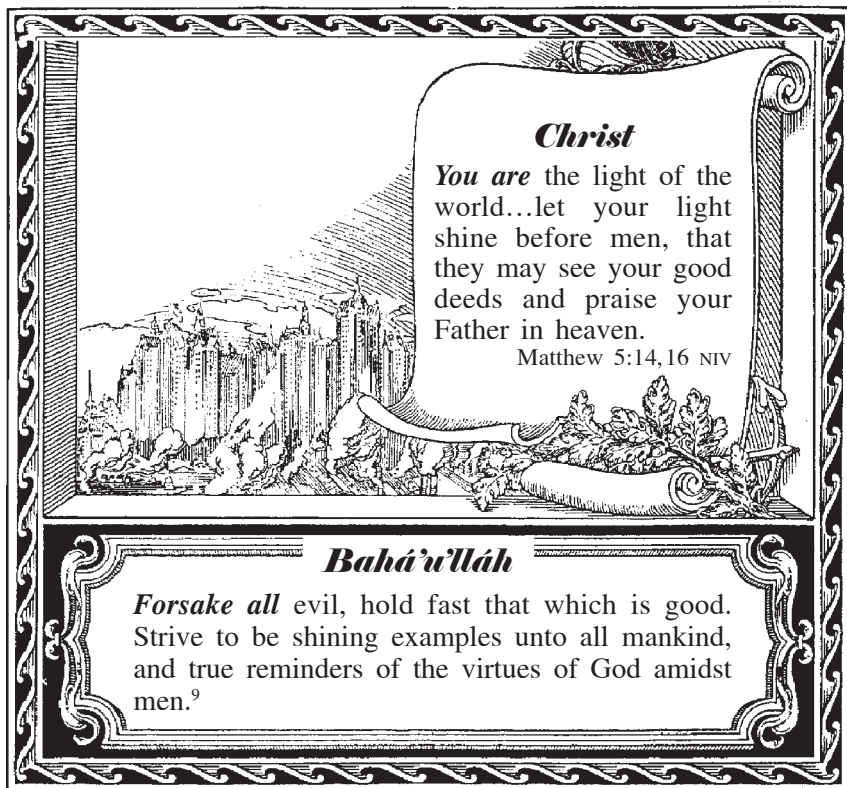
Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity.⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Every one must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for words are the property of all alike, whereas such deeds as these belong only to Our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

5

Let Your Light Shine



Beware, O people of Bahá, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments. Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth. Happy is the man that heedeth My counsel, and keepeth the precepts prescribed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind.¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Every one must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for words are the property of all alike, whereas such deeds as these belong only to Our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds.¹²

Bahá'u'lláh

The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds...¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.

Christ (Matt. 19:17)

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 2:17

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Christ (John 14:15)

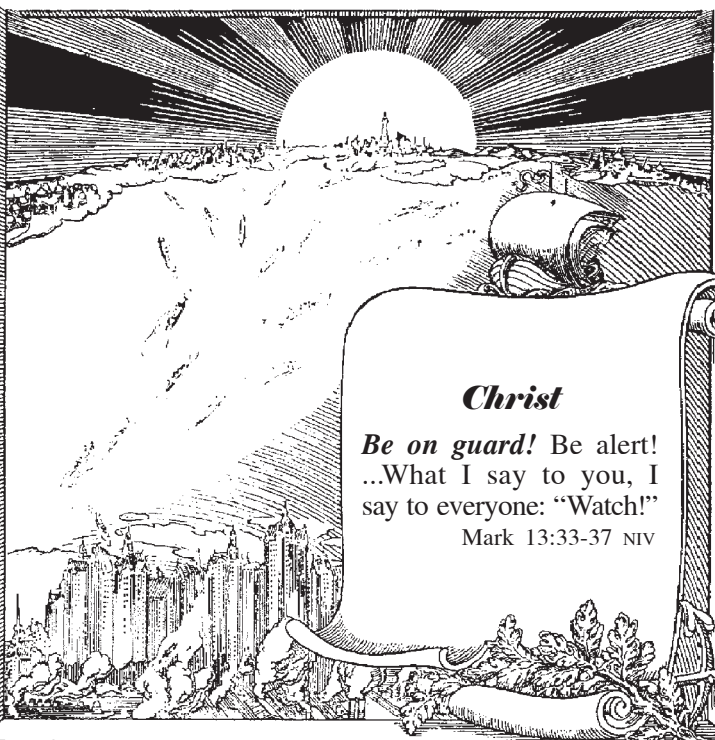
For you I desire spiritual distinction...You must become distinguished for loving humanity...for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace.¹⁴

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Independent Search for Truth

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.

Christ (Matt. 7:7 NIV)



Christ

Be on guard! Be alert!
...What I say to you, I
say to everyone: "Watch!"

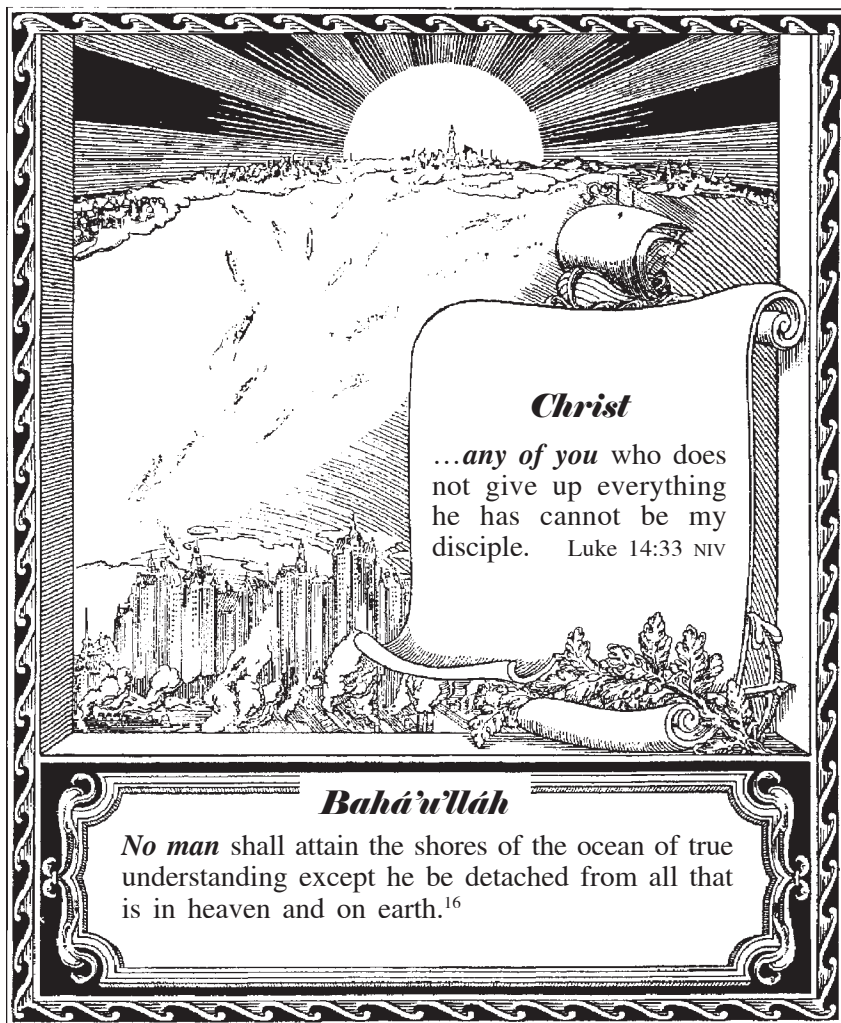
Mark 13:33-37 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

The essence of all that We have revealed for thee
is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle
fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of one-
ness His glorious handiwork, and look into all
things with a searching eye.¹⁵

Both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh emphasize the need for spiritual “detachment.” The word “detachment” is not found in Jesus’ teachings, only the idea. What is spiritual detachment? It is the ability to separate one’s self from everything except God. It is seeing as God sees, it is relying on nothing but God; it is separating one’s self from one’s ego, from one’s knowledge and beliefs, from one’s dependence on people, and from one’s love for material possessions.

Spiritual Detachment



If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must leave self behind.

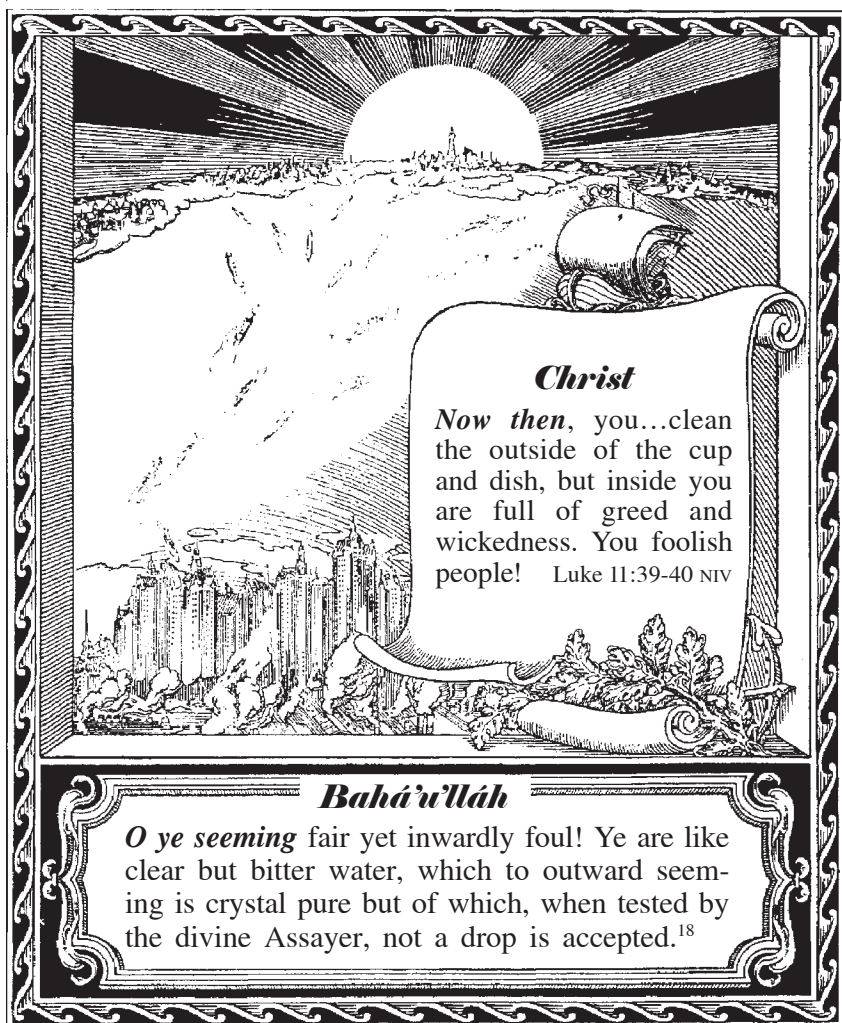
Luke 9:23-24 NEB

Sanctify your souls, O ye peoples of the world, that haply ye may attain that station which God hath destined for you...¹⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

8

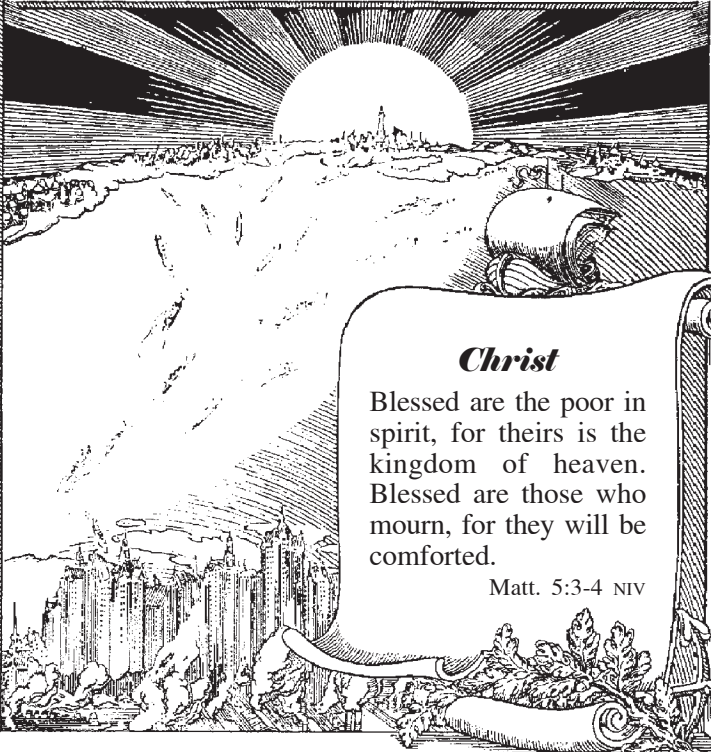
Hypocrisy



Gems of Virtues

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they
will be shown mercy.

Christ (Matt. 5:5-7 NIV)



Christ

Blessed are the poor in
spirit, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who
mourn, for they will be
comforted.

Matt. 5:3-4 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

Let each morn be better than its eve and each
morrow richer than its yesterday. Man's merit lieth
in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of
wealth and riches.¹⁹

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Christ (Matt. 5:8-10 NIV)

O ye beloved of the Lord!...Set your reliance on the army of justice, put on the armor of wisdom, let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favored of God.

...Endeavor to the utmost of thy powers to establish the word of truth with eloquence and wisdom and to dispel falsehood from the face of the earth.²⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

Loving one's enemy is the ultimate test of one's spiritual maturity. Jesus asked Christians to rise and reach this glorious state of perfection:

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Christ (Matt. 5:44-48 NIV)

Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to any one, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.²¹

Bahá'u'lláh

If ye become aware of a sin committed by another, conceal it, that God may conceal your own sin.²²

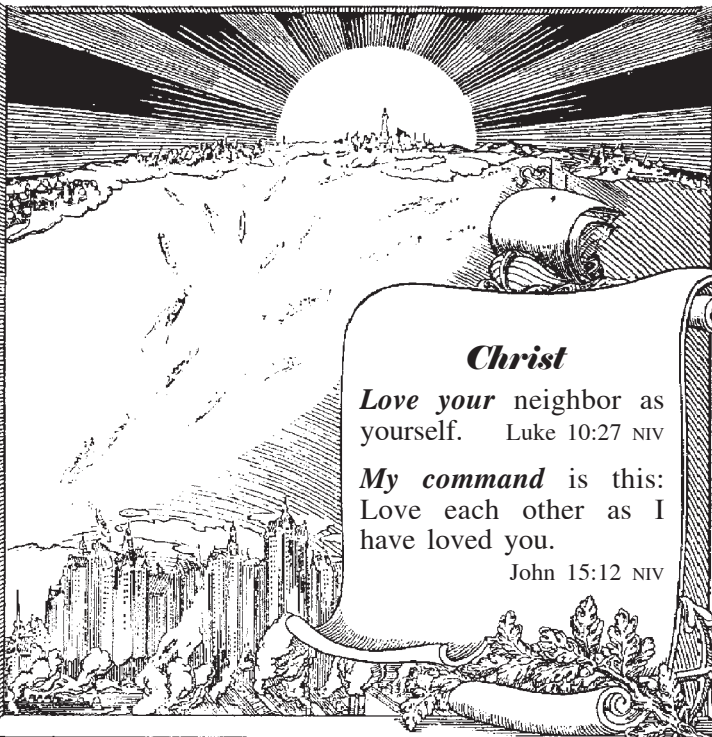
Bahá'u'lláh

...forgive the sinful, and never despair his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be.²³ Bahá'u'lláh

We Were Created to Love One Another

O ye beloved of the Lord!...By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancor.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Love your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27 NIV

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:12 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind.²⁴

This quotation offers the essence of everlasting virtues found in both biblical and Bahá'í Scriptures:

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

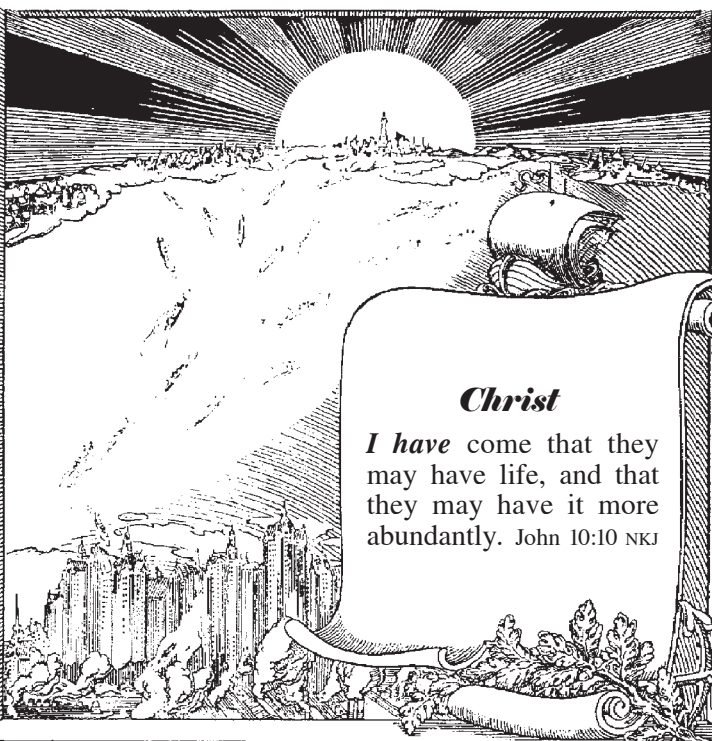
Show forbearance and benevolence and love to one another. Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindliness and good-will. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

II

That We May Attain Life and Glory

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory,
in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems
that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost
selves.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*I have come that they
may have life, and that
they may have it more
abundantly. John 10:10 NKJ*

Bahá'u'lláh

*Verily, He hath consented to be sorely abased
that ye may attain unto glory...²⁷*

My sole purpose in revealing to thee these words is to sanctify thee from the transitory things of the earth, and aid thee to enter the realm of everlasting glory, that thou mayest, by the leave of God, be of them that abide and rule therein.²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindliness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.²⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

Though the purpose of Him Who is the Eternal Truth hath been to confer everlasting life upon all men, and ensure their security and peace, yet witness how they have arisen to shed the blood of His loved ones, and have pronounced on Him the sentence of death.³⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.³¹ Bahá'u'lláh

10

Fruits of God's Garden

Part II

Believing and Denying

The theme of believers and deniers stands out in the teachings of both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh. The selections offered in this chapter show:

- The qualities that allow us to recognize the Redeemer of the Age.
- The consequences of believing or denying the Redeemer of the Age.
- The way we should teach the Word of God to others.
- Our accountability before God if we deny the Redeemer of our Age.

