

Bahá'í Proofs

*You
shall
know
them
by
their
fruits*



*Proofs of the Divine
Origin of the Bahá'í Faith*

Bahá'í Proofs

How can we know—without any doubt—
that a religion comes from God?

*Does our law permit us to pass judgment
on a man unless we have first given him a
hearing and learned the facts?*

John 7:51 NEB

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Bahá'í Proofs

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How Can We Know the Truth?

“Present your case,” says the Lord. “Set forth your arguments”...

Isaiah 41:21 NIV

Prove all things...

I Thessalonians 5:21



Who Knows the True Meaning of Prophecies?

...who has known the mind of the Lord...?

I Cor. 2:16 NIV

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...

Isaiah 55:8 NIV

Then He [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24:45 NIV



Why Are Such Warnings and Instructions Given to us?

Wake up!... I shall come upon you like a thief! Christ (Rev. 3:2-3 NEB)

That is the day when I come like a thief! Happy the man who stays awake...

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NEB)

...unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time.

Hebrews 9:28

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...find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:3-5 NIV

Contents

Introduction

Part I

The Obstacle

*Prophecy: The Obstacle that Prevents
Many Believers from Knowing
Their Promised Redeemer*

Chapter 1: How Do Believers Turn a
“Guiding Map” Into a “Misleading Map”?

Chapter 2: Like a Mustard Seed



Part II

Bahá'u'lláh: The Glory of God

Chapter 3: Bahá'u'lláh: The One
Promised in All Sacred Scriptures



Part III

Proofs

*How Can We Know—
Without any Doubt—that
a Religion Comes from God?*

Chapter 4: Bahá'í Proofs



Part IV

The Role of Religious Leaders

Chapter 5: Religious Leaders

Chapter 6: My Dialogue With
Several Christian Theologians



Part V

The Word of God

Chapter 7: Prayers from Bahá'u'lláh

Chapter 8: Bahá'u'lláh's Meditations
and Prayers to God

Chapter 9: How Does God Motivate Us
to Know Him and Love Him?



Part VI

Further Proofs

Books that Can Confirm Your Faith
and Change Your Destiny

Introduction

The Obstacle

What is the purpose of prophecy? To help us recognize our Redeemer. Yet history shows that prophecy serves just the opposite purpose. It prevents us from knowing our Redeemer! The main reason is the discrepancy between what God intends to say and what we think He intends. God often speaks in figurative language, we speak in literal. Instead of adapting our thinking to God's language, we try to adapt God's language to our ways of thinking and speaking.

Because of Jesus' unique ways of speaking, sometimes even His disciples did not understand Him, let alone the Jewish religious leaders and scholars. Could this happen again? Should not example of the first Advent be a lesson to us? Should we, like the Jews, disregard the discrepancy between the heavenly and human language? Should we insist, as they did, that we have the wisdom to understand the true meaning of prophecies? Should Christian scholars and leaders claim that although the Jews did not understand God's language, they do? Can any believer present a single verse to show that Jesus has given him the wisdom or the authority to interpret the prophecies? This book presents conclusive evidence to show that unless we approach the Word of God in a spirit of humility, we will once again allow history to repeat itself, we may even side with negative forces. We may be remembered among those who rejected their Redeemer.



The Proofs

In discovering what God has planned for us, should we submit to the dictates of emotions, or depend on the demands of reason? What is a reliable standard? The validity of religion, like science, must stand on evidence; if it cannot pass the test of reason, it should be rejected. Any seeker who investigates the truth of a religion must demand proofs. If a religion cannot prove itself, it is unworthy of attention. What would happen if all people followed this one rule, if they demanded irrefutable evidence for the truth of a religion before believing in it?

The prime reason science moves forward is this: scientists do not depend on what their parents or friends tell them to believe. They demand evidence. What has been, and still is, the norm in religion? Ask a hundred people: "Why are you a Christian, a Jew, or a Muslim?" What do you think they will say? If they followed the rules of reason, as scientists do, would they not be following one harmonious system of beliefs?

We all reflect on this question: Is it easy to tell the difference between the divine and the deceptive? Ponder for a moment, and ask yourself: Can there be a comparison between

what God plans and what a deceiver devises? Would they not be as different as light and darkness? Can anyone with open eyes mistake one for the other?

As long as people fail to demand evidence for their beliefs, two things will happen:

- Deceivers will continue to find receptive listeners.
- The followers of great religions will remain divided.

You now have a chance and a choice to reverse both of these trends by doing exactly what others fail to do: demand convincing proofs for the divine origin of the Bahá'í Faith and its Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, who declares to be the promised Messenger and Redeemer of all mankind. If you fail to find irrefutable proofs, then reject His claim without any hesitation.

Part I

The Obstacle



*Prophecy: The Obstacle that Prevents
Many Believers from Knowing
Their Promised Redeemer*

*In the last days people will be...always learning but never able to
acknowledge the truth.* *II Timothy 3:1, 7 NIV*

*They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to
myths.* *II Timothy 4:4 NIV*

I

Prophecy

How Do Believers Turn a “Guiding Map” into a “Misleading Map”?

This chapter describes how the believers, throughout all ages, have altered the “guiding map of prophecies” into a “misleading map” of confusing theories and assumptions. They have been so confident in their beliefs, in the accuracy of their assumptions that *they have refused to pay any attention to the News of the Advent of their Redeemer*. They have totally ignored these clear and emphatic instructions:

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching [paying close attention] when he comes. Luke 12:37 NIV

If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. Revelation 3:3 NIV

...do not let him find you sleeping. Mark 13:36 NIV

What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!” Mark 13:37 NIV

A Deadly and Epidemic Disease

The Bible contains one verse so powerful, it could change the world. It speaks of a deadly disease that is quite easy to catch and spread. It has caused countless religious wars, it has divided Christianity into thousands of denominations, and it has caused the rejection of every Redeemer God has ever sent. This deadly disease is literal-mindedness. Its awesome powers are described in these words:

...for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. II Cor. 3:6 NIV

It is amazing that even after 2,000 years of learning about this deadly disease, the bacteria of literal thinking is as alive and deadly at the time of the Second Advent as it was at the time of the First! This chapter demonstrates how this deadly disease has shaped the course of history.

The First and Foremost Obstacle

Prophecies are like sign posts; *they are given to guide us to our destiny, to help us recognize our Redeemer. But many believers, throughout all ages, have used them for an opposite purpose. They have turned them into obstacles to deny their Redeemer.* They have acted like someone who thirsts for water, but uses water to drown himself!

The prime reason for the abuse of prophecy is the abundance of symbols, parables, and metaphors in sacred Scriptures—especially in prophetic verses—and the abundance of literal-minded believers among the followers of all religions. Obviously this is not a good match. What would we expect if we had a married couple who could not communicate? What would happen if one of them spoke in sign language, and the other could not interpret the signs? This seemingly little seed of misunderstanding has borne bitter fruits in all ages and all religions. The following verse describes the obstacle that people faced at the time of Jesus and still are facing:

Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.
John 10:6 NIV

Why are Prophecies Clothed with Symbols?

Prophecy is essentially a sign language. There are many reasons for this. Let us explore two of them:

- What would have happened if King Herod had known who Jesus was? Would Jesus have had a chance of surviving beyond His infancy (Matt. 2:13-16)? Those who hold the reins of power, both secular and religious, always feel threatened by God's great Messengers and Redeemers.
- What would happen to people's freedom of choice if prophecies gave them the exact details about their Redeemer in a way that they could not deny Him? What would happen to their cherished gift of faith?

Symbolic or sign language serves as a means of testing the believers' sincerity. It offers the faithful a means by which they can reach their hearts' desire. It offers the faithful a stepping stone to reach their destiny by recognizing their Redeemer. But symbolic language also offers the same opportunity to the unfaithful. It provides them with a way to justify and follow their hearts' desire: to remain in their comfort zone by rejecting their Redeemer. It allows them to preserve their freedom of choice.

Concealing events through symbols is comparable with the way God conceals Himself. What would happen if God stepped out from behind "the veil" and allowed us to see Him? The consequences would be the same if all prophecies were expressed in literal language.

The Example of Jesus

The way Jesus spoke and the way the Pharisees responded to Him and treated Him presents the most valuable lesson for all believers. It demonstrates the difference between human language and God's language. It teaches us what happens when spiritual language strikes the minds of literal thinkers, what follows when two opposites come together and interact. Imagine a four year old who hears his parents speak about "burning love," and thinks that they mean literal fire. That is how the Pharisees interpreted the Word of Jesus. Imagine also a police officer who hears about a poor, homeless wanderer, with devoted followers, who walks around and tells people that:

I have come to set fire to the earth. Christ (Luke 12:49 NEB)

And if asked: "Where are you coming from?" The poor man responds:

I have come from heaven (sky). Christ (John 6:38 NEB)

Then he adds:

I am the bread that came down from heaven (sky). Christ (John 6:41 NIV)

Literal Thinking is Anti-Biblical

The literal-minded believers encounter several specific references and many examples throughout the Bible that condemn literal thinking. They also encounter several specific references and many examples that encourage spiritual thinking. Despite this they continue to insist on the accuracy of their position, and continue to ignore the teachings of the Bible that they should not depend on their personal interpretation (II Peter 1:20; Proverbs 3:5).