1

The Thirsty Are Invited

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.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Rev. 22:17 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

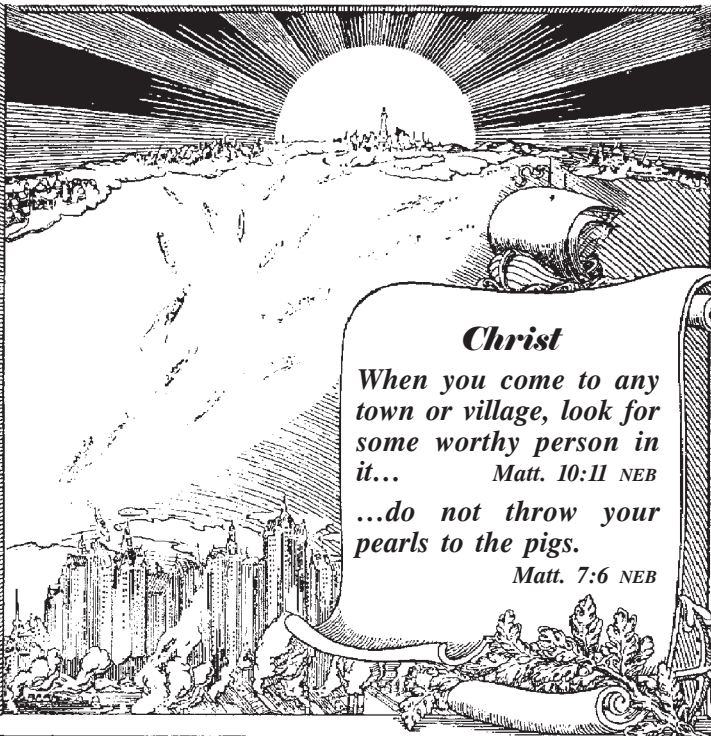
The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men...Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.¹

Teach Only the Receptive

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...

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

When you come to any town or village, look for some worthy person in it...

Matt. 10:11 NEB

...do not throw your pearls to the pigs.

Matt. 7:6 NEB

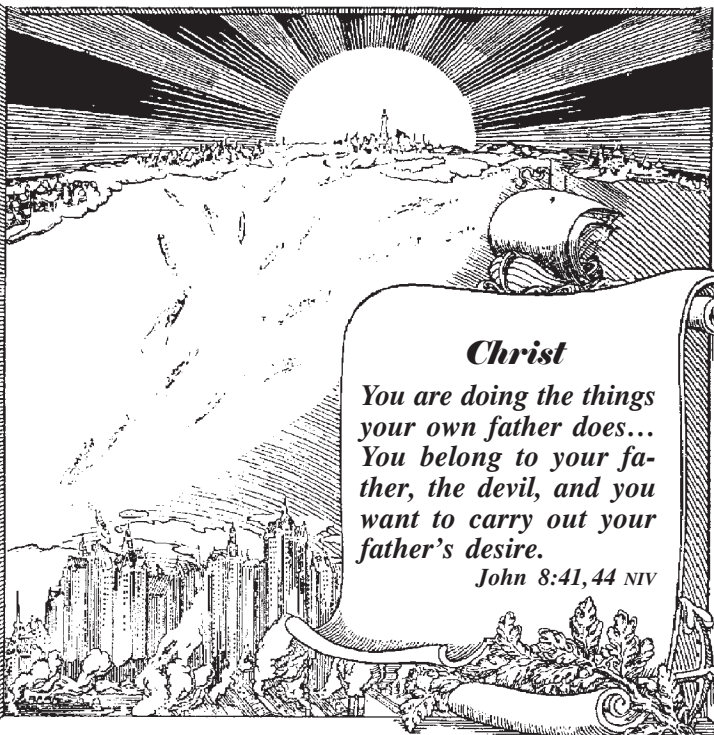
Bahá'u'lláh

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.²

Do Not Imitate Your Fathers

Consider how men for generations have been blindly imitating their fathers, and have been trained according to such ways and manners as have been laid down by the dictates of their Faith.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

*You are doing the things
your own father does...
You belong to your fa-
ther, the devil, and you
want to carry out your
father's desire.*

John 8:41, 44 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

*O heedless people! Ye repeat what your fathers,
in a bygone age, have said. Whatever fruits they
have gathered from the tree of their faithlessness,
the same shall ye gather also.³*

Ere long shall ye be gathered unto your fathers, and with them shall ye dwell in hellish fire. An ill abode! the abode of the people of tyranny.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Overcome Your Pride

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

Obadiah 1:4



Christ

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Luke 14:11 NIV

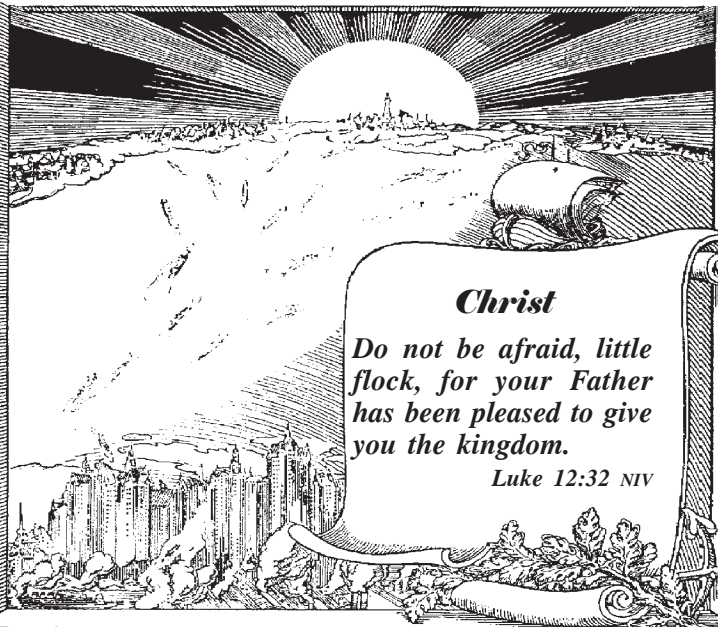
Bahá'u'lláh

Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.⁵

Overcome Your Fears

The thing that must come hath come suddenly; behold how they flee from it!

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened [receive eternal life]?⁶

To inspire courage, Bahá'u'lláh sometimes quotes this verse:

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come... Isaiah 35:4

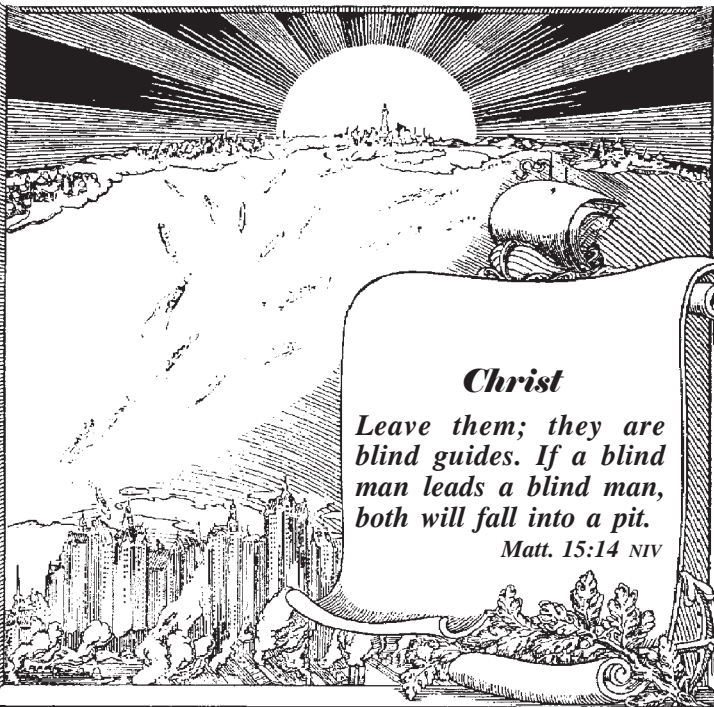
Do Not Be Blind and Deaf

The True One is come evident as the shining sun; O pity that He should have come into the city of the blind!

Bahá'u'lláh

Their eyes are drunken; they are indeed a blind people.

Bahá'u'lláh



Christ

Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

Matt. 15:14 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh

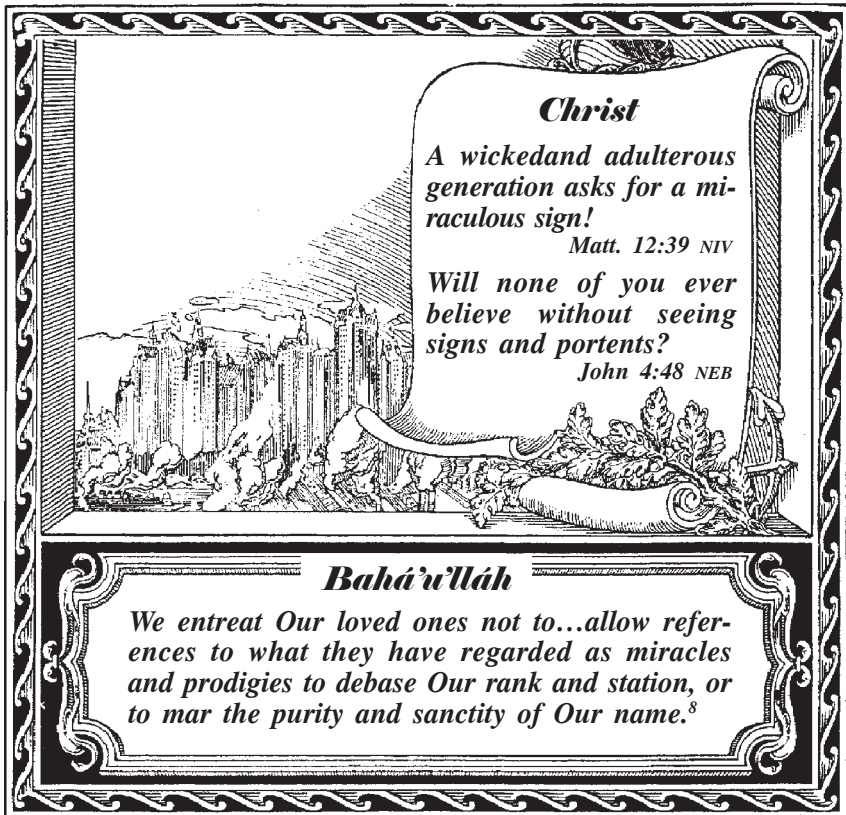
Say: So great is the glory of the Cause of God that even the blind can perceive it, how much more they whose sight is sharp, whose vision is pure.⁷

For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

Christ (Matt. 13:15 NIV)

7

Do Not Expect Miracles

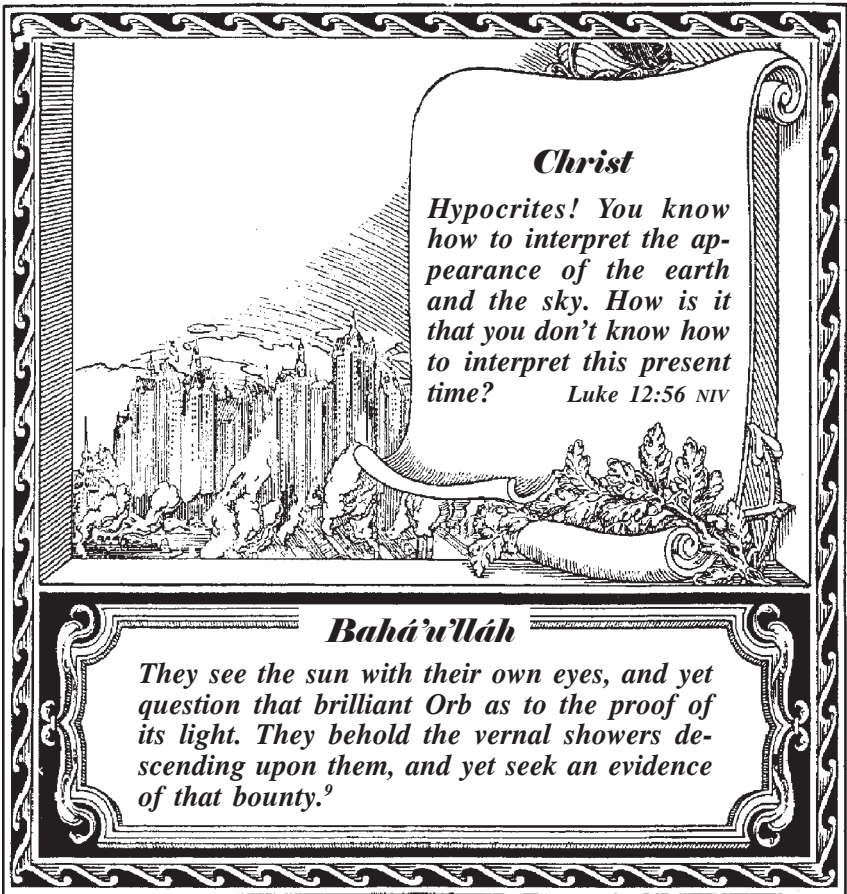


Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life...

Christ (John 6:27 NIV)

Do Not Use Double Standards

Both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh rebuked, in the strongest language, those who come to the Vineyard of heavenly fruits with closed or fearful hearts and minds, who claim to be true believers yet are far away from the truth, who use “common sense” for judging natural events and objects, but refuse to use that same sense to judge the spiritual:



When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, "It's going to rain," and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, "It's going to be hot," and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? Christ (Luke 12:54-56 NIV)

Gracious God! how strange the way of this people!...They cleave to the obscure intricacies of knowledge, when He, Who is the Object of all knowledge, shineth as the sun.¹⁰
Bahá'u'lláh

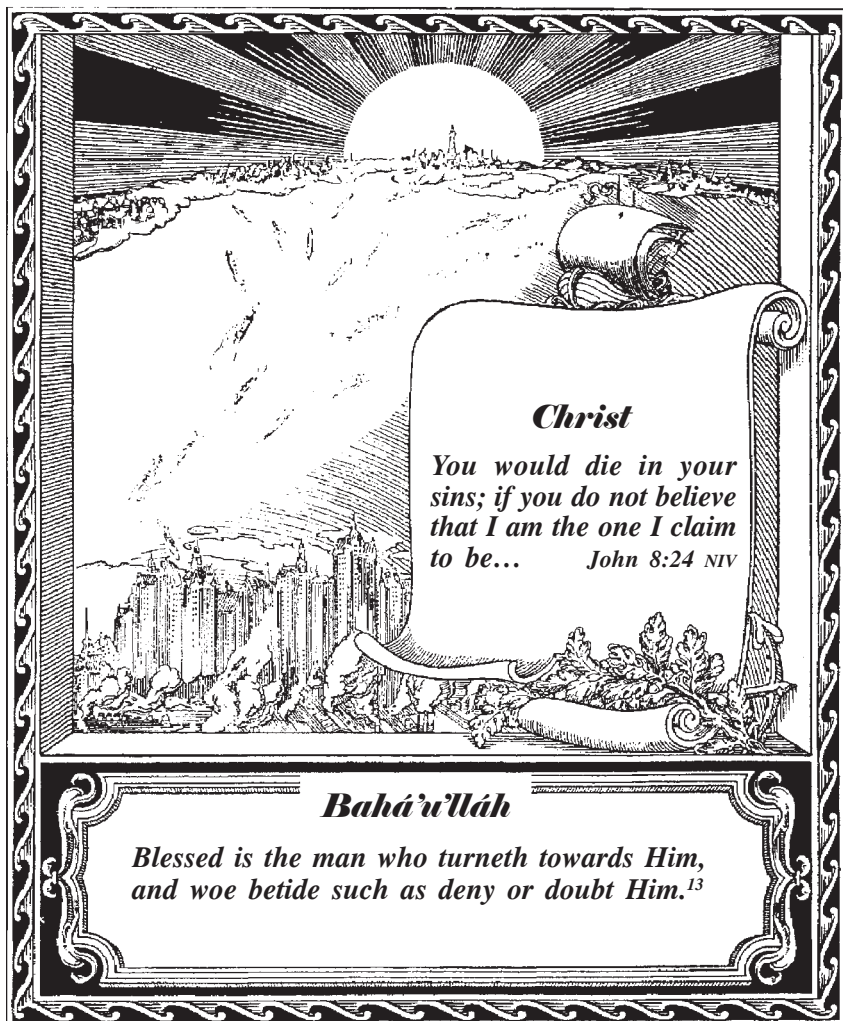
The proof of the sun is the light thereof, which shineth and envelopeth all things. The evidence of the shower is the bounty thereof, which reneweth and investeth the world with the mantle of life. Yea, the blind can perceive naught from the sun except its heat, and the arid soil hath no share of the showers of mercy.¹¹
Bahá'u'lláh

Though such men [the deniers] have been, night and day, remembering the one true God, and have been devoutly engaged in the exercise of their devotions, yet they failed in the end to recognize, and partake of the grace of, the Day Springs of the signs of God...

Consider the Dispensation of Jesus Christ. Behold, how all the learned men of that generation, though eagerly anticipating the coming of the Promised One, have nevertheless denied Him. Both Annas, the most learned among the divines [religious leaders] of His day, and Caiaphas, the high priest, denounced Him and pronounced the sentence of His death.¹²
Bahá'u'lláh

Severe Punishment for Deniers

Both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh condemn those who refuse to investigate and acknowledge their divine station. Christ also promised severe punishment for those who deny Him at His Second Advent:



They that have disbelieved in God and rebelled against His sovereignty are the helpless victims of their corrupt inclinations and desires. These shall return to their abode in the fire of hell: wretched is the abode of the deniers!¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus offered this warning to those who will deny Him on His Second Advent:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory...He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world..." Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

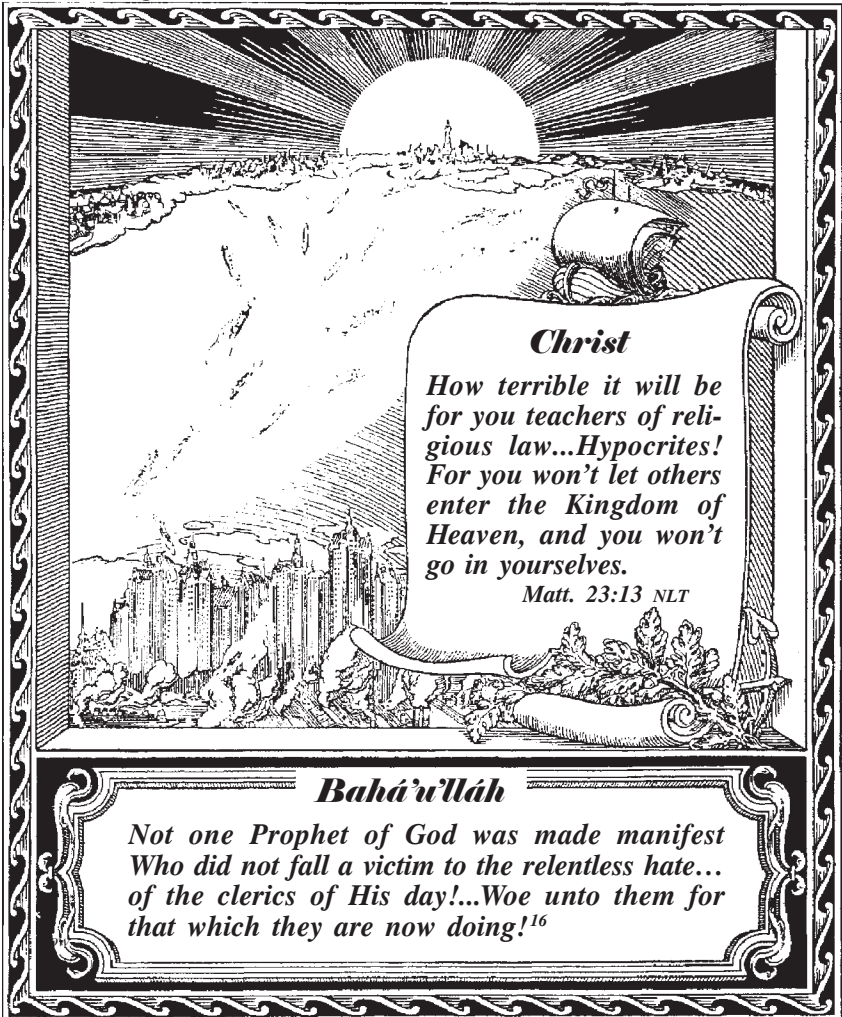
Christ (Matt. 25:31-41 NIV)

Know ye that the world and its vanities and its embellishments shall pass away. Nothing will endure except God's Kingdom...The days of your life shall roll away, and all the things with which ye are occupied and of which ye boast yourselves shall perish, and ye shall, most certainly, be summoned by a company of His angels to appear at the spot where the limbs of the entire creation shall be made to tremble, and the flesh of every oppressor to creep. Ye shall be asked of the things your hands have wrought in this, your vain life, and shall be repaid for your doings. This is the day that shall inevitably come upon you, the hour that none can put back. To this the Tongue of Him that speaketh the truth and is the Knower of all things hath testified.¹⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

The Most Severe Punishment for Religious Leaders Who Deny Their Promised Redeemer

Both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh rebuke the religious leaders for ignoring their awesome responsibility to lead their followers to the light of truth:



Consider also these words of censure from Jesus addressed to the religious leaders of His time:

Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear extra long tassels on their robes. And how they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the most prominent seats in the synagogue! They enjoy the attention they get on the streets, and they enjoy being called “Rabbi”...