What Scriptural defense do we find for literal thinking? None! To justify their stance, literal thinkers have their own verse. They simply claim—without a single reference to support their views—that: "The Bible means what it says, and says what it means."

We have countless references and examples that teach us just the opposite. Surely the Bible contains many literal facts. But contrary to what the literalists claim, the Bible often does not mean what it says, and often does not say what it means. This topic is so vast, it is treated in a forthcoming book by this author: *In the Clouds of Glory*. The book explains the many uses of metaphor in the Scriptures.

The Consequences of Literal Thinking

Literal thinking is not a minor problem. Its consequences are very serious, more than anyone can imagine. What consequence can be more serious and sinful than the rejection and ridicule of the One who comes to guide humankind and lead them to their divine destiny? What consequence can be greater than sending the Redeemer of the world to

prison? What consequence is greater than executing the One who comes to give life to the world?

Since the Ones sent by God do not literally fulfill the prophecies, the literal-minded believers, who are always in the majority, simply refuse to pay attention (“Watch”) to the news of His coming. This has been the trend throughout all ages, the prime reason for the rejection of every Messenger and Redeemer God has sent to humankind.

Why is Literal Thinking Popular?

Literal thinking is popular for several reasons. It is easier; it does not require abstract thinking. Further, it appeals to the believers’ self-interests, it reinforces what they already want to believe. It gives them the good news of being among the privileged; it offers them the hope of receiving special treatments, favors, honors, and glories from their powerful Redeemer who comes exclusively to comfort them and rescue them, while leaving the followers of other faiths in the grip of hopeless misery, humiliation, and even death by fire!

Imagine the sense of elation and ecstasy that this belief can generate in any believer. No wonder a series of books known as *Left Behind* (to suffer and die in misery) has sold over 40 million copies. This breaks the record set by any religious book published in the West except the Bible. The success of these books alone points to the fulfillment of the following prophecy concerning the believers who live at the end of the age:

...they will gather around them a great number of [Bible] teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. II Timothy 4:3 NIV

Today the first obstacle that prevents many Christians from investigating the news of the Second Advent is their assumption and insistence that they know how Jesus will return: from heaven to take the “true” believers with Himself back to heaven, but leave the great majority of humankind behind to suffer and die in misery. Some leaders of literal thinking even estimate the number of Christians who deserve to be saved: about nine percent of the earth’s population.

A Repeated Pattern

There are many parallels between the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus and the literal-minded Christians who live today. The Jews expected their Redeemer to come from an “unknown place” with great glory and power to crush their enemies and crown them on a kingdom as lofty and splendid as those ruled by David and Solomon. They said: “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46 NIV). Where on earth can a place be unknown to humans? None except the heavens qualify for this honor.

How then did Jesus fulfill the expectation cherished by the Jews? What did He say to those who questioned Him? He told them in plain language that He had fulfilled their desire, that He had indeed come from the sky, and that He had at His command “all power.”

...I have come down from heaven...

Christ (John 6:38 NIV)
See also John 6:42

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Christ (Matt. 28:18)

...a deliverer with victorious power...

Luke 1:69 NEB

Why did Jesus advance a claim that did not seem to be true? Because He spoke in sign language, not literal language. He contradicted this widely accepted principle: “The Bible means what it says, and it says what it means.” In this instance and many others, Jesus did not mean what He said and did not say what He meant. He used metaphoric speech to show the fulfillment of metaphoric prophecies. Only a spiritual mind can discern and appreciate the things that come from God. The literal mind does not have this extremely valuable and unique talent:

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
I Corinthians 2:14 NIV

Once again Bahá'u'lláh* speaks in the same language to show the fulfillment of the same prophecies. He reminds Christians that He has indeed fulfilled their desire, that He has also come from heaven with great power and glory, even as he had come and fulfilled the same expectations in the same way, the first time:

He [Bahá'u'lláh], verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

God is my witness! He, the Ancient of everlasting days [Bahá'u'lláh] is come, girded with majesty and power.² Bahá'u'lláh

The All-Merciful is come invested with power and sovereignty.³ Bahá'u'lláh

If Jesus' statement that He came from heaven is true, cannot the same statement from Bahá'u'lláh also be true? If Jesus' statement that He has “all power” is true, cannot Bahá'u'lláh's statement that He has “power and majesty” also be true? Why apply two standards to God's language spoken at different times? Why take one language symbolically, and the other literally? Who decided that there was a shift in God's way of speaking between the First and Second Advents?