Christ (Matt. 23:5-7 NLT)

Woe to you, blind guide!

Christ (Matt. 23:16 NIV)

Woe to you, teachers of the law [of Moses] and Pharisees, you hypocrites!...on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, “If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets... Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

Christ (Matt. 23:27-34 NIV)

It is clear and evident that whenever the Manifestations of Holiness [God’s Messengers] were revealed, the divines [religious leaders] 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.¹⁷

Bahá’u’lláh

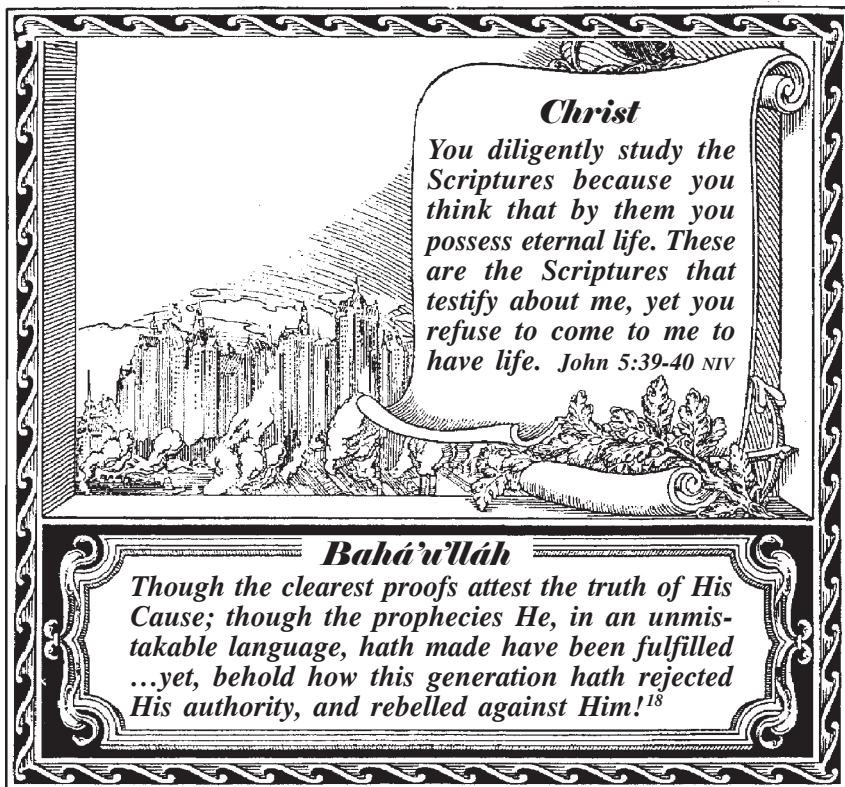
Why is God’s judgment on religious leaders so severe? For this reason:

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Christ (Luke 12:48 NIV)

We should remember that all judgment belongs to God. We should never look down, however slightly, on anyone, whether he occupies the lowest or the highest position of power. We should treat with respect all religious teachers and leaders, whatever their religion, whether they are mullas, mujtahids, bishops, elders, pastors, or priests. Love means absolute respect for the entire creation. We all belong to God and are His honored guests. Disrespect for anyone means disrespect for the Host.

II

Denial Despite Clear Evidence



This Cause is too evident to be obscured, and too conspicuous to be concealed. It shineth as the sun in its meridian glory. None can deny it unless he be a hater and a doubter.¹⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

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!²⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

11

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

Christ (Matt. 7:20)

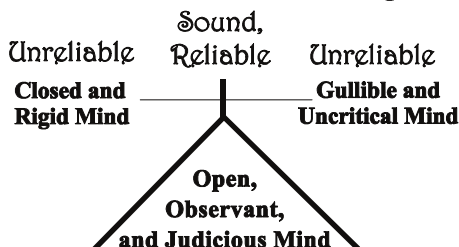
Part III

A Scientific Paradigm or Pattern for Decision Making

What virtues or values should guide decision making? This chapter examines Jesus' statement, "By their fruits ye shall know them" in the light of reason and modern scientific methods. The principles expressed in this model or paradigm should guide both spiritual and secular decisions.

Every decision depends on the way the mind works, on the strategies and processes it uses to come to a conclusion. This brief chart presents the three most significant ways in which the mind can work:

A Paradigm or Pattern for Decision Making



Unsound, Unreliable
Misleading

**Closed and
Rigid Mind**

Everyone is a deceiver.
Ignore every invitation
to search for truth.

Gullible Mind

There is no right or
wrong, no way to know
the truth. Choose, believe,
and do whatever you like,
whatever feels right.

Sound, Reliable, Leading
to True Knowledge

**Open and
Observant Mind**

Have courage, "watch,"
pay attention, seek,
investigate, taste the fruit.

Judicious Mind

Beware of false prophets.
Do not be gullible. Use
reasonable standards
to judge. Use only
testable and provable
evidence: fruits.

Every field of knowledge, every system of beliefs must be grounded, must function within the realm of reason and understanding, otherwise it loses touch with reality. If religion loses its ground, it turns into superstition and fanaticism. What is the firmest and most reliable ground? It is expressed in these two brief verses:

Prove all things (I Thess. 5:21).

By their fruits you will know them (Matt. 7:20).

There is little if any difference between religion and science. How do we verify an idea or principle in science? By evidence,

by research, by testing or examining the “fruits.” This method is applied to all fields of science. How do we know a medicine works? By its “fruits” or consequences. How do we know a system of farming is efficient? By studying its “fruits.” How do we know healthy foods are better than junk foods? By their consequences. The principle of testing by “fruits” is among the best established laws of science. It is so reasonable that no one questions it. It is as established as the laws of mathematics. Why, then, should we make an exception in religion? ***The only reason is being unreasonable!***

All the standards we are asked not to use have this feature in common: ***they are untestable and unprovable, and therefore unreliable as evidence.*** Take miracles. Would you join a cult because its members would take an oath and testify in a court that their leader has performed miracles? Take “prophesying” or foretelling the future. Why would anyone be able to foretell the future better than you do, even if he uses the words of the Bible? When Jesus declares that He shall come on the clouds and every eye shall see Him, has anyone any advantage over anyone else in predicting that this will literally happen? No human being is better gifted than any other to make a prediction based on a literal meaning of this prophecy. Almost every Jew made this prediction based on clear prophecies of their Scripture: “The Messiah will come as a powerful king to save us from bondage.” And every Jew who made that prediction was wrong.

Ponder this supremely enlightening and yet incredible admission from two distinguished theologians of this age. Dr. James Kennedy, a highly respected and recognized Christian leader, ranks Dr. Charles Hodge among the greatest theologians Christianity has offered to the world. When Dr. Kennedy was asked, “What do you believe are some of the major mistakes we [Christians] tend to make in our study of prophecy?” He said:

The great Princeton theologian of the last century, Dr. Charles Hodge, said that ***though the Old Testament is***

filled with some 333 prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ; in spite of that...they crucified Christ because of a misunderstanding about what the Messiah was really coming to do. And we should because of that [failure] be somewhat humbled and modest in our attempts to interpret prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ. It is quite possible that all of us [Christian leaders] are wrong as well. [Emphasis added.]¹

Read Dr. Kennedy's statement repeatedly until its truth touches your heart and soul. We have an absolutely reasonable but rare admission from two distinguished and highly respected theologians with this most enlightening message: ***all Christian leaders can be wrong in their interpretation of prophecies.*** That is how unreliable human interpretation of prophecies can be. If this is true, ***why, then, would anyone build his or her everlasting destiny on such shifting sand?*** Examine Dr. Kennedy's statement in the light of the instructions our Lord gave us:

- Depend on the fruits
- Do not prophesy in my name
- Obey my command
- If you fail to obey, you have built your house on sand

In spite of this admission by two distinguished scholars, why do so many Christians continue to build their everlasting house on sand? Why do they continue to make these absolutely false assumptions:

1. The sure way to know the Lord is through prophecy.
2. We are capable of deciphering the language of "metaphoric miracles" used abundantly in prophecies. We know which prophecies are literal, and which prophecies are symbolic.

Historical and scientific studies indicate that human beings are unable to predict the future. This is what fortune telling

pretends to do. Would you place your destiny in the hands of a fortune teller, even if he or she uses the Bible? Theologians are no better in telling the future than fortune tellers. ***The gift of knowing the future is only God's.***

Take the question of the “driving out the demons.” Is this testable or provable? Is this not a prescientific belief that mentally ill patients were possessed by the devil, and punished and sometimes even killed for being “possessed”? As we can see, ***our Lord hits at the root of all superstitions, unscientific, untestable, unprovable, and unreliable means of knowing the truth.*** And then He tells us exactly what we must do: To follow not only what the scientific method teaches us but also what our own “common sense” tells us, provided that “common sense” is not contaminated with selfish desires or spiritual weaknesses, such as conformity, fear, pride, complacency, apathy, and lack of faith and sincerity. To clarify His point, our Lord used an example that is totally based on common sense: the way of knowing a tree is by testing its fruits.

Another untestable and unprovable claim that people make to support their beliefs is to say that the Holy Spirit tells them that they are right! Recently I heard of a Christian who would beat his non-Christian wife. When she would ask, “Why are you doing this to me?” He would respond, “Because the Holy Spirit tells me!” People have used both the Holy Spirit and the devil to justify their selfish desires. It is easy to find thousands of people with conflicting views and beliefs who would all claim, and be convinced, that they are under the supervision of the Holy Spirit! I have met and continue to meet them wherever I go.

Some Christians claim that they find guidance by “speaking in tongues.” Note this statement from a Christian publication:

A joint statement by the Fountain Trust and the Church of England Evangelical Council admitted: “We are also aware that a similar phenomenon [speaking in tongues]

can occur under occult/demonic influence.”...in Haiti “speaking in tongues” is characteristic of both Pentecostal and Voodoo religions.²

There are a few clever authors who attract many gullible people by claiming that their theological views came to them in visions. How can anyone be sure that the visions are not the author’s personal views? Recently a number of American authors have gained sizable royalties by claiming that their books were dictated to them in dreams and visions, or other similar mystical ways.

Sometimes even “good” people justify lying. They are so sure they are right that they ask themselves, “How can I convince people?” The answer comes quickly, “Call your views visions.” Religious wars have been waged by people who were regarded as faithful disciples of their Lord by the masses of people. This is the reason we are told, “Beware of false prophets.” People can look good on the outside, but be deceivers inside. ***Only provable evidence can separate the divine from the deceptive. This is why nothing short of “fruits” can suffice.***

Untestable and unprovable claims and counterclaims denigrate the station of religion. They hit at the root of the Tree of Life. They bring it down from the supreme station of “fruits” and evidence to the level of “Make up your pie of beliefs the way you like. Include in the recipe anything your heart commands you. Put a respectable label, such as ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Vision,’ on your beliefs and ‘Devil,’ ‘Satan,’ or ‘Antichrist’ on the beliefs of your opponents. As long as your claims are untestable and unprovable, you are safe.”

When our Creator tells us, “Ye ***shall*** know,” we must trust His words and not substitute “fruits” with our own untestable and unauthorized standards, such as prophesying. If we doubt God’s clear instruction, it can be due only to a lack of faith in the One who gave us the standards.

Some people say to me, “This is **your** interpretation.” Yes, the details, the clarifications offered in this book are all mine. But **the fundamental principles**, such as the need to rely on the Word of God as the ultimate proof of knowing Him and the use of “metaphoric miracles” as a means of testing the heart of believers—all these basics come from Bahá’u’lláh, who claims to be the Lord. The underlying message presented here is not one more view of a theologian, but the decoding or unsealing of prophecies by the Lord, by Bahá’u’lláh, by the One who uttered the prophecies. My position of authority is “absolute nothingness.”

This book is only a clarification of biblical prophecies **in the light of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings**. I can be wrong in details, but the fundamentals stand as solidly as rock; they come not from a fallible author but from the One who proves Himself, **by sheer evidence**, to be the Lord.

Following God’s Standard is the Only Way to Our Lord

At any given moment there are millions of people who look good, almost perfect, on the outside, and yet their inner world contradicts their outer. We have repeatedly seen evangelists who teach the Word of God to millions and receive the highest reverence until someone gives us a glimpse of their inner world. This is why our Lord said that the deceivers come in “sheep’s clothing.” Appearances can be deceptive. We cannot assume that anyone who wears an aura of holiness (II Tim. 3:5) will not lie, will not make up visions, will not claim miraculous powers, will not pretend to have true knowledge of prophecies. These are all untestable and unprovable claims. How can we test a vision? There is absolutely no way to do this. How can we trust a miracle? It took a Houdini, a genius, to expose some but not all deceivers.

Jesus never linked “good fruits” to deception. Never can a deceiver, an evil person, bring good fruits that would resemble even remotely those produced by God. As Jesus told us, a bad tree cannot bring good fruits. His fruits will expose him. A false prophet or a false Christ has at least two problems:

1. All the fruits of God are testable. A deceiver cannot withstand the light of testing.
2. The fruits of God are so sublime, so far beyond a deceiver’s reach, he can never copy them.

We cannot find statements in the Bible such as “False Christs and false prophets will appear and bring good fruits to deceive even the elect.” It is not *fruits*, but *miracles*, that can serve as tools of deception:

For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

Christ (Matt. 24:24 NIV)

Prophesying in any way, even in the name of the Lord, can also serve as a means of deception, sometimes of self-deception. How can you test a prediction of the future? Would you trust any predictor more than you trust yourself? When it comes to the future, we are all equal—equally ignorant.

Nowhere in the Christian world can you find a war waged as intensely as it is waged among Bible teachers who “prophesy in the name of the Lord.” See this for yourself by studying *The Last Day Handbook*. This book is an outstanding volume written by a distinguished Christian scholar, Dr. Robert Lightner. He wrote the book for the sole purpose of bringing peace among interpreters of biblical prophecy: those who preface their personal interpretation with words such as, “Our Lord promised in plain language.” “There is no doubt about the meaning of this prophecy.” “I am sure this is the way our Lord will come.” When it comes to interpretation of prophecy, it is hard to find any modesty. Seldom can we find statements such as the one by Dr. James Kennedy that all

Christian leaders may be wrong in their interpretations. That statement is extremely rare. Our Lord knew that many false prophets, interpreters, and predictors would appear under His name in our time. Hence He undermined every means they are using today to support their claims. We have a perfect map for finding and knowing our Lord on His return. "Behold, I have told you all things" (Mark 13:23). But is there any leader to hear "What the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:29)?

Everything revolves around this point: Absolute, unqualified, and unconditional obedience to our Lord. No deviation, however slight, is acceptable. In our journey of the search for truth, even one wrong turn leads us away from the truth. The reason we have so much confusion in religion is this: "The authority figures," Bible teachers and scholars, do exactly the opposite of what they are told. They take the wrong turn at every point. To make their ego triumphant, and to look good in the eyes of the masses, they boast of a knowledge and wisdom they do not have. They take advantage of the trust people have in the Word of God. They abuse that trust, ***knowing full well that they cannot be exposed.***

Consider this example: Suppose you are an egoist and would like to endear yourself in the eyes of others. You have two choices. You can either make a claim that is testable or one that is not. Which would you prefer? Of course, the one that is untestable. If you falsely claim that you have memorized the entire Bible, can you succeed in your deception? Any child can expose your deception. But suppose you are an excellent communicator and spend a lot of money to find out what people's "itching ears like to hear" (II Tim. 4:3). Then you write an exceptionally convincing book on prophecy, a book in which you claim to be absolutely sure of your interpretation. Can anyone expose you? No. You may have written a bestseller, and will be quoted by many authors for years to come. You may even be surprised by your success. You will become the authority others will quote to prove their point. ***As long as your views are untestable, you are safe.***

Almost every Christian makes predictions in the name of Jesus in some way or another. All these predictions are untestable except one: When they set a date for the return of Jesus. Why? The passage of time exposes the truth or falsehood of their prophecy. Those who prophesy in the name of the Lord enjoy a perfect safety net as long as they refrain from setting dates, unless the date is far ahead. Consider this simple example. Hal Lindsey is perhaps the most popular Christian author, especially in relation to prophecy. People love what he writes. Over the course of half a century he has made many predictions about the way our Lord will return. At some point, he felt so confident about his interpretations and predictions that he ventured to set a date for the return of Jesus. According to a Christian author: "By interpreting 'this generation' of Matthew 24:34 as being 'the generation which sees Israel...back in the land of Palestine,' Lindsey predicted in 1970 that 'within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place.'"³

"In an interview reported in *Christianity Today* (April 1977), Ward Gasque asked Hal Lindsey regarding his prediction that **Christ would return by 1988**, 'But what if you're wrong?' Lindsey replied: 'Well, there is just a split second's difference between a hero and a bum. I did not ask to be a hero, but I guess I have become one in the Christian community. So I accept it. But if I'm wrong about this, I guess I'll become a bum.'"⁴

Mr. Lindsey does not deserve more blame than any other Christian who claims knowledge of the inner meaning of prophecies. He simply became too confident and made a mistake; he made a claim that was testable, that would later teach him this critical lesson: prophesying in the name of the Lord is forbidden. Unfortunately, this event did not force Mr. Lindsey to declare a disclaimer about his other prophecies, such as the physical rapture of true believers, and the literal war between our Lord and 200 million military men from all the armies of the world!

Why then would anyone with wisdom build his everlasting destiny on such shifting sand? This evidence alone should awaken every sincere Christian from the grand illusion of “We know what biblical prophecies mean!” To recognize the critical significance of using testable standards, consider this example. Suppose you want to employ a physician for your clinic. Would you use testable or untestable standards? Would you simply say, “Tell me what credentials you have?” and stop there, or would you want to *see* the credentials? If you as an employer would refuse to use *untestable* standards, why would God, the supreme source of all knowledge and wisdom? This point is critical and self-evident; why then do so many seekers ignore it? Why do so many believers continue to use the standards they are told not to use, the standards that our Lord has condemned in the harshest words. He called **wicked** those who disobey and deviate from the standard of “works” and “fruits,” and yet the disobedience and deviation continue. Why did He use such a harsh word? Because a “wicked” person would not obey his Lord. He pays lip service to the Master, and then acts as if *he* is the Master.

The necessity of using God’s standards, in one’s search for truth, should not be taken lightly. This is not the same as misunderstanding a prophecy. It is the most fundamental issue. Disregarding it is like using the map of New York to find a house in Chicago. Ignoring it is like looking for a lake in India instead of Israel. Working harder, using more people, spending more hours, investing more talent, looking for the seal of approval from famous authorities, juggling the order of prophecies—none of these will solve the problem.

Consider the Jews. They have been prophesying for 2,000 years. They have depended on the authority of thousands of rabbis, Greek and Hebrew scholars, and brilliant interpreters of Hebrew Scriptures. All those Jewish rabbis, scholars, and interpreters have been prophesying ***in the name of Jehovah, the Lord God***, just as Christians are doing today. They have been prefacing their interpretations and their views with,

“This is what Jehovah promised to our prophets.” During those 20 centuries, they have been exposed to the intense light of the One who had the knowledge of all mysteries—Jesus Christ—and yet they have not seen the Light. Why? They have replaced the divine directions with their own. Instead of looking heavenward to see the Sun, they have been digging holes in the ground. *They have been searching for their Lord with the wrong map, the map of prophecy, the forbidden standard of “prophesying in the name of Jehovah,”* of using the authority of God to support their private personal interpretation of His Word.

This issue—*using the right standard, the right map—is at the heart and soul of every search, of every endeavor, of every expectation.* If this is missing, there is no life, there is no truth, there is no hope. If you make this one exchange—from human standards to God’s—the divine splendors of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, will suddenly and dramatically transform your perspective. Instead of seeing drifting clouds, you will begin to see dazzling stars with infinite beauty and splendor. You will say, “How could I have missed this glorious Sun of Truth?”

Because of its critical position in helping us choose our everlasting destiny, let us analyze once again our Lord’s most clear and conclusive pronouncement on how we can distinguish truth from falsehood, how we can recognize *future* Messengers and Redeemers. The following is the only statement from Jesus in which He declares the exact standards of knowing a Prophet or Redeemer from God.

May I encourage you to read these instructions many times. Each time you read them, their meanings will become clearer. After repeated readings, you will begin to see a picture or a pattern in Jesus’ instructions that you may not have seen in your first few readings.

*The
Essence of
our Lord's
Message*

*The Verses
He Uttered*

*The Number
of Words He
Devoted to
Each Topic*

1

*The
Warning:*

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.
Matt. 7:15 NIV

18 Words

2

*The
Standard:*

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. *Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

Matt. 7:16-18 NIV

70 Words

3

*Obedience
to God's
standard
is
essential:*

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matt. 7:19-21 NIV

21 Words

*The
Essence of
our Lord's
Message*

*The Verses
He Uttered*

*The Number
of Words He
Devoted to
Each Topic*

4

The standards that should not be used for testing the truth, actions that are prohibited, and punishment for those who disobey:

Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not *prophesy in your name*, and in your name drive out demons and *perform many miracles*?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, *you evildoers*!"

Matt. 7:22-23 NIV

43 Words

5

Obedience to instructions is absolutely essential. The consequences are quite serious:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. *But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.* The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Matt. 7:24-27 NIV

103 Words

What did you discover from your repeated readings of Jesus' instruction? Ponder these points:

1

Warning

Jesus begins by reminding us that in choosing our spiritual destiny, we must use critical judgment, we must watch for deceivers who tell us, in Paul's words, what our "itching ears like to hear" (II Tim. 4:3). This is a matter of common sense, yet we need to be reminded.

Unfortunately, many Christians have exaggerated Jesus' instruction. Instead of observing caution, they experience phobia. Instead of being prudent, they engage in avoidance. Today the fear of being deceived by outsiders has overwhelmed many Christians. The consequences of exaggerating this fear is so serious, it is studied separately. (See Appendix II.)

2

The Standard of Knowing Him

After this brief introduction, Jesus introduces His critical pronouncement: The standard that separates the divine from the deceptive. This standard is not self-evident. We do not know how we can recognize a prophet from God. We do not know by what standards we can separate the sincere from the insincere. This is the heart of the entire discourse. We need a clear standard by which we can separate the God-given from the ego-driven. How can we know a good surgeon? How can we know a good teacher? Only by having and applying standards.

To make sure everyone will take this instruction to heart, after stating the standard "By their fruits you will know

them” (Matt. 7:20), Jesus clarifies it by asking a common-sense question, one that even a child can answer: “Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?” (Matt. 7:16). After raising the question, Jesus repeats His main principle—the standard—several times to draw everyone’s attention to it. He knows that most people do not like “fruits.” They have their eyes on something more exciting—one that He covers later.

3

Obedience: the Key to the Kingdom of Heaven

After disclosing the standard that separates the divine from the deceptive, Jesus changes the subject to obedience. Why? He knows Christians living in the last days will not obey His commandments. Many prophecies confirm this. He knows people have always shown a reluctance to accept something as ordinary as “fruits.” They do not find much excitement in tasting something as ordinary as apples and oranges, or pears and peaches. They have their eyes and hearts on miracles. They like someone who changes apples into oranges, pears into peaches. They like magicians, not Messengers. They want a savior who will suddenly turn gravel into gold, chickpeas into chocolate chips; a redeemer who will send down from the sky milk and honey instead of hail and rain. Note this conversation between Jesus and the Jews:

The Jews

What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

John 6:30-31 NIV

Jesus I tell you the truth...the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. John 6:32-33 NIV

Note how precisely history is repeating itself. The Jews wanted to see a *physical* sign. ***They wanted the Lord to bring them some loaves of bread from the sky. What do most Christians expect today? Instead of loaves of bread, they want the Lord to bring Himself down from the sky!***

In the same conversation Jesus declared this everlasting truth:

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. John 6:27 NIV

To make sure Christians will obey His command, that they must depend on “fruits,” Jesus offers a grave warning: He declares that those who disobey His pronouncement will be unable to enter His heavenly Kingdom.

4

The Forbidden Standards

Jesus then introduces the standard that the *disobedient* Christians will use to separate the divine from the deceptive. The first standard He mentions is: prophesying in His name. How can a person prophesy in the name of Jesus? Only by depending on Jesus’ prophecies. If our Lord had made no other prediction except this one, we would need no other evidence for His divine foresight. Because many Christians are violating this rule on a scale that is unimaginable.

Every Christian who hears about Bahá’u’lláh, but hesitates to investigate, has a problem with prophecy. ***His first and foremost reason for rejection is related to what he expects must happen.*** He acts as if he has already understood the

meaning of every prophecy. When he hears about the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, he instantly begins to prophesy in the name of the Lord. What an astonishing foresight Jesus had!

What is the essential ingredient of all the predictions that today's Christians are making in the name of Jesus? That ingredient is the miraculous. It seems they expect Jesus, at His Advent, will break every law of nature.

After invalidating the standard of prophesying in the name of the Lord, Jesus then invalidates the value or relevance of anything that is untestable, such as the miraculous, cultic, or demonic.

To instill obedience in Christians, Jesus once again declares the most severe threat for violators: that of remaining outside His heavenly Kingdom. Jesus is so angry with Christians who pride themselves in His name, but disregard His commands, He curses them in the strongest words. He says, "Away from me you evildoers!" (Matt. 7:23). Why does He call them evildoers? Because they are hypocrites. They claim His name, but disobey His command. To make sure that they understand the reason for His severe threat, He tells them, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). What does that expression imply? It implies this: Many people consider themselves Christian. They think they know their Lord and that the Lord knows them. But this is an illusion. How can they know the Lord if the Lord does not know them? In the next Kingdom, these Christians will be treated as strangers.

5

Obedience: the Sign of Spiritual Wisdom

At the end, Jesus brings His discourse to a conclusion by raising the question of obedience once again. Jesus' emphasis

shows that obedience is by far the most critical challenge Christians of this age are facing.

In conclusion, Jesus uses a wonderful analogy to emphasize His point: The analogy of building one's house on sand or on rock. Christians who judge Bahá'u'lláh by their personal interpretation of prophecy—an act they are strictly forbidden by Jesus, Peter, and Paul—are building the house of their everlasting destiny on sand. To recognize the shifting sands behind these interpretations, examine the various theories theologians have been presenting about the return of Jesus. These theories are changed constantly like sands blown by the wind. After all, what can we expect from fallible human beings when they engage in decoding mysteries far beyond their understanding? What can we expect when people engage in a forbidden task: "No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). Can a direction be more clear?

Lack of obedience is the root cause of all denials. If people obey God, they will definitely find the One they are searching for.

As we noted, when Jesus reasoned with the Jews in relation to His ***first*** Advent, He linked knowing the source of His teaching to ***obeying*** God's will. He said, "If anyone ***chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God***" (John 7:17 NIV). Is it a coincidence that, in relation to both advents, our Lord emphasized the issue of ***obedience***? What is the connection between ***the standard*** of knowing a Redeemer, and ***obeying*** God's command? The answer is obvious. But why did our Lord emphasize obedience so much? Why did He refer to it repeatedly? Because ***He knew Christians who live in this age would disregard His instructions. He knew they would ignore God's standards, just as the Jews of His time abandoned God's standard of "works," "bread," "water," and "fruits" and opted for miracles.*** He knew the intense desire in human beings to behold the incredible, the miraculous, the dramatic. He knew people love "the magic arts," when the impossible suddenly

becomes possible, when the earth changes in one instant into heaven, and all the bad people are magically destroyed.

Did not the Jews use the wrong map? Did they not prophesy in the name of Moses and Hebrew Prophets? Did they not object to our Lord for not doing things *their* way, for not following *their* map? Even Jesus' disciples had to struggle with their urgent desires to prophesy in the name of the Hebrew prophets, and to say to Jesus, "Our Lord! Why are you so helpless? Why don't you hit back? Why don't you conquer our enemies, as Hebrew prophecies have promised? Why don't you establish your Kingdom? Why don't you act like David, the pride of Israel? You have all those incredible powers at your command. Why don't you use them?"

This was an awesome test for Jesus' disciples. We should sympathize with their dilemma. If we were in their place, we would feel and act the same way. To understand their impatience, think of this example. Suppose you are walking with your friend, who is a powerful boxer. Suddenly you are attacked by a few muggers. But your friend, instead of hitting back, submits to the demands of the muggers. In response to your pleas for defense, he says "Be patient! In time they will be punished!"

When St. Peter, our Lord's distinguished disciple, changed his map from God's to that of humans, when he began to prophesy and dream of miracles, he received the harshest rebuke imaginable from our Lord. Note this brief but extremely instructive dialogue immediately after Jesus informed Peter of His own imminent death:

From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that...he would suffer at the hands of the leaders and the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed...But Peter took him aside and corrected him. "***Heaven forbid, Lord,***" he said. "***This will never happen to you!***" Jesus turned to Peter and said, "***Get away from***

me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. ***You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, and not from God's.***
Matt. 16:21-23 NLT

Jesus' application of this awful word—Satan—to His dear disciple, the one who deviated for one moment from God's way of doing things, and shifted his heart to human ways, should serve as a lesson to every sincere Christian. It should awaken every faithful seeker and lover of truth to the supreme significance of following God's map with absolute precision, to the urgent need for submitting our hearts and souls to ***His*** ways of doing things—ways that are often contrary to ours:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.
Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV

If God did everything our way, how then would He test us? ***Only when we submit our way to His way can we pass our tests.***

Note the remarkable similarity between our Lord's statement to St. Peter, who briefly engaged in prophesying and dreaming of miracles, with His statement to others who would do the same:

Our Lord's statement to St. Peter:

A harsh rebuke: ***Satan***
A strong command: ***Get away from me!***

Our Lord's statement to Christians who think like St. Peter:

A harsh rebuke: ***Wicked***
A strong command: ***Away from me!***

Observing God's standards of knowing the truth and honoring ***His*** ways of accomplishing His goals should not be taken

lightly. It is the map by which we can guide our journey of the search for truth; it is the command by which we can recognize our Lord; it is the road by which we can reach our heavenly destiny. The consequence of ignoring God's map is spiritual death and loss of everlasting life. Negligence in this case may seem innocent, as it often does, but this is an issue no one should take lightly. The sincere and faithful lover of our Lord will make every effort to ensure that his or her choices are based not on convenience, but on absolute obedience to God's command; not on sand but on rock.

When we study our Lord's teachings, we discover that He had only words of condemnation and contempt for those who loved the magical and the impossible, for those who wanted miracles from Him as evidence. Consider this verse once again:

A *wicked* and *adulterous* generation asks for a miraculous sign!
Christ (Matt. 12:39 NIV)

Why did our Lord call miracle-lovers *adulterous*? Because our relationship with God is like a loving relationship between a married couple. Both are a *spiritual* commitment of *exclusive* love. Each spouse can say to the other: "I am all yours and you are all mine." What if a married man or woman starts looking for a relationship with someone other than his or her partner, for someone who is younger, prettier, or richer, for someone who has a physical advantage? Is that not a clear breach of the commitment, and a step toward adultery?

What binds us to God? A *spiritual* commitment that we love Him for *His own sake*. We do not say, "I will love you if you give me a million dollars." We embrace Him with our heart and soul because we love Him for who He is, and we know He loves us in return. What if we say, "I can't trust our relationship. If you really love me, prove yourself by some *physical* signs. Send me a golden plate from the sky. Or better still, bring yourself down from the sky. Do something so extraordinary that even magicians can't do." Is this

not as bad or even worse than adultery? Is it not going beyond our *spiritual* relationship with God? Is this not breaking the bond of exclusive love? Is this not like loving material objects?

Expecting miracles is a grave insult to God. It is similar to staying in the “marriage,” but looking for love elsewhere. No wonder our Lord calls the violators of *the spiritual* bond by the worst of words: *wicked* and *adulterous*. Yet many believers break this commandment. Some of the most wonderful Christians, without knowing it, continue to engage in this unseemly act. *They continue to believe that to prove His credibility, our Lord must come down from the sky, and any Savior who fails to do this, no matter what SPIRITUAL evidence He manifests, no matter what celestial fruits He produces is unworthy of attention.* Is not this expectation or attitude a violation of our commitment to God that our relationship with Him is spiritual; that we love Him because He is love, and not because He engages in some miraculous feats, in some “magic arts”? Note the sense of utter desperation in our Lord:

Will none of you ever believe without seeing signs and portents?

Christ (John 4:48 NEB)

It is as if you repeatedly say to your mother, “Mom, I will love you *if* you make me my favorite dessert!” And in desperation, your mother responds: “Will you ever love me if you don’t get your favorite food?”

As time went on, the image of our Lord continued to change from that of a real person, the neighbor next door, who talked and walked with people, who got hungry, thirsty, sick, sleepy, and tired; to that of a *mystical figure* far removed from His physical nature. *The original image has changed so much that people cannot imagine that another human being, just like Him, can be the Lord.* To restore this ingrained mystical image to its original form—to that of a mortal and humble being who suffers from all physical needs and is subject to

all demands and laws of nature—is extremely difficult. It is a challenge of unimagined proportions.

The image of Jesus cherished and immortalized by most Christians is even more ethereal and mystical than the Jews' image of their Messiah. The Jews looked at our Lord and saw another human being like themselves. They could not imagine that their Messiah would have a mother and a father, and brothers and sisters:

“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?”...Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” Matthew 13:55-57 NKJ

An image, once established, becomes all-powerful, and takes on a life of its own. Imagine how difficult it is to alter your self-image. To change a person's beliefs and actions, we must first change the image that controls them. The same holds true with ingrained mystical or spiritual images in religion. ***As long as people picture our Lord as a mighty Figure surrounded by hosts of heavenly angels with supreme physical powers, they will resist examining the claims of a mortal and humble human being like themselves.*** From a young, ordinary man, from a Prophet who received no honor in His country and His home, the image of our Lord has gradually changed into that of the most mighty and celestial conqueror who comes down from the sky to transform our planet ***in an instant***. Should we not reexamine and put to the test the one perpetual image portrayed by fallible theologians over the course of many centuries? Should we conform to tradition? Should we, just like the Jews, keep a narrow and rigid image of our Lord? Should we not be open-minded?

Untestable Evidence Has No Value

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God... I John 4:1 NIV

By their fruit you will recognize them.

Christ (Matt. 7:16 NIV)

We are asked to test the spirits. How can we test a spirit by untestable standards? Suppose a person says, “I am a good doctor.” How can we know if we cannot test him?

Dr. Curtis Vaughan, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, offers this interpretation for the command that we must test the spirits:

The command itself is twofold: “believe not every spirit” and “try the spirits.”...the use of “spirit” rather than “prophet” shows that the apostle was looking behind and beyond the individual prophet to the superhuman influence, which inspired him. Strictly speaking, then, the “spirit” is the spirit possessing the prophet...To “try the spirits” is to test them for authenticity. The verb was used in ancient times of the testing of metals for genuineness...We are not to apply tests and canons of our own invention, eager to demonstrate that all the rest are wrong, and we alone are right. Too often has orthodoxy shown that spirit...The purpose of testing the spirits is to determine their origin, that is, whether they are of God.⁵

If we use *untestable* standards, we will have nothing but chaos in the kingdom of spiritual knowledge. Everyone says, “Come here, my miracle is bigger and better.” “My vision is longer and sweeter!” “What the Holy Spirit told me is nothing but the truth!” “God talks to me when I speak in tongues!” “The Holy Spirit showed me that the Lord will come from the sky, that what I prophesy in the name of the Lord is true.”

This kind of thinking turns the kingdom of spiritual knowledge and truth into a marketplace where anyone can make any claim without the fear of being exposed. Imagine the consequences if the kingdom of scientific knowledge were ruled by the same standards. Imagine if a biologist said, "My theory is the truth because I had a vision that told me so!" Imagine if a physicist said, "My discoveries are true because while doing the experiment I saw a miracle!"

If such a system prevailed, we would have scientific chaos. In fact, there would be no science. Today that chaos has gripped religion and suffocated its glory and honor. What we have in place of religion is a blend of facts and fiction; a mixture of truths, half truths, and falsehoods. Everyone makes a claim, yet none is testable.

Our Lord knew precisely what would happen in this age. He tried to bring us back to reality, from the illusive assumptions down to earth, to the testable and provable ground. Unless we listen to Him, unless we obey Him, we will have only spiritual chaos, where false prophets prosper and go unchallenged. How do they prosper? They are not required to present testable and provable evidence.