The Narrow Limits of Human Understanding

Christians have a precedent for the meaning of “sky” in precisely the same context: the descent of a Redeemer from above. The Jews did not have this precedent. The example that Jesus set—how He fulfilled the prophecies and how people rejected His interpretation—should open the hearts and minds of all faithful Christians. It should awaken them to this truth, to this invaluable lesson of history: human beings should not regard their understanding of prophecy as the standard of truth.

* See Part II for a brief introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's life.

...man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom...unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

When tested for their ability to decode the prophetic language, human beings have always received a failing grade. In the court of prophecy, they have always proved to be unfair and incompetent judges.

Does a Redeemer come to break the seal of prophecies, or should He ask Bible teachers to teach Him the wisdom required to break them?

“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.

Christ (Rev. 5:2-3 NIV)

All prophetic vision has become for you like a sealed book...

Isaiah 29:11 NEB

Does a Redeemer come to judge us by *His* truth, or does He come to be judged by *our* “truth”?

...He is coming to judge...the peoples with His truth.

Psalms 96:13 NKJ

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Listening to the Voice of Wisdom

If wisdom could speak, what would it say? Would it say: “Trust the popular beliefs, accept the traditional expectations”? Would it say: “Your lucky birth into your family gives you a good reason to remain where you are”? Would it say: “If your family is Baptist, stay a Baptist; if a Sunni, stay a Sunni; if an atheist, stay an atheist”? Would wisdom say: “This choice—investigating or ignoring the news of the Second Advent—is so minor, it should be left to the judgment of others”? Would wisdom say: “If you wish to find the truth, do not waste your time in seeking”? Would it say: “Do not hesitate to build your everlasting destiny on chance or coincidence”? Would wisdom declare: “Do not pay attention to any claim that does not fulfill the orthodox, the popular, and the mainstream expectations”? Would wisdom say: “As long as you are in the majority, you are safe”? No, wisdom would say none of these. The Scriptures, the evidence of history, and reason reject all those assumptions:

...seek, and ye shall find...

Christ (Matt. 7:7)

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

Christ (Matt. 7:14 NIV)

The Need for Humility

The tragic story of Jesus should encircle the lives of all faithful believers with haloes of absolute and unconditional humility. Those haloes should enlighten all their thoughts. They should guide every step of their spiritual journey. Jesus exalted and blessed the

meek who acknowledge their spiritual poverty (Matt. 5:3, 5), and debased those infected with pride (Matt. 23:12).

If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind.

Matthew 16:24 NEB

See also John 9:39

Let a man humble himself till he is like this child, and he will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 17:4

He that is exalted among you shall be abased, and he that is abased shall be exalted.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

A lack of humility—such as saying “I am sure I am right and have no need to investigate Bahá'u'lláh's claim”—is the first and foremost obstacle in the path of many devout Christians. This obstacle is so powerful, it conceals from the sleeping souls, the most splendid revelation of God's glory and grace. To the awakened, the Glory of God shines as brightly as the lightning that illumines the sky (Matt. 24:27). To the sleepers, that Supreme Glory remains as hidden as a thief (Rev. 3:3). Those who start their spiritual journey with this grave obstacle—I am sure Jesus must come from the sky—will be unable to take the next essential step: Test Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God—by God's standards, rather than by their own faulty assumptions. They will fail for the same reason that others before them have failed: staying firmly on the literal track, preferring the earthly bread over the heavenly.

Heeding the Lessons of History

Are the believers of this age, who look to the sky to deliver their Redeemer, justified in assuming that they understand the meaning of prophecies any better than the Jews? Is there a single verse that promises them this advantage, that validates this sense of superiority? Do they have a global vision of God's plan? Can they assemble the grand jigsaw puzzle of prophecy? If they can, why then are there so many conflicting “schools” of prophecy?

Note how Jesus rebuked the Jews for their failure to recognize that their Messiah must first suffer and then later “enter His glory”?

“How dull you are!” he answered. “How slow to believe all that the prophets said!

Was the Messiah not bound to suffer thus before entering upon his glory?”

Luke 24:25 NEB

What evidence is there to believe that those who lived at the time of the First Advent were “spiritually dull,” but those who live at the time of the Second Advent are “spiritually bright”? Do people change from age to age?

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom...

Jeremiah 9:23

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long...He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psalms 25:4-5, 9 NIV

The Jews were absolutely certain that their Redeemer would not come to suffer. He would rather come to relieve *their* sufferings. They did not link Chapter 53 of Isaiah—that speaks of suffering—to their expected Messiah. Consider the following statement from a major Christian institution, known as *Resources for Christian Communication*:

Jesus' closest friends also found it impossible to believe that Jesus would suffer at the hands of His enemies (Matt. 16:21-23). They expected that He had come to conquer the world and bring in the kingdom of God. Only in time would Jesus' disciples be able to see that the prophet Isaiah had predicted another side of the Messiah's work. Only in retrospect would the friends of Jesus be able to see the meaning of the prophet Isaiah's words...⁶

The publication then quotes several verses from Isaiah 53, a chapter people failed to link to Jesus:

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:3, 6 NIV

Question: It took some time for the followers of Jesus and a long time for others, to see that Isaiah's prophecy was relevant to the promised Messiah, and that the phrase "despised and rejected by men" depicted another side of Jesus' First Advent. How long will it take for the masses of Christians to see that predictions such as "I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" or "He must first suffer," or "I shall come like a thief" or "as it was in the days of Noah" and many others, also depict another side of Jesus' Second Coming?*

It took about three centuries before Jesus received His due recognition—when Emperor Constantine became a believer and promoted Christianity. How long will it take this time? How long will people wait before they will partake of the most glorious outpouring of grace from their Lord?

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.⁷
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.⁸
Bahá'u'lláh

Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created Days. How great the felicity [bliss] that awaiteth the man that forsaketh all he hath in a desire to obtain the things of God! Such a man, We testify, is among God's blessed ones.⁹
Bahá'u'lláh

Should we allow once again three centuries to pass before we awaken to this glorious dawn, before we pay attention ("watch") and open our hearts to the news of the coming of our Redeemer?

* For a detailed review of prophecies that predict that Christ "must first suffer and be rejected" at His Second Coming, see *King of Kings*, Chapters 4 to 9. In that book, a total of 6 chapters are devoted to this topic.

The Awesome Powers of One Word

Let us now see how a little obstacle—one word—prevented the people of the past from “seeing” the meaning of prophecies of the First Advent, and how once again one word is preventing the people of our time from “seeing” the meaning of prophecies of the Second Advent. The Jews were told repeatedly to expect their Messiah to be a *king*. Consider these prophecies among many others:

I will raise up your offspring to succeed you...his throne will be established forever.
I Chronicles 17:11, 14 NIV

...one who will be ruler over Israel... Micah 5:2 NIV

When questioned about His kingdom, Jesus spoke in metaphoric language—as He did in relation to His “coming from heaven”—to show the fulfillment of a metaphoric prophecy. In response to the objections, He simply said that He was indeed a king, but in another world—the spiritual world:

My kingdom does not belong to this world. Christ (John 18:36 NEB)

The story of the First Advent shows that when it comes to prophecy, human beings are “slow learners.” Why did it take them so long to learn that God often speaks in spiritual or figurative language? Now, once again, we are at a critical turning point in history. How long will it take us this time to learn that same lesson? How long will it take us to learn that “every eye shall see Him” refers to the spiritual eye, the “eye” in the heart, not on the head? How long will it take us to learn the lesson of humility? How long will it take us to notice and obey this instruction?

...no prophecy of Scripture is a [matter] of any personal or private or special interpretation. II Peter 1:20 AB

How long will it take us this time to obey and honor this instruction?

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God. I Corinthians 4:5 NIV

Ponder the following statement from the noted Christian author and scholar, Dr. James Kennedy:

The great Princeton theologian of the last century, Dr. Charles Hodge, said something which I have always thought is worth remembering. He said that though the Old Testament is filled with some 333 prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ; in spite of that, nobody got it right. And as you know, they crucified Christ because of a misunderstanding about what the Messiah was really coming to do. And we should because of that 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.]¹⁰

Even the enlightened people who lived at the time of Jesus needed help to understand the meaning of Hebrew prophecies:

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Luke 24:45 NIV

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27 NIV

Do we not once again need our Redeemer's help to open our minds? Do we not need His Wisdom to explain the meaning of prophecies to us?

Who Knows the Meaning of Prophecies?