Those who follow such false prophets fail to do their homework, to recognize that they must test and taste the fruits before swallowing them, that they must depend only on testable and provable evidence. Put yourself on trial! Present any **objective** evidence that proves the truth of your faith, any evidence that is **testable** and **provable**:

Think about this most critical question as long as you can: If a religion cannot be supported by testable and provable evidence, how can anyone be accountable for choosing his or her beliefs for any selfish reasons? What advantage would God's Messengers have over the deceivers? Anyone can write a few verses, claim several mighty miracles, and find a few people who would testify to the truth of his claim. Past miracles

are untestable and unprovable. Using them as evidence of truth in the kingdom of spiritual knowledge undermines the divine distinction of the One sent by God. The only evidence, the only proof is what our Lord validated:

- By their fruits ye shall know them.

That statement or standard can also be repeated as:

- By their bread you shall know them.
- By their works you shall know them.

The next chapter will help you put your faith in Jesus' commands to the test.

12

As In a Trap

Don't let that day catch you unaware, *as in a trap*. Christ (Luke 21:34)

...the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world *to test* those who live on the earth.

Christ (Rev. 3:10 NIV)

So far we have put *Bahá'u'lláh* and *the Bahá'í Faith* to the test of the Scripture. Now you have a chance to put *your own faith* in Jesus Christ to the test of the Scripture. God always tests the depths of our sincerity and our faith. The evidence of sincerity is obedience; the proof of faith is action, not empty words. Putting one's self to the test is a willingness to look at one's faith objectively. Bahá'u'lláh asks us to "bring ourselves to account every day:"

O SON OF BEING!

Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.¹

Avoiding a test is running away from reality. It is saying, “I am pleased with what I have. By knowing more, I may lose my self-satisfaction. What matters is what I think, not what God thinks or what lies beyond my knowledge.” Jesus declared that everyone will be tested:

...the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

Revelation 3:10 NIV

Why is it *the hour of trial*? Because taking and passing the test is difficult. Jesus’ prophecy has been clearly fulfilled: Most people run away from the responsibility of testing Bahá’u’lláh. They do not want to know. How can anyone be afraid of knowing? What harm can come from the knowledge of the most glorious advent in human history?

Note the Báb’s confirmation of Jesus’ prophecy:

How numerous the verses which have been revealed concerning the grievous tests ye shall experience on the Day of Judgment...[and] regarding the trials which will overtake you on the Day of Our Return, and yet ye seem never to have set your eyes upon them.²

Our willingness to take the test or avoid it is in itself a test. What is the most awesome test we can ever face? Our desire to remove the veil that separates us from the truth. Read and ponder the meaning of these two quotations from Jesus and the Báb:

Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NKJ)



Were I to remove the veil, all would recognize Me as their Best Beloved, and no one would deny Me.³ The Báb

The Trap of the Antichrist

As a rule, people register a list of expectations in their minds. When they hear about the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh, they begin to measure Him, against that list, without reexamining their views or doing any research. If He falls short in relation to any one of them, they pass a negative verdict and stop their spiritual journey. Such a simplistic approach protects them from the “pains” and “perils” of stepping out of their comfort zone into an unknown territory. A sign that almost everyone registers in his or her mind is *the Antichrist*. This expectation alone can become a trap for one's soul.

Whenever there is light, there is also darkness. That is why we are asked to be careful, to test a spirit before accepting him. It is obvious that we should neither be gullible like a sponge that absorbs everything, nor be hard and closed-hearted like a coconut that keeps everything out. This is common sense. To live is to make choices between good and bad. God gave us the power to reason for a reason!

The purpose of covering this topic is this: Christians believe that a deceptive figure, referred to as “the Antichrist,” will appear and set himself up as the Christ. There is a void in their expectations to be filled by such a figure. As soon as they hear about anyone who makes a claim, they tend to fill the void with him. They say, “He is the one!” Without testing Bahá'u'lláh, without obeying the command of the Gospel that they should *test* the spirits before judging them, they rush to judge. Without knowing, they lay the trap of denial upon their souls. They forget this warning from Jesus:

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. Christ (Matt. 12:337 NIV)

Many prophecies specify the signs of the Antichrist. *King of Kings* contains two long chapters on this topic. As the Bible

predicts, *a deceptive figure did appear upon the scene* during Bahá'u'lláh's time *and played his role exactly as predicted*. He set himself up as the Christ and did everything within his power to destroy Bahá'u'lláh.

Did he fulfill any signs? Yes, he fulfilled all the prophecies that predicted his evil deeds. As to "the fruits," he fulfilled them also, but in *an opposite* way. Consider this sign, "I am the good shepherd: *the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*" (John 10:11) Although Bahá'u'lláh had many enemies, He feared no one, and *never hid Himself*. It is hard to imagine anyone in Bahá'u'lláh's position who could have survived even a week, unless, of course, he hid himself. That deceptive figure—the Antichrist—was a man known as *Azal, who lived a life of perfect secrecy. He hid himself either in the inner chambers of houses or in the mountains and deserts. Azal was a pest on the Tree of Life.*

In His Olivet discourse, our Lord warned us against this elusive figure and described His own presence as the lightning that shines from the East to the West (Matt. 24:25). The "metaphoric miracle"—*lightning*—dramatized Bahá'u'lláh's power and openness before the gaze of all the peoples of the world.

Jesus wanted to demonstrate a stark contrast between His own Return and the appearance of this deceptive figure. *He knew that the sign of openness versus secrecy would present the clearest contrast between Him as the Christ and the Antichrist.*

If you still have more questions, instead of looking for a verse or a sign that will become a trap for your soul, may I suggest once again that you study these three volumes:

- *I Shall Come Again*
- *Lord of Lords*
- *King of Kings*

These volumes abound with countless prophecies about Bahá'u'lláh. Study all the facts before telling yourself that Bahá'u'lláh is *not* the One you are waiting for. ***King of Kings*** offers many detailed prophecies in the course of two long chapters on Azal as the Antichrist.

Remember the warning that all the peoples of the world are being tested (Rev. 3:10). ***Everyone is at least in one trap.*** The problem is this: ***no one sees his own trap.*** We grow up in our traps and become used to them. It is so natural to want to stay there.

What happens when you talk to someone else about the news of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh? You do this because you need confirmation from the people you trust. Will they come to your rescue? Will they obey their Lord and test the claim before making a judgment? No, not as a rule. Since ***they are also in their own unique traps, it is very likely that they will attempt to add their traps to yours!*** Instead of following the commands of our Lord that they should investigate the glorious news of His coming, they will look for a loophole in your news. Since most people are controlled by fear, their negative signal will further scare you off. It is natural to say to yourself, ***"I know I am saved. Why take chances?"*** ***You must muster enormous courage to resist the prevailing fears and temptations, and to go against the tides of the times.*** According to a noted pastor, fear is the source of all evil. It shows lack of trust in God.

No one can take you out of the trap of denying your Lord, the One you worship and remember every day, except the Lord Himself. Nothing can rescue you from that trap except absolute trust in your Lord, except instant and unconditional obedience to the One who has already told you what to do: ***"Watch ye therefore, and pray always"*** (Luke 21:36). No one, no theologian, no pastor, no priest, no rabbi, no evangelist, no charismatic speaker, no prolific author, no professor can save you from the trial that has come upon you and all the peoples of the world. The only choice you have is to spend

hours and days in privacy, pleading, crying, and praying to our Lord for heavenly guidance. No one can change your heart except the Lord. No one else can lift you from the clouds of unawareness and confusion to the light of knowledge:

...no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.

Christ (John 6:65 NKJ)

You have the right to make multiple traps for your soul. That is the meaning of freedom of choice. But remember that ***you*** are the one who must face the consequences of disregarding our Lord's emphatic commands to investigate the news of His coming with courage and wisdom.

If you are bent on finding excuses, ***you can find as many as you want.*** Spiritual traps, like potholes, are everywhere. Very likely you have another question or objection that is not covered in this book. You have every right to make that unresolved question a trap for your soul. But that does not show true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows faith in your own desires to find reasons that will justify your action. ***I will be delighted to receive and respond to your unresolved questions.****

Overcoming the Traps

The three most critical commands of Jesus to save Christians from falling into the trap of denying Him:



* See the Web Site listed at the beginning and the end of this book.

The veil that conceals the Glory of God in Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, or Jesus is our attachment to this world. The trap that conceals the light of truth is our own soul. Our test is to tear the veil and liberate our soul from the trap. Otherwise, we may look and look but will be unable to see (Acts 28:26). To help us overcome the veil of separation, to help us escape from our unique trap, our Lord *emphasized and repeated three commands*:

Watch!

Pray!

Overcome!

Consider these examples:



Why would anyone repeat a command? At least for two reasons:

- It is critical.
- Those who must obey it are negligent.

- Question: What does “watch” mean? According to the dictionary, it means, “To look at and pay attention to something that is happening.”⁴
- Question: Under what conditions does a person need to pay attention? When he or she may *miss* an event or its significance.
- Question: Under what conditions is the command to watch needed? When the person who must obey it is *negligent*.

The responses offered to the preceding questions are totally literal and sensible. Can you find any flaws in them?

We have numerous warnings, parables, and commands from our Lord that support the literal and common-sense explanation offered here. Take the following warning. It reveals the *obstacles* to being *watchful*, and presents the *precautions* we must take, so that we will succeed in pursuing our spiritual destiny, so that we will be protected from falling into the hidden traps along the way. Note the clarity of Jesus’ instructions:

Watch out! Don’t let me find you living in *careless ease and drunkenness* and filled with *the worries of this life*. Don’t let that day catch you *unaware, as in a trap*. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. Keep a constant watch. And pray that, if possible, you may escape these horrors [trials] and stand before the Son of Man.

Christ (Luke 21:34-36 NLT)

Our Lord asks us to watch out. For what? For traps. Which ones? He singles out these three most dangerous and common but concealed traps:

- *Careless ease*
- *Drunkenness*, which is a state of complacency and unawareness of one’s unawareness
- *The worries of this life*

Both extremes—either being overtaken by complacency and a life of ease or being gripped by worries and a life of pains and pressures—can distract our attention from our spiritual goal: that of pursuing what God has planned for us. How divinely prophetic Jesus’ words are! These are precisely the reasons that prevent the people of our time from investigating Bahá’u’lláh’s Message. Let us look more closely at the three categories of people:

- ***Life of Ease***: Many people feel comfortable with what the world offers them. They enjoy the many luxuries that modern civilization gives them. Their purpose is to pursue a life of ease.
- ***Drunkenness***: Many people are “drunk” with what they have. They love their church, synagogue, or mosque so much that they cannot even hear an invitation to watch or pay attention to this awesome news.
- ***Worries of Life***: Many people are continually running but never catching up. They are so busy, they cannot “find” the time to read even a small book like this or come to a meeting. Surprisingly these people somehow manage to “find” time for everything that pertains to their instant or worldly needs and desires.

What is the solution? How can we prepare our souls to become worthy of standing before the Son of Man? By ***not*** allowing our souls to fall into the traps of careless ease, unawareness, complacency, and constant working and worrying about the demands of this earthly life.

Could Jesus’ instructions have been more clear? Who falls into a trap? The one who fails to watch. Would a watchful person fall into a trap? No, the one who obeys the commands of his Master cannot and will not fall into a trap. The Master will protect him.

Ponder this prophecy once again:

Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who **watches**, and **keeps his garments**. Christ (Rev. 16:15 NKJ)

What instructions does our Lord give us?

- He asks us to watch or pay attention. Why? Because He comes in a way that He may not attract our attention. He implies that we can miss Him just as a householder who is inattentive or sleepy can miss a thief who breaks into his house.
- He asks us to keep our garments. What does He mean by “**garments**”? He means our faith in His commands, and the spiritual qualities we need to recognize Him. These instructions once again indicate that ***if we fail to overcome the spiritual traps in our souls, we cannot know our Lord***. Jesus asks us to look for Him even as we look for a thief; and we must do this with our “garments” on, otherwise we will miss Him.

It is evident, if we start with preconceived notions, if we keep our hearts and minds closed, we will be unable to “see” Him. Can a person with closed eyes or with serious visual defects see? Are people’s “eyes” more open today than they were at Jesus’ time?

I [Jesus] am sending you to them ***to open their eyes***.

Acts 26:17-18 NIV

Every instruction confirms every other. It is hard to imagine our Lord could have guided us with more clarity. In His first Advent, Jesus met the same kind of people who live today. He told the Jews that ***they used common sense to predict the weather. Why then did they fail to use that same sense in judging their Redeemer?***

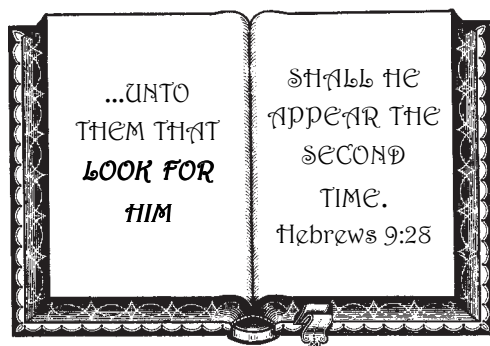
Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him ***asked that He would show them a sign from heaven***. He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red;’ and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red

and threatening.’ *Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.*

Matthew 16:1-3 NKJ

Let me invite you to use your *common sense* about Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, just as the Jews were asked by our Lord in His first Advent to use that same God-given sense. Our Lord in His *Second* Advent has once again fulfilled *every* sign, *every* standard. He has produced *every* good fruit imaginable. *The only thing He has failed to do is to fulfill the prophecies the way you or most theologians expect.* But do you have the right to decide what the prophecies mean? No, you are told not to depend on your personal interpretation of prophecies, but rather *let the Lord* tell you what they mean. Your common sense also tells you that theologians can be wrong. You know “authority figures” differ and even fight over the meaning of prophecies. You also know that people rejected our Lord at His first advent for the same reason: *misinterpretation of prophecies*. For what reason then would you brush aside Bahá’u’lláh’s claim to be the Lord?

This passage is a further confirmation that you *must* look for “the Heavenly Thief” to find Him:



Are you still not convinced that you *must* search for the Master, that you *must* overcome the hidden traps in your soul? Consider another instruction from our Lord. In the Book of Revelation, which is mostly about His Return, our

Lord repeated yet another word: **OVERCOME**. He repeated that word **eight times**. Consider this example:

He who **overcomes** will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But **the cowardly, the unbelieving...** their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
Christ (Rev. 21:7-8 NIV)

What does “**overcome**” mean? This is how the dictionary defines it: “To control a feeling or problem that prevents you from achieving something.”⁵ Does not the word “**overcome**” relate clearly to “**trap**” or to any obstacle that prevents you from “**watching**” or paying attention? What conditions require extra attention? The conditions in which we are **inattentive**, or the event is **ordinary**. If our Lord were to come from the sky, and if every eye saw Him, why would He emphasize the need to pay attention? Why would He say He would come like a thief? Why would He warn us about spiritual traps? Why would He ask us to **overcome**? Why would we need to “look for Him”?

Why did Jesus ask us to pray? To plead with Him to give us “**the eyes**” so that we can **see** Him and recognize His thief-like coming in the dark night of unbelief, fear, complacency, unawareness, conformity and confusion.

Perhaps you are still not convinced. Ponder the parable of the five maidens. That parable teaches us that the Bridegroom arrived at the darkest hour: midnight. The **wise** maidens, who were awake and aware, met Him and followed Him into the Banquet. But the **unwise** maidens missed Him. Why? Because they did not have enough “oil.” What does the “oil” symbolize? Wisdom. That is what the parable is all about: being wise or foolish. What kind of person is wise? The one who obeys his Master, who pays close attention to the news of His coming, who prays that he will be worthy of knowing Him, and who makes every effort to “overcome” any obstacle that may prevent him from attaining His presence.

As a rule, people pay more attention to picking fruits than to picking their faith. They look for the best bunch of grapes

before directing their hands. Do they follow the same course before directing their hearts? The practice of allowing our ancestors to choose our spiritual destiny is so common that we do not even notice it until someone brings it to our attention. Consider this example: How would you react if your parents told you that *they* would choose your spouse for you? You would probably think they were joking. Why? Because you know *you* are the one who will live with your spouse, *not* your parents.

Choosing Your Destiny

Who will experience *your* destiny? You or your parents? Who will face the consequences of your life? You or your parents? Who will be accountable for your choices? You or your parents? If you would not allow your parents to choose your spouse, why then would you allow them to choose your beliefs for you? If you would not allow someone else to decide what you will eat, when you will go to bed, or when you will wake up, why then would you allow your ancestors to decide what you should believe? Why, then, would you let chance choose your everlasting destiny? Why, then, would you take your spiritual life so lightly?

Do your beliefs matter less to you than everything else in your life? Even choosing a spouse, perhaps the most significant choice in your life, cannot compare with choosing your faith. Your beliefs will determine your *whole* destiny for *all eternity*; your spouse will determine *part* of your destiny for “*less than a moment*” *here on earth*. In the context of eternity, even a thousand years counts as less than a second.

Put yourself to the test. Choose one of these:

- I have both the obligation and the honor of choosing my everlasting destiny. I will continue my investigation of Bahá'u'lláh until I come to a definite conclusion. I will pray for divine guidance and do everything within my power to overcome my spiritual weaknesses.

- I have neither the ability nor the interest in choosing my everlasting destiny. Studying the evidence for Bahá'u'lláh has no significance or priority in my life.

*Followers of the Gospel...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...*⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

*Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs?*⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

*By God! This is He Who hath at one time appeared in the name of the Spirit [Christ]...*⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

*The time foreordained 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.*⁹ Bahá'u'lláh



Dear Seeker:

The divine command is clear: *We must give up our personal interpretation of prophecies*—especially those expressed as “*metaphoric miracles*”—*submit to God’s standards*, and taste His celestial fruits, the food He has sent us from heaven. Obeying God’s command is the ultimate test of our faith.

In the following statement, Bahá'u'lláh uses the example of “*the sun*” and “*the shower*” in place of “*the tree*” to prove the same point. As we know a tree by its fruits, so do we know the sun and the rain by their effects:

The proof of the sun is the light thereof, which shineth and envelopeth all things. The evidence of the shower is the bounty thereof, which reneweth and investeth the world with the mantle of life.¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

When our Lord says, “***By their fruits ye shall know them***” is He asking us to do anything extraordinary, anything unreasonable? No, He is asking us to do the most sensible thing. Consider this analogy. Suppose we wanted to buy a car. What would our common sense, our reasonable mind tell us to do? To find as much information as we can about that car. If our common sense tells us to do this, why then would that same sense not ask us to follow the same course of action to know or test a Redeemer from God? The reason it would not is totally emotional. Our negative emotions, based on past conditioning, prevent us from carrying out the most sensible and reasonable thing our mind tells us to do.

Ponder this statement from our Lord:

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ***On that day*** you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ***Whoever has my commands and obeys them...I...will...show myself to him.*** John 14:18-21 NIV

Note how clearly He tells us the way we can see Him. Every Christian with an inner “*eye*” can and shall see his Lord. What happens if a person does not have an “*eye*”? Jesus makes no promises to him. Only obedience to Jesus’ command gives a believer eyesight to see His Lord on His Return. Those Christians who continue to give themselves the right to interpret the prophecies, according to their own fallible minds, violate the command of the Scripture. They are not loyal to their Master, and Jesus will not show Himself to them. Those who *fail* to use “*the fruits*,” as they are commanded, will be unable to see *the Glory of God*—a celestial splendor that is hidden in the ordinary human temple of *the Heavenly Thief*.

Some Bible translations use Jehovah or Yahweh in place of the word God. They use a non-English word for God. Let us do the same for the *Glory of God*:

Did I not tell you that *if you have faith* you will *see Bahá'u'lláh*?
Christ (John 11:40 NEB)

The Lord gives only one condition for seeing Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. That condition is *faith*. How can you show your faith? Only by obeying His commands. Only by trusting and using His standards of knowing Him, not *your* standards.

If we follow Jesus' instructions, we are told, we *will* know Him, we *shall* know Him. This is God's standard; this is God's promise. If we follow His instruction, He will not deceive us. What can we expect, if we don't follow it? If we *fail* to obey the clear command of our Lord, if instead of listening to Him, we listen to the voice of tradition? Will He *show* Himself to us? Consider Jesus' promise once again:

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...
Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and *I too will love him and SHOW myself to him.*"

Christ (John 14:18, 21 NIV)

Is the true Christian the one who goes to "the right church" regularly? Few would accept such a narrow definition. Who then is a true Christian? *The one who obeys Jesus Christ*. The one who respects the command of his or her Lord that the only authorized standard the servant can use to know the Master on His Return is the purity and perfection of His *fruit*:

By their FRUIT you will recognize them...Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but ONLY HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER...Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock...But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

Christ (Matt. 7:16-26 NIV)

Ponder these verses to recognize the honor of obeying God's commands:

But why do you call Me “Lord, Lord,” and do not do the things which I say? Christ (Luke 6:46 NKJ)

...observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Christ (Matt. 28:20 NKJ)

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. I John 2:3 NKJ

But this is what I commanded them, saying, “Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.” Jeremiah 7:23 NKJ

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

Christ (John 15:14 NKJ)

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

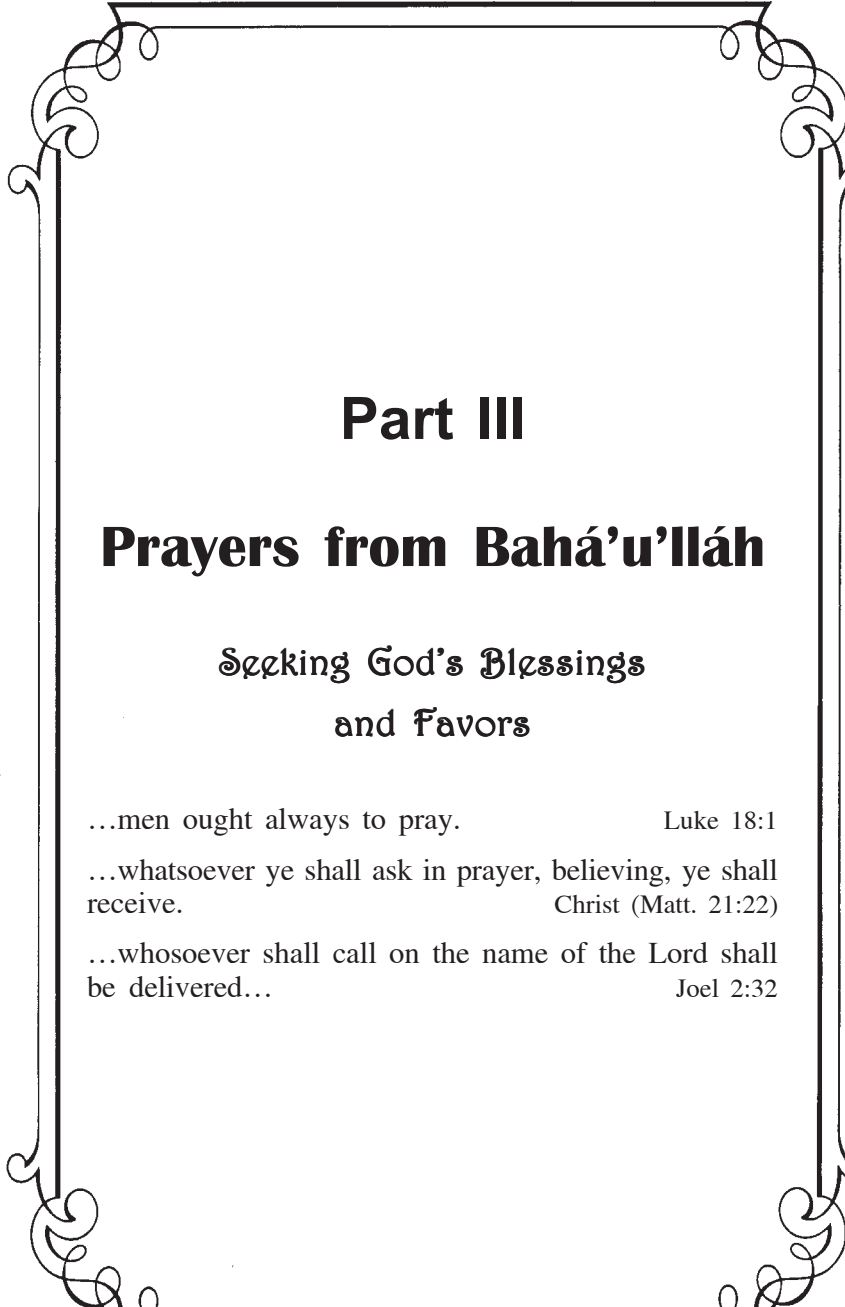
Christ (John 14:15 NKJ)

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words...

Christ (John 14:23-24 NKJ)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

Christ (John 15:10 NKJ)



Part III

Prayers from Bahá'u'lláh

Seeking God's Blessings and Favors

...men ought always to pray.

Luke 18:1

...whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Christ (Matt. 21:22)

...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered...

Joel 2:32

How Can You Recognize Jesus in His Second Advent?

We are told repeatedly to pray for heavenly blessings.

...pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord...
Lamentations 2:19

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?
Christ (Matt. 7:11)

The Lord...heareth the prayer of the righteous.
Proverbs 15:29

...the prayer of the upright is His delight. Proverbs 15:8

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him...
psalms 91:15

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you... Christ (Matt. 7:7)

To recognize Him and follow Him, Jesus did not ask us to engage in debates! He asked us to pray:

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.
Mark 13:33 NKJ

...pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*
Christ (Luke 21:36)

Why should we pray for receiving the honor of recognizing our Redeemer? Because without His permission and His blessings, we will be unable to know Him:

* To emphasize the power of praying in disclosing His glory to the seekers of the heavenly Kingdom in His Second Advent, Jesus spoke a specific parable (Luke 18:1-8). For a detailed description of this parable see: *Prayer: the Key that Unlocks the Gate of Heaven*, by this author.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you...

Christ (John 15:16 NKJ)

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me
draws him...

Christ (John 6:44 NKJ)

Sometimes we pray for the purpose of attaining trivial wishes or needs. Should we not pray for the most glorious honor that heaven may bestow on humans?

To help us attain the purpose for which we came into being and to become worthy of knowing Him, Bahá'u'lláh has revealed hundreds of prayers. The following are a few brief selections from a large volume: *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*.



Unto Thee be praise, O Lord my God! I entreat Thee, by Thy signs that have encompassed the entire creation...to rend asunder the veils that shut me out from Thee, that I may...be immersed beneath the ocean of Thy nearness and pleasure.¹



Suffer me not, O my Lord, to be deprived of the knowledge of Thee in Thy days, and divest me not of the robe of Thy guidance. Give me to drink of the river that is life indeed...that mine eyes may be opened, and my face be illumined, and my heart be assured, and my soul be enlightened, and my steps be made firm.²



Magnified be Thy name, O Lord my God! Thou art He Whom all things worship and Who worshipeth no one...I implore Thee...to enable me to drink deep of the living waters through which Thou hast vivified the

hearts of Thy chosen ones and quickened the souls of them that love Thee, that I may, at all times and under all conditions, turn my face wholly towards Thee.

Thou art the God of power, of glory and bounty. No God is there beside Thee, the Supreme Ruler, the All-Glorious, the Omniscient.³



I beseech Thee, O my Lord...to rend asunder the veils that have hindered me from appearing before the throne of Thy majesty, and from standing at the door of Thy gate. Do Thou ordain for me, O my Lord, every good thing Thou didst send down in Thy Book, and suffer me not to be far removed from the shelter of Thy mercy.

Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, the Most Generous.⁴



I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art my Companion in my lowliness, to rain down upon Thy loved ones from the clouds of Thy mercy that which will cause them to be satisfied with Thy pleasure, and will enable them to turn unto Thee and to be detached from all else except Thee. Ordain, then, for them every good conceived by Thee and predestined in Thy Book. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, He Whom nothing whatsoever can frustrate.⁵



Since Thou hast revealed Thy grace, O my God, deter not Thy servants from directing their eyes towards it. Consider not, O my God, their estate, and their concerns and their works. Consider the greatness of Thy glory, and

the plenteousness of Thy gifts, and the power of Thy might, and the excellence of Thy favors. I swear by Thy glory! Wert Thou to look upon them with the eye of justice, all would deserve Thy wrath and the rod of Thine anger. Hold Thou Thy creatures, O my God, with the hands of Thy grace, and make Thou known unto them what is best for them of all the things that have been created in the kingdom of Thine invention.⁶



Blessed is he that hath set himself towards Thee...Blessed is he who with all his affections hath turned to the Dawning-Place of Thy Revelation and the Fountain-Head of Thine inspiration. Blessed is he that hath expended in Thy path what Thou didst bestow upon him through Thy bounty and favor. Blessed is he who, in his sore longing after Thee, hath cast away all else except Thyself. Blessed is he who hath enjoyed intimate communion with Thee, and rid himself of all attachment to any one save Thee.⁷



Lauded be Thy name, O my God! I entreat Thee...to blot out from my heart all idle fancies and vain imaginings, that with all my affections I may turn unto Thee, O Thou Lord of all mankind!

I am Thy servant...O my God! I have laid hold on the handle of Thy grace, and clung to the cord of Thy tender mercy. Ordain for me the good things that are with Thee, and nourish me from the Table Thou didst send down out of the clouds of Thy bounty and the heaven of Thy favor.

Thou, in very truth, art the Lord of the worlds, and the God of all that are in heaven and all that are on earth.⁸



Happy is the man who hath recognized Thee, and discovered the sweetness of Thy fragrance, and set himself towards Thy kingdom...Great is the blessedness of him who hath acknowledged Thy most excellent majesty, and whom the veils that have shut out the nations from Thee have not hindered from directing his eyes towards Thee, O Thou Who art the King of eternity...Blessed, moreover, be the man that hath turned unto Thee, and woe betide him that hath turned his back upon Thee. Praised be Thou, the Lord of the worlds!⁹



Glory be to Thee, O King of eternity...I pray Thee...to number me with such as have rid themselves from everything except Thyself, and have set themselves towards Thee...¹⁰



I have laid hold, O my Lord, on the handle of Thy bounty, and clung steadfastly to the hem of the robe of Thy favor. Send down, then, upon me, out of the clouds of Thy generosity, what will purge out from me the remembrance of any one except Thee, and make me able to turn unto Him Who is the Object of the adoration of all mankind...¹¹



Suffer me, O my God, to draw nigh unto Thee, and to abide within the precincts of Thy court, for remoteness from Thee hath well-nigh consumed me. Cause me to rest

under the shadow of the wings of Thy grace, for the flame of my separation from Thee hath melted my heart within me. Draw me nearer unto the river that is life indeed, for my soul burneth with thirst in its ceaseless search after Thee. My sighs, O my God, proclaim the bitterness of mine anguish, and the tears I shed attest my love for Thee.¹²



I beseech Thee...to grant that we may be numbered among them that have recognized Thee and acknowledged Thy sovereignty in Thy days. Help us then to quaff, O my God, from the fingers of mercy the living waters of Thy loving-kindness, that we may utterly forget all else except Thee, and be occupied only with Thy Self. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou wilt. No God is there beside Thee, the Mighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Glorified be Thy name, O Thou Who art the King of all Kings!¹³



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 tender mercies. 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.¹⁴



Deny me not, O my Lord, what is with Thee, and suffer me not to be forgetful of what Thou didst desire in Thy days. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.¹⁵



Hold Thou the hand of this seeker who hath set his face towards Thee, O my Lord, and draw him out of the depths of his vain imaginations, that the light of certainty may shine brightly above the horizon of his heart...¹⁶



Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God!...I beseech Thee, by Him Who is the Fountain-Head of Thy Revelation and the Day-Spring of Thy signs, to make my heart to be a receptacle of Thy love and of remembrance of Thee. Knit it, then, to Thy most great Ocean, that from it may flow out the living waters of Thy wisdom and the crystal streams of Thy glorification and praise.¹⁷



I beg of Thee, O my God, by Thy most exalted Word...to ordain that my choice be conformed to Thy choice and my wish to Thy wish, that I may be entirely content with that which Thou didst desire, and be wholly satisfied with what Thou didst destine for me by Thy bounteousness and favor. Potent art Thou to do as Thou willest. Thou, in very truth, art the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.¹⁸



I implore Thee, by Thy name which Thou hast raised up above every other name, and hast caused to overshadow all that are in heaven and all that are on earth, to cast not away him that hath turned towards Thee, and to deny him not the wonders of Thy grace and the hidden evidences of Thy mercy. Let the hands of Thine omnipotence kindle in his heart a lamp that will enable him to shine brightly in Thy days...that Thou mayest behold him sanctified as Thou wishest and as beseemeth Thy majesty and glory.¹⁹



Lauded be Thy name, O my God and the God of all things, my Glory and the Glory of all things, my Desire and the Desire of all things, my Strength and the Strength of all things, my King and the King of all things, my Possessor and the Possessor of all things, my Aim and the Aim of all things, my Mover and the Mover of all things! Suffer me not, I implore Thee, to be kept back from the ocean of Thy tender mercies, nor to be far removed from the shores of nearness to Thee.²⁰



O God!...the remembrance of Thee is a healing medicine to the hearts of such as have drawn nigh unto Thy court; nearness to Thee is the true life of them who are Thy lovers; Thy presence is the ardent desire of such as yearn to behold Thy face; remoteness from Thee is a torment to those that have acknowledged Thy oneness, and separation from Thee is death unto them that have recognized Thy truth!²¹



Glory be to Thee, O my God! Thou hearest Thine ardent lovers lamenting in their separation from Thee...Open Thou outwardly to their faces, O my Lord, the gates of Thy grace, that they may enter them by Thy leave and in conformity with Thy will, and may stand before the throne of Thy majesty, and catch the accents of Thy voice, and be illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy face. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. None can withstand the power of Thy sovereign might.²²



Have mercy, then, upon Thy servants by Thy grace and bounty, and suffer them not to be kept back from the shores of the ocean of Thy nearness. If Thou abandonest them, who is there to befriend them; and if Thou putteth them far from Thee, who is he that can favor them? They have none other Lord beside Thee, none to adore except Thyself. Deal Thou generously with them by Thy bountiful grace.

Thou, in truth, art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.²³



I pray Thee, O Thou Who causest the dawn to appear...that Thou wilt grant that we may draw near unto what Thou didst destine for us by Thy favor and bounty, and to be far removed from whatsoever may be repugnant unto Thee. Give us, then, to drink from the hands of Thy grace every day and every moment of our lives of the waters that are life indeed, O Thou Who art the Most Merciful!²⁴



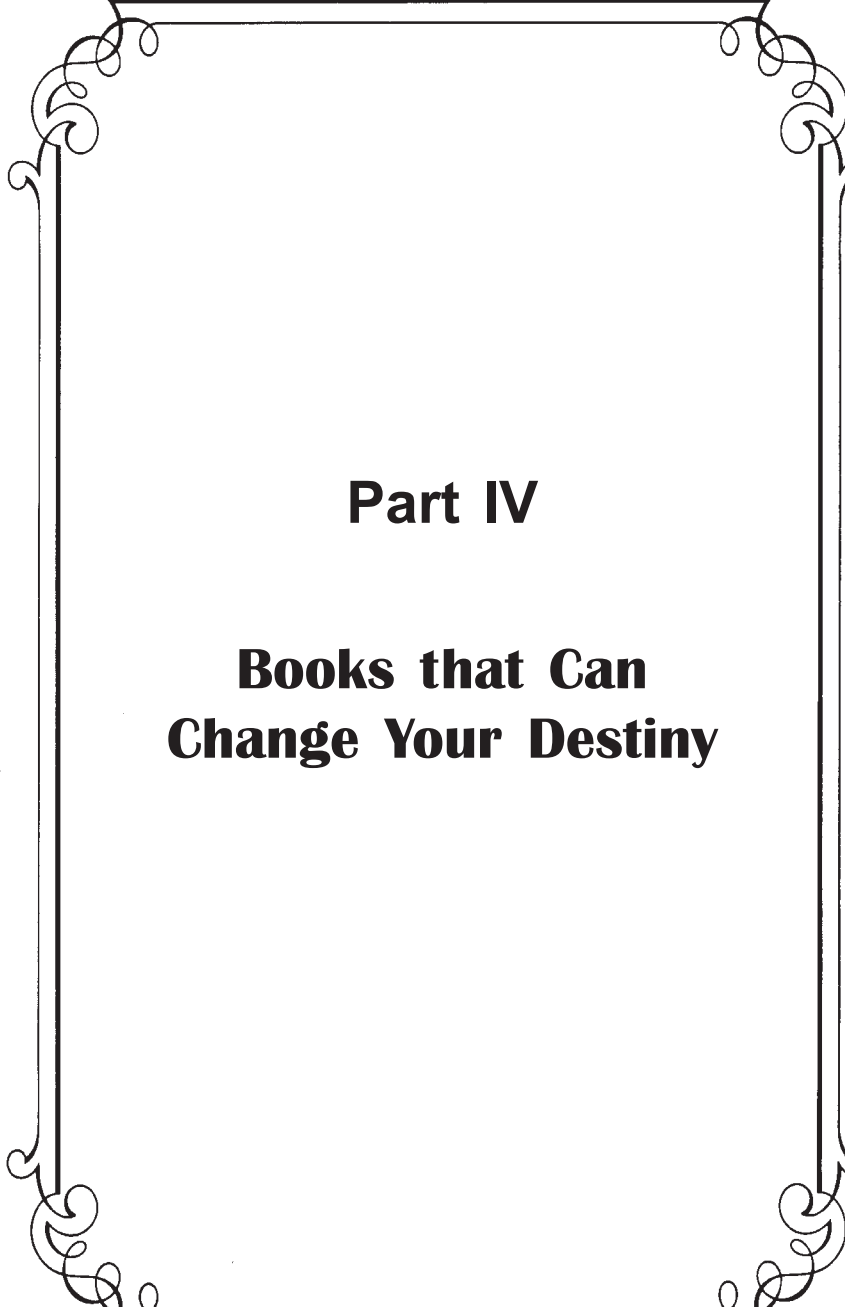
I am he who is sore athirst, O my Lord! Give me to drink of the living waters of Thy grace. I am but a poor creature; reveal unto me the tokens of Thy riches...

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy mercy that hath surpassed the entire creation, and Thy generosity that hath embraced all created things, to cause me to turn my face wholly towards Thee, and to seek Thy shelter, and to be steadfast in my love for Thee. Write down, then, for me what Thou didst ordain for them who love Thee. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou pleasest. No God is there beside Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bountiful.

Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds!²⁵



I testify, O my God, that this is the Day whereon Thy testimony hath been fulfilled, and Thy clear tokens have been manifested, and Thine utterances have been revealed, and Thy signs have been demonstrated, and the radiance of Thy countenance hath been diffused, and Thy proof hath been perfected, and Thine ascendancy hath been established, and Thy mercy hath overflowed, and the Day-Star of Thy grace hath shone forth with such brilliance that Thou didst manifest Him Who is the Revealer of Thyself and the Treasury of Thy wisdom and the Dawning-Place of Thy majesty and power.²⁶



Part IV

Books that Can Change Your Destiny

Section I

Bahá'í Scriptures Available in English

Bahá'u'lláh's Works

Seek ye out the book of Jehovah and read...

Isaiah 34:16

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh is the most complete and comprehensive reference on Bahá'u'lláh's Works available in English. This book, which is a compilation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, covers a wide spectrum of precepts ranging from the purpose of man's creation, his duty and destiny, to the manifold mysteries of divine Wisdom.

Prayers and Meditations***By Bahá'u'lláh***

Bahá'u'lláh has left a rich repository of prayers pertaining to every human hope and aspiration, dream or desire. Thus, in this dispensation, the seekers of serenity, guidance, and inspiration can select and recite prayers and meditations revealed and blessed by the Pen of the Redeemer of the age, the revealer of divine Purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh has also written many prayers expressing His own supplication and servitude before God. Such prayers offer an intimate knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's own self—His indomitable spirit, His unswerving love for the Creator and for humanity, His steadfastness in His claim, His determination before the onrush of adversities, His absolute trust in God, and His loving counsel to all those athirst for truth.

The Hidden Words***of Bahá'u'lláh***

No other of Bahá'u'lláh's works so succinctly offers the reader as complete and as representative a sample of the ethical fruits of the new Revelation as *The Hidden Words*. It is a small book filled with gems, a treasure-house of celestial Wisdom, a divine guide to the unfoldment and ennoblement of the human spirit.

All the requirements for attaining purity and self-fulfillment are stated in the most exquisite and lofty language. Everything that the soul must seek or surrender, everything that a spiritual seeker must know or must do to direct the course of his or her spiritual destiny is concisely and clearly revealed and set forth by the pen of the Supreme Messenger—the Revealer of hidden wisdom and divine mysteries.

The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys

Perhaps the most mystical of Bahá'u'lláh's works available in English. It unfolds and enumerates the stages of seeker's journey towards God; revealing, in a language at once poetic and perplexing, his potential for attaining perfection and nobility, and his sublime and celestial destiny, if he but turns to the light instead of darkness, seeks the gems of divine wisdom instead of the perishable joys of flesh, and undertakes to tread the long but wondrous and enchanting path of purification and illumination.

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Addressed to a cruel and cunning Muslim clergyman who, along with his father, inflicted death, distress, and torment on some of Bahá'u'lláh's most beloved and most distinguished disciples. Though addressed to a symbol of denial, it is a call to humanity as a whole. This weighty volume covers and clarifies many illuminating and inspiring arrays of precepts.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts

Contains some of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistles or Tablets addressed to the kings and rulers of the world, to religious leaders, and to humanity in general. These Tablets comprise Bahá'u'lláh's most emphatic words on His claim and on His station as the supreme Savior of humankind, the King of Kings, the Glory of the Lord, the Desire of the Nations, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of the Vineyard, Christ returned in the Glory of the Father, the Inaugurator of the Cycle of Fulfillment, and the Promised One of all ages and religions.

The Book of Certitude*

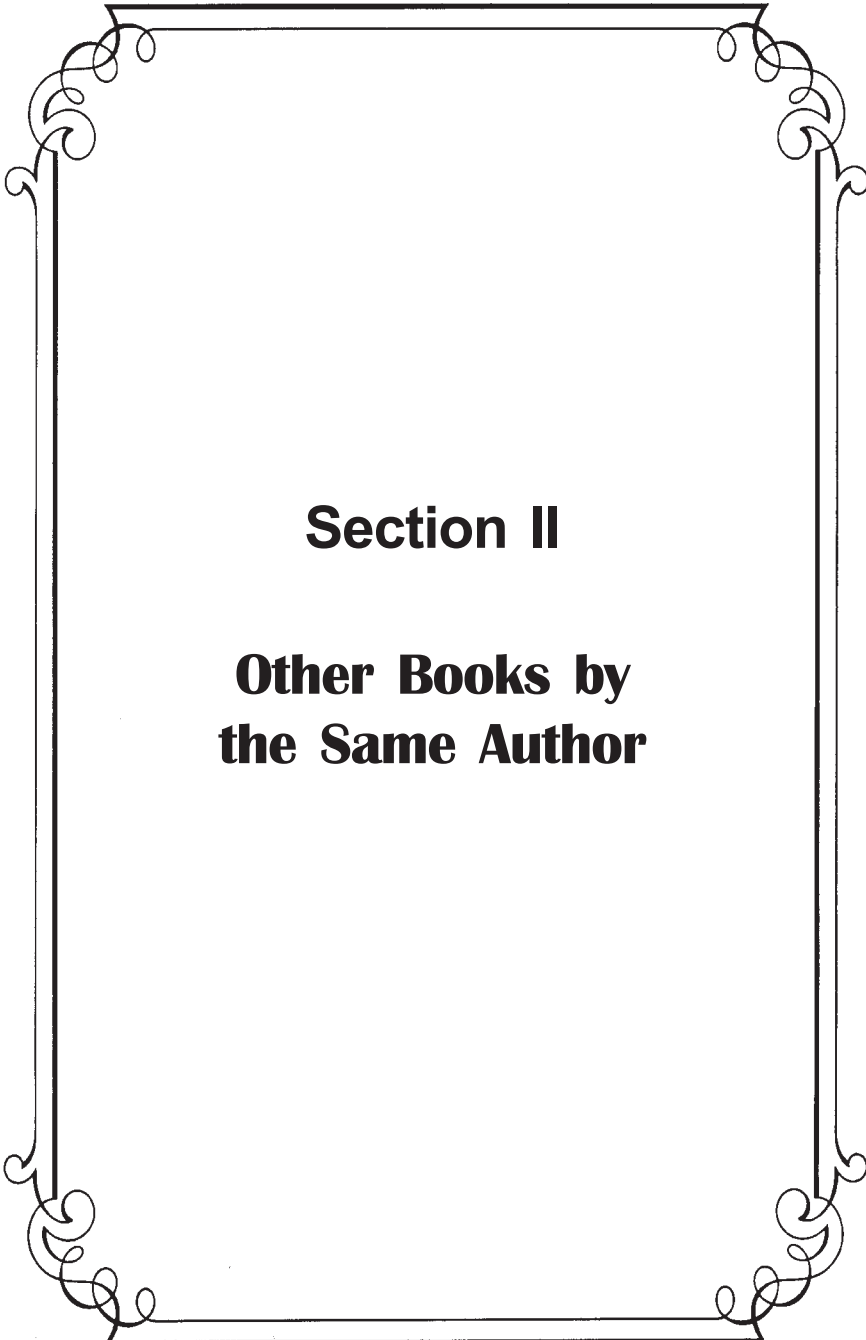
This book responds to questions raised by a seeker of truth. It unseals “the sealed Wine of mysteries,” and unveils the symbolism and the essence of all the scriptures of the past. It indicates how the seeker of truth can rise above the prevailing perplexity and confusion, how he or she can move from doubt to certitude, and from unbelief to belief.

It offers proofs of divine Revelation, portrays in a moving language man’s refusal to accept and acknowledge, in every age, the gift of divine Guidance, and conveys in a unique tone and style the dramatic story of the unfoldment of the perennial Faith of God—the unveiling of the eternal Truth.

***Other Bahá’í Writings
Available in English***

By Bahá’u’lláh:*The Most Holy Book**Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh****By the Báb:****Selections from the Writings of the Báb****By ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:****Some Answered Questions**Foundations of World Unity**The Secret of Divine Civilization**Paris Talks**Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**The Promulgation of Universal Peace**A Traveller’s Narrative*

*Also known as *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*.



Section II

**Other Books by
the Same Author**



I Shall Come Again

522 Pages

Volume I

That is the day when I come like a thief. Happy the man who stays awake. Christ (Rev. 16:15)

Do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" Christ (Mark 13:36)

Did you know that the Bible contains 16 time prophecies concerning the year of the Second Advent? No wonder so many scholars discovered the same date. Did you also know that all those 16 prophecies point to the same year: 1844? ***Bahá'ís believe that the promise of the Second Advent has already been fulfilled, precisely as predicted.*** Christ did return in 1844, ***"like a thief,"*** in a way that ***the News of His coming did not draw much attention.*** And as the Book of Revelation predicts, God gave Him a new name: ***Bahá'u'lláh***, meaning ***the Glory of God.***

Obviously ***we expect you to be very skeptical,*** but we invite you ***to stay spiritually awake, to "watch," to pay close attention, and to investigate this most glorious News.*** How can you do this? Start your search by examining the evidence presented in ***I Shall Come Again***, the first of a six-volume series on the fulfillment of biblical prophecies by ***Bahá'u'lláh***, ***the Glory of God.***

I Shall Come Again, written after three decades of research, takes you step by step through 16 prophecies that point to 1844, and hundreds of other prophecies, concerning the return of Christ. It proves how these prophecies, without exception, were fulfilled by ***Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*** and His martyred Herald, ***the Báb (the Gate)***, who appeared in 1844.

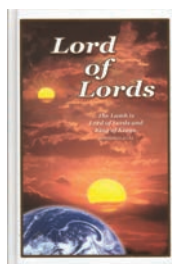
I Shall Come Again is one of the most fascinating books of our time. If you have faith in God's promises and a desire to know the truth, you will receive incomparable joy and hope from reading it.

Imagine if the News of the Return of Jesus is true and you choose not to investigate and not to know Him! Imagine also if the News of His Return is true and your investigation leads you to recognize Him!

I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. Christ (John 14:3)

"He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: 'Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!'"
"Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs?"

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)



Lord of Lords

634 Pages

Volume II

This volume presents hundreds of biblical prophecies concerning the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith—the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—as well as Shoghi Effendi (the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith), the Universal House of Justice (the supreme administrative body in the Bahá'í Faith), the Bahá'ís (the followers of Bahá'u'lláh), the Bahá'í teachings, and the Book of Bahá'í Laws (*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*).

Lord of Lords presents six fulfillments for Daniel's prophecy of 1335, and shows their connection to the Bahá'í Faith. The book also presents ***86 similarities between Jesus and the Báb***, who is called ***"One like a Son of Man."***

Christian scholars often apply the statistical laws to the prophecies of Hebrew Scriptures to prove the divine station of Jesus. ***Lord of Lords*** applies the same laws to the prophecies of both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to prove the divine station of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Lord of Lords shows that the probability of biblical prophecies coming true in the Bahá'í Faith by chance alone is about 1 in 10^{80} . The number 10^{80} is equal to the number of atoms in the known universe! What does this evidence indicate? ***It indicates that if anyone could pick a specific atom in the universe by chance, he could then claim that the biblical prophecies fulfilled in the Bahá'í Faith also happened by chance!*** The proof presented in this volume is so compelling it can convince even the most skeptic seeker!

...the desire of all nations shall come... Haggai 2:7

He who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty...Better is this for you than all ye possess.

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.

Christ (Matt. 16:27)

I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty.

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)



King of Kings

510 Pages

Volume III

This is the third of the six-volume series. This volume also presents hundreds of biblical prophecies concerning the advent of the Bahá'í Faith.

Four of its chapters show that, contrary to what most people—both Christians and Jews—believe, *the Bible predicts suffering and severe persecution for the Redeemer of our time*. *King of Kings* also presents many prophecies, in the course of two chapters, to show that according to both testaments, the title of the Redeemer of our age (known to Christians as the Second Coming of Christ and to the Jews as the Messiah) is “*the Glory of God*,” the English translation of the original title “*Bahá’u’lláh*.”

A chapter discusses the many reasons why people deny and persecute their promised Messenger and Redeemer in every age, and then later claim that if they had lived at the time of His Advent they would not be among the deniers!

Many Christians expect the coming of the Antichrist. *King of Kings* presents two chapters to show the fulfillment of this expectation by two deceptive figures who opposed *Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God*, with all their might, and tried in vain to destroy Him and establish themselves as the Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith.

I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and *King of Kings* prove that once again God has spoken to humanity, that He has fulfilled His promises, and has manifested His great glory and power by sending two supreme Messengers and Redeemers—*Bahá’u’lláh, and His martyred Herald, the Báb*—to guide our bewildered world to unity, peace, and justice, and to lead our wandering souls to His heavenly Mansions. Not investigating this Message of hope and fulfillment is to deprive yourself of the very source of all wisdom and the very purpose of coming to this world.

I have come down from heaven... Christ (John 6:38)

Say, God is my witness! The Promised One Himself [Bahá’u’lláh] hath come down from heaven...with the hosts of revelation on His right, and the angels of inspiration on His left... Bahá’u’lláh (the Glory of God)

Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake...
Christ (Rev. 16:15)

Blessed the slumberer who is awakened... Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him... Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

What do others say about:

I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, King of Kings?

A scholarly work of meticulous research. Appealing to reason and applying the scientific method to prophetic scripture, it demonstrates that God has once again revealed Himself to humankind and has provided hope for unity and peace on this planet. John Paul Vader, M.D.
Author of For the Good of Mankind

A book with a message of hope and fulfillment, a message that can transform our planet into a place of peace, into a kingdom that has been the dream and hope of humanity since the dawn of history...a scholarly, comprehensive, and fascinating work that has been long overdue. No wonder it took over three decades to complete it.

Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson
Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

A story with an incredible ending that is made credible by the sheer weight of evidence. It is a must for anyone interested in the proofs of the advent of the Promised One of all ages.
John Huddleston

***Former Chief of Budget and Planning
Division, International Monetary Fund,
Author of The Earth Is But One Country***

...a treasure house of great value for both Bahá'ís and seekers.

Adib Taherzadeh
Author and Scholar

I am in awe at the extent of research you have undertaken!

Waldo Boyd
Writer and Editor

Your work never fails to astound me. The effort and breadth of your knowledge both of the Bible and other literature as well as the depth of your understanding of Bahá'í Scripture is truly amazing. Also, a hallmark of your work is your thoroughness. Anyone who believes in biblical prophecy, and reads these volumes with an open mind, cannot fail to be convinced.

Dr. Tom Rowe
Professor of Psychology

Your work is the best I've seen on biblical prophecies and proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. You offer so much information in relatively few pages. Your many references prove clearly the book's central claim. Your language is simple and exciting. You take the reader through a complete spiritual and prophetic adventure. Your approach is modest, yet dynamic. I pray it will excite all your readers as it has excited me.

Joe Killeen
Bible Scholar, with a Degree in
Eschatology and Soteriology

There are few works by a single author that can rival Dr. Motlagh's in their sheer scope, depth and thoroughness of scholarship. Without doubt, future Bahá'ís will thank Dr. Motlagh for his achievements, that are, in my opinion, not only astonishing—they are heroic.

An important work that will be referenced by future Bahá'í scholars for millennia to come.

Robert F. Riggs
Aerospace and Marine Scientist, Inventor,
Author of *The Apocalypse Unsealed*

By writing these volumes Dr. Motlagh has made a momentous contribution to our understanding of biblical

prophecy. As a former Baptist minister, I urge all Christians to investigate the news of the return of our Lord as presented in I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you” (Isa. 60:1).

Mel Campbell

Former Baptist Minister



Come Now, Let Us Reason Together

286 Pages

This book is written in response to the objections raised by a pastor against the Bahá'í Faith. It removes all the main obstacles that prevent Christians from recognizing the return of the Son in the glory of the Father, from acknowledging the promised Redeemer of our time—*Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God*. Once you start reading this book, you will find it hard to put down.



On Wings of Destiny

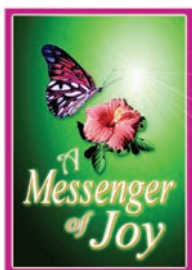
274 Pages

On Wings of Destiny is based on a dialogue between two friends. Reading it is like joining a circle of friends and participating in a “fireside chat.”

The prime purpose of the book is to inspire you—and anyone else who values his soul and spiritual life—to recognize that *in this world you have an awesome responsibility: you must choose your everlasting destiny. That choice has*

unimaginable consequences that will endure beyond death for all eternity. Failing to make a choice is also a choice. This book invites you to make every effort to discover God's plan for you and to follow that plan.

On Wings of Destiny shows that the only way you can attain true joy and happiness in all the worlds of God is to cultivate your spiritual potential and to draw nearer and nearer to God. If you value your soul and wish to choose your destiny in the light of knowledge and freedom, take the time to listen to this inspiring "fireside chat" to discover how the Bahá'í teachings can help you attain contentment, fulfill your life's purpose, and discover your divine destiny: Heaven's most glorious gift to you.

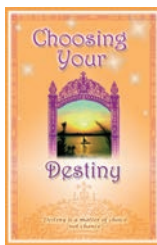


A Messenger of Joy

112 Pages

A Messenger of Joy is the most comforting and positive book ever written on death and the afterlife. In consoling and uplifting the souls of the grieving, it sets a standard that is not likely to be surpassed for a long time.

This book portrays death as a message of joy and hope, and not as the news of sorrow and despair. It lifts the veil to show that death is not the end of life, but the beginning of an everlasting and most glorious journey toward God.



Choosing Your Destiny

375 Pages

Most people leave their destiny to “chance.” Whatever their parents happen to believe, they believe. This book shows that our “destiny” is God’s most precious gift to us. Should we throw this gift to the wind? Should we allow “chance” rather than “choice” determine our destiny?

The Bahá’í Faith has come to give us spiritual insight and to help us choose our destiny in the light of reason and true knowledge, rather than in the darkness of tradition and conformity. The knowledge contained in ***Choosing Your Destiny*** can liberate us from past prejudices and illusions and set our souls free. It can help us become spiritual by developing “the divine image” in our soul.



One God, Many Faiths; One Garden, Many Flowers

290 Pages

One God, Many Faiths; One Garden, Many Flowers shows that in God’s garden there are many fragrant flowers, planted and nourished by the same Gardener. The Bahá’í Faith has come to help us recognize the beauty of the garden, the harmony of the flowers, and the oneness of the Gardener.

When we realize that we are all one people, on one planet, under one God, with one common destiny, the walls of prejudice that divide God’s beautiful garden will crumble.

Only true knowledge and love can reveal this beauty and bring about this wonder. The Bahá'í Faith is that knowledge and that love. It penetrates the hearts and souls of humankind to dispel all shadows of prejudice and separation. It connects our hearts and reveals the beauty and splendor of our souls in the light of oneness. ***One God, Many Faiths, One Garden, Many Flowers*** offers you the knowledge that can change your destiny.

Forthcoming Books

The Glory of the Son

It is absolutely essential to know why we believe in Jesus. Where can we find the answer? Only in the Words of Jesus Himself. ***The Glory of the Son*** offers a brief summary of all the reasons Jesus—not His followers—gave to substantiate His claim. This is a book that every Christian should read. It will also be of great value to those of the Jewish faith who have a desire to know the evidence for their glorious King and Redeemer: Jesus Christ.

Will Jesus Come from the Sky or as a Thief?

Be always on the watch! Luke 21:36

***The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the
night. 1 Thess. 5:2***

In the mid-19th century many Christian scholars had discovered that, according to numerous biblical prophecies and promises, Christ would return in 1844. Thousands of Christians around the world expected His Return in that year. Why did so many

discover the same date? And what piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did they miss? Let us explore this critical question.

Jesus declared that He would return “*like a thief*.” He also repeatedly warned us to “*Watch!*” How does a thief come? Secretly. A thief does not want to draw attention to himself. This is his foremost concern. How can we catch a thief? By being awake and “*watchful*,” by “*paying attention*” to his coming. Jesus’ warning that He would return “*like a thief*,” and His recommended strategy for recognizing Him by staying *awake* and by “*watching*” for Him, are complementary:

The warning: I shall come like a thief!

*The way to recognize me: Watch, pay close attention!
Do not be complacent!*

What, then, did Jesus mean by warning us repeatedly and emphatically to “*Watch!*”? He meant: “*Pay close attention to the news of My coming!*”

How did Jesus come the first time? Like a thief. He walked among the Jews. He knew every one of them, but with a few exceptions, they did not know Him. Jesus concealed His supreme glory from “the strangers,” from all those who were unworthy of seeing the Spirit of God in Him (John 12:40), from all those who “*may look and look but see nothing*” (Mark 10:12). *Only the spiritually-sighted paid close attention to Him*, only they “watched” with their hearts and souls, and only they saw the glory of God in Him. Jesus did not allow the spiritually blind to witness His divine glory.

By the vivid expression “*like a thief*” Jesus instructs us to expect a repetition of the way He came the first time. He further confirms this fact by predicting that *people will respond to the News of His coming the same way that they responded to the News of the coming of Noah*. They will be complacent, non-attentive, negligent, and spiritually asleep!

What piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did Christians (who expected the Return of Christ in 1844) miss? The same “piece” that the Jews had missed 18 centuries earlier and are still missing! That piece is the word “**SPIRIT**:”

The “missing piece” for Jews:

He will come as a “*king*” means: “*His Spirit*
will come as a king.”

The “missing piece” for Christians:

He will come from *heaven* means:
“*His Spirit* will come from heaven.”

Jesus Himself decoded the word “sky” or “heaven” several times. Compare the following two verses, one from *Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God*; the other from *Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God*:

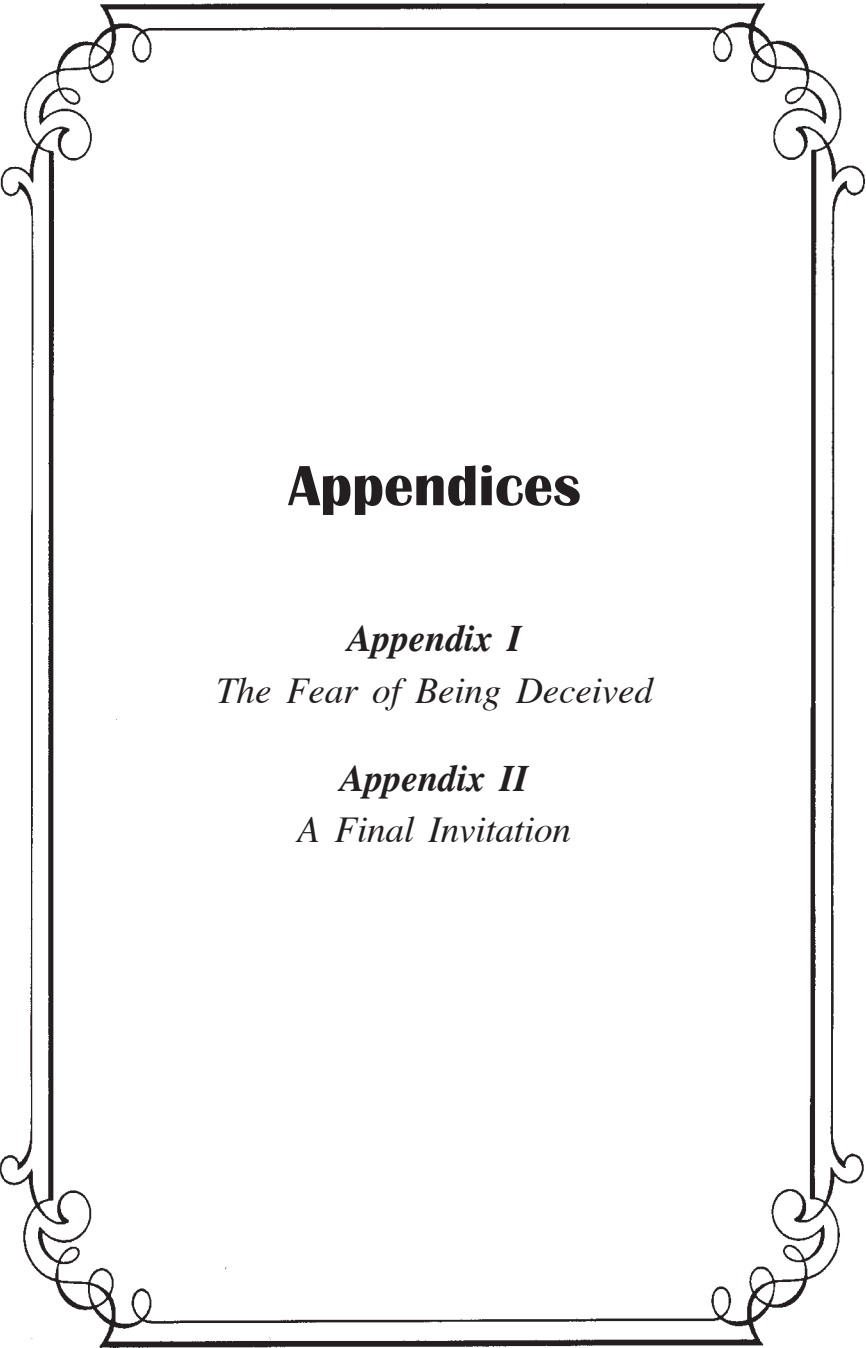
*I [the Spirit of God, Christ] have come down from
heaven.* *Christ (John 6:38)*

*He [the Spirit of God, Bahá'u'lláh], verily, hath
again come down from heaven, even as He came
down from it the first time.*

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

***Does Your Fishbowl
Need Fresh Water?***

This book presents scientific proofs for the existence of God and the afterlife.



Appendices

Appendix I

The Fear of Being Deceived

Appendix II

A Final Invitation

Appendix I

The Fear of Being Deceived

Many Christians who hear about Bahá'u'lláh, spontaneously remember this warning: “Beware of false prophets.” The concept of being “deceived” spiritually is so threatening that it prevents most believers from asking even a few simple questions, such as: Who is Bahá'u'lláh? Where does He come from? What evidence does He present?

Consider the past. Why would the Jews fear a man as gentle as Jesus?

Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Christ (Matt. 8:26)

In the preceding statement, Jesus links “fear” with “lack of faith.” Faith—true faith—and fear are incompatible. A faithful believer has a firm conviction that God will not abandon him.

Are human beings primarily emotional or rational beings? So often we respond as a slave to our emotions. Remember the times you kept telling yourself that there was no reason for

feeling anxious, fearful, or depressed. Did that work? Did your heart respond to your rational appeals? Fear of being deceived is so pervasive, it enjoys such a vast empire, it makes us fearful of everything that lies outside our “safety zone.” And that covers a lot of territory. Consider a child who fears a dog, and then extends that fear to all animals, even to a beautiful nightingale or even a butterfly.

Fear has such awesome forces at its command that it can completely numb the mind. The mind can become so paralyzed by fear that it cannot hear even the greatest, the most glorious, and the most joyous News: the News of the coming of the Lord, the News that hundreds of generations have been waiting to hear.

Did not the Jews rejoice at the thought of welcoming and honoring their Messiah? Yet when He came, they saw in Him the image of a deceptive prophet. Jesus was peaceful, gentle, and kind to the point of perfection. Even with the aid of those virtues, He could not gain the trust of His audience. He manifested the glory, the grace, and the majesty of God in all its splendor, and yet only a few—not even one in a hundred—trusted Him and believed in Him.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 1:11

The great majority of Jews were fearful of being deceived by their Redeemer! Jesus repeatedly asked them to overcome this emotional obstacle, but to no avail:

Have no fear...for your Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom.

Christ (Luke 12:32 NEB)

The instinctive fear of being spiritually deceived is so pervasive that it can completely paralyze one’s rational powers. It is ingrained in the heart and soul of every believer. Compare that with the fear of losing one’s material possessions. Have you met anyone who did not fear the loss of his savings to a conman? To be deceived is humiliating. This explains why

so many are closed to new ideas, and are reluctant to enter into even a simple dialog about someone else's beliefs.

We should note that most people fear not only falsehood but also the truth. Fear does not discriminate between good and bad. Avoidance is our first and foremost weapon against fear. Fear forces us to avoid anything that falls outside the traditional domain. It prevents us from being attracted to all new or uncommon beliefs, *whether they are true or false*.

Two forces interact within our soul:

- The fear of being deceived.
- The desire for knowing the truth.

Which force is more dominant? The fear of being deceived is instinctual; it is embedded in our heart and soul. What about our desire to know the truth? Is that also embedded in our heart and soul? Our mind has a desire to know the truth. The desire to know the truth is written mostly on our mind. But the mind faces enormous obstacles. It must move against our natural or defensive tendencies. It must take us outside our "safety zone."

The events and trends of our time have further intensified our natural tendencies. They have created an ideal breeding ground for fear:

- Today the ways of God have multiplied. Thousands of cults, sects and denominations claim to be in control of the only highway to heaven.
- People like to hear bad news. They feel good about themselves when they hear bad news about others!
- The news media fertilizes and cultivates this harvest. It gives people more of what they like: bad news.

All these forces have worked together to make us wary of the unknown and the unfamiliar. They have made us extremely cautious—reluctant to investigate or explore even the greatest News. Only a few adventurous souls can overcome the awesome forces of fear.

Suppose you are a skydiver and are about to make your first jump. You keep asking yourself: “What if my parachute fails to work?” That possibility constantly crosses your mind. The parachute is our trust in God. Today that trust has reached its lowest ebb. The believers’ parachutes are worn out. They refuse to jump.

Jesus knew that Christians living at the time of His Second Advent would be as faithless and fearful as the Jews who lived at the time of His First Advent. Human nature does not change from age to age. People have always been, and will always be, wary of stepping into an unknown zone. To show the spiritual state of His followers at the time of His return, Jesus asked:

...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?
Christ (Luke 18:8 NIV)

Jesus designated the most severe punishment for coward Christians. He declared that if such believers fail to overcome their unjustified fears, their home will be hell. It is hard to imagine a fear that surpasses the perception of being in hell for all eternity. Jesus appealed to fear of hell to save Christians from another equally potent fear—that of being deceived:

He who *overcomes* [his fears] will inherit all this...But *the cowardly*...their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
Christ (Rev. 21:7, 8 NIV)

“Overcome” what? Overcome spiritual obstacles that prevent us from knowing our Redeemer. One of those obstacles is the fear of being deceived. Just as we have secular cowards, so do we have spiritual cowards. The threat of being thrown into “the fiery lake of burning sulfur” as a motivator proves that Jesus had full knowledge of the powerful and prevailing fear that has engulfed and overcome today’s Christians.

Did Jesus use any warnings or incentives to teach Christians to be fearful of deceivers? None! He knew they would do this instinctively. He simply reminded them that they should be judicious in their choices, and not be gullible.

To show His concern for the cowards-in-spirit living at the time of His return, Jesus uttered a specific parable, known as the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30). In that parable, Jesus once again threatened His fearful followers with the same punishment: hell-fire. In the parable of the talents, Jesus likens Himself to a Master who leaves for a long journey. Before leaving, the Master calls His servants and entrusts them with His possessions. To each of them He gives according to his capacity or talents. Two of the servants, who had received the most, **double** their possessions by investing them. The third one, who had received the least, **buries** his.

“A long time afterwards their master returns to settle accounts with them.” The two servants who had invested their possessions heard these glowing words from their Master: “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matt. 25:21 NIV). What of the fearful servant who did not invest his possessions? He presented excuses that showed lack of trust in his Master. He said, “I was afraid and went out and hid my talent in the ground.” His Master called him “wicked and lazy.” Wicked because he pretended to trust Him in words but not in deeds, lazy because he did not use his God-given talents for the very purpose for which they were given to him. Then the Master punished the fearful servant by taking his meager possessions away from him and shutting him out of His heavenly Kingdom.

It is clear that “investing” means using one’s talents in the light of divine guidance to find and follow the Truth—in this case the Master Himself. The severe punishment imposed on the fearful servant points to the severity of his infraction: denying the very Master who granted him the cherished possessions.

The fearful servant had Jesus Christ in his heart, His Name at least, but did not obey His command or trust His counsels. At last, he lost even the very Name that he had zealously guarded. The adventurous, enterprising servants **also** had Jesus

Christ in their hearts. But since they trusted in His Command “**Watch!**”—which means nothing short of “**Investigate!**”—they **doubled** their possessions. They kept the Christ of the Gospel, and to that added the Christ of the new Revelation.

Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

Christ (Mark 4:25 NIV)

Jesus used yet another parable to show God’s displeasure with those who are not adventurous, who cling to what they already have for fear of losing it (Luke 19:11-27).

Continuing the Journey of the Search for Truth

When we compare human beings, we compare light bulbs. When we compare the divine with the human, we compare the sun with light bulbs. If God’s great Messengers and Redeemers are as bright as the sun, then why do so many fail to see them? Consider this analogy: What would happen if we placed two small pieces of paper over our eyes? Would we see the sun through them? What would happen if some clouds blocked our vision? The physical frame of God’s great Messengers is like a piece of cloth or a cloud. Just as clouds obscure the sun, so do their bodies obscure their Spirit. Their spirit is clothed with a cloud. This is the challenge our Creator has intentionally set before us: He asks us to make every effort to look through the clouds that clothe our promised Redeemer:

[He was] clothed with a cloud...His face was like the sun...

Christ (Rev. 10:1 NKJ)

Which eyes will see the Sun? The eyes that overcome the clouds. From God’s perspective, the eyes that cannot overcome the clouds are impaired. The divine physician has prescribed a special ointment for such eyes:

...you do not realize that you are...blind...I counsel you to buy from me...salve [ointment] to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Christ (Rev. 3:17-18 NIV)

God conceals His great glory in a humble body for a reason: to separate the adventurous from the complacent, the daring from the fearful, the curious from the closed-minded. This principle applies to all human achievements. We accept it in every facet of our lives, except the spiritual.

Why has God concealed all precious metals in the earth? Why are we not born with wisdom and knowledge? Why do we have to discover science? Why do we have to struggle to learn to walk? Why do we have to work to make a living? Why should this rule—the necessity to strive—not apply also to our relationship with God? Is God less worthy than gold? Should we obey “Seek and ye shall find!” for discovering gold, but not for finding God and the Glory of God?

...and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and ***search for it as for hidden treasure***, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:3-5 NIV

Appendix II

A Final Invitation

Bahá'u'lláh invites all seekers and lovers of truth to awaken to the dawn of this most glorious Day of the Lord. He asks them not to exchange the everlasting Kingdom for the transient pleasures and treasures of this world:

Know ye of a certainty that all the treasures of the earth, all the gold, the silver, and the rare and precious gems they contain, are, in the sight of God, of His chosen ones and His loved ones, as worthless as a handful of clay. For ere long all that is on earth shall perish, and the kingdom will remain unto God, the All-Powerful, the Incomparable. That which perisheth can never profit Us, nor can it profit you, were ye but to reflect.

By the righteousness of God! I speak not falsely, and utter naught save that which God hath bidden Me. To this bear witness the very words of this Tablet, if ye but reflect upon its contents. Follow not the promptings of your own desires, nor the whisperings of the Evil One in your souls. Follow rather the Cause of God, both in your outward and your

inner lives, and be not of the heedless. Better is this for you than all that ye have laid up in your houses, and all that ye have sought by day and night.

The world will pass away, and so will all the things whereat your hearts rejoice, or wherein ye pride yourselves before men. Cleanse the mirrors of your hearts from the dross of the world and all that is therein, that they may reflect the resplendent light of God. This, indeed, shall enable you to dispense with all save God, and to attain unto the good pleasure of your Lord, the Most Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We, verily, have unfolded before your eyes that which shall profit you both in this world and in the realm of faith, and which will lead you to the path of salvation. Would that ye might turn thereunto!¹

Bahá'u'lláh



Turn thou unto God and say: O my Sovereign Lord!...I have lifted my suppliant hands unto the heaven of Thy grace and Thy bounties. Send down, then, upon me from the clouds of Thy generosity that which will rid me of all save Thee, and draw me nigh unto Thyself. I beseech Thee, O my Lord...to rend asunder the veils that have intervened between me and my recognition of the Dawning-Place of Thy signs and the Dayspring of Thy Revelation. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Bounteous...Thou art truly the Lord of the worlds and of those who show mercy the Most Merciful...Thou, indeed, hast power over all things. Glory be to Thee, O Thou in Whose hand is the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth.²

Bahá'u'lláh



I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the King of kings...to remove the veils that have come in between Thee and Thy creatures and debarred them from turning unto the horizon of Thy Revelation. Cause them, then, O My God,

by Thy most exalted Word, to turn from the left hand of oblivion and delusion unto the right hand of knowledge and certitude, that they may know what Thou hast purposed for them through Thy bounty and grace, and may set their faces towards Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy Cause and the Revealer of Thy signs.

O My God! Thou art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite. Withhold not Thy servants from the most mighty Ocean, which Thou hast made the repository of the pearls of Thy knowledge and Thy wisdom, and turn them not away from Thy gate, which Thou hast opened wide before all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth. O Lord! Leave them not to themselves...Cast upon them, O My God, the glances of the eye of Thy favor and bounty, and deliver them from self and passion, that they may draw nigh unto Thy most exalted Horizon, taste the sweetness of Thy remembrance, and delight in that bread which Thou hast sent down from the heaven of Thy Will and the firmament of Thy grace. From everlasting Thy bounty hath embraced the entire creation and Thy mercy hath surpassed all things. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.³ Bahá'u'lláh

Sources for Information and Literature

1. Visit these Bahá'í Websites:
 - *www.globalperspective.org*
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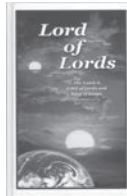
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Be always on the watch. Luke 21:36

I shall come upon you like a thief. Rev. 3:3