In His First Advent Jesus rejected, even condemned, the personal, private interpretation of the Jews. He showed them that only He had the right to say that by "king" is meant "spiritual king." Does not Christ have the same right in His Second Advent? Is He not allowed this time to say that by "eye" is meant the "spiritual eye"? Is He not authorized this time to declare that His true essence is His Spirit, and that only the "eye" that can "see" God can also see Him? Can He not declare, as He did in His First Advent, that once again He has descended from heaven?

Both by the way Jesus responded to objectors and by the story of His life, He set the standard of knowing what to expect. Should we change that standard and claim that this time *we* know the true meaning of prophecies, that this time *we* know what "sky" and "seeing" mean?

Does not God often speak in metaphoric language? Did He not teach us that only pure-hearted people can "see" God? Surely He did not mean "seeing" with physical eyes.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Christ (Matt. 5:8)

Whether we want to see God, the Glory of God, the Love of God, or the Greatness of God, the requirement is the same. We must possess a noble heart—pure and faithful. Note how clearly Jesus taught us the requirement or prerequisite for seeing "the glory of God" which is the English equivalent of "Bahá'u'lláh."

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

Then who is qualified to decide which prophecy is literal, which prophecy is metaphoric? Can Christians or Jews find one bishop, one rabbi, or one scholar, among all the peoples of the world, who has this wisdom, who can "break the seal"? Will they be able to find one honest Bible teacher who can claim to have the insight to know for sure?

This is one of the greatest puzzles of all times. Those who lived at the time of Jesus did not understand the meaning of the prophecies regarding the First Advent. Jesus reminded them repeatedly of their failure:

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. Christ (Matt. 16:2-3 NKJ)

What do you think has changed since Jesus spoke those words? Could we assume that people did not have the wisdom to discern the meaning of prophecies at the time of the

First Advent, but somehow they have gained that wisdom? What evidence is there to show that they have, that they are wiser, humbler, or more discerning? Unfortunately prophecies portray a gloomy picture of the spiritual profile of the people of our time:

There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of...pleasure rather than lovers of God...They are the kind who...[are] always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. II Timothy 3:1-7 NIV

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. II Timothy 4:3-4 NIV

If people acknowledge this fact—their inability to understand the truth of prophecies—they will discover a panorama of fulfilled prophecies in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation on a scale they have never witnessed.

Coming on the Clouds

Every Redeemer comes on the clouds: the clouds of traditions, assumptions, and misconceptions. The only “authority” that most people respected and obeyed at the time of Jesus was “tradition.” That same authority rules today. And what is tradition? It is an accumulation of assumptions—idle fancies—made long ago by some self-assured, imaginative, and bold theologians, and then passed to others until it assumed the appearance of truth!

What an awesome power tradition has at its command! Jesus was a poor and lowly Jew. Without any armies, He conquered the world. Today one out of every three persons living is Christian. By the example of His life and sacrifice, He showed us that He could not have falsely claimed to be a Redeemer from God. Further, He fulfilled many Hebrew prophecies. Yet, that one word—king—is still preventing millions of Jews from acknowledging their Jewish Redeemer! How can one word possess such an awesome power? How can it prevent the hearts and minds of millions from seeing?

In both of His Advents, Christ came not only from the sky, but also over the clouds. Like the Sun He shined, and still is shining, but the clouds of assumptions and traditions concealed—and still are concealing—His great glory and power from many millions of people.

Today another word is playing the same role, and it has assumed the same awesome power as the word “king” did long ago. That word is “sky.” Once again, to many people, it does not matter how great Bahá'u'lláh is, what incredible prophecies He has fulfilled, what great works He has accomplished, how noble a life He has lived, or what beautiful Scriptures He has revealed. All that matters is that word: sky. Once again one word is concealing the awesome Glory of God from countless millions of devout Christians. History is repeating itself with astonishing precision. As Jesus declared, it is the way of people to persecute the Prophets, and it is the way of future generations to build magnificent shrines in their memories (Matt. 23:29).

The Word of God as the Ultimate Evidence

Consider the following verses from Bahá'u'lláh. Can any human being, on his own, speak with such authority and power? These quotations alone manifest to receptive hearts and souls, the true identity of Bahá'u'lláh, His divine glory and power:

I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh

...from the heights of the Kingdom the Voice of the Spirit of God is heard proclaiming: "Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye unto Him." Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: "The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Loved, is made manifest."¹² Bahá'u'lláh

Solomon in all his majesty circles in adoration around Me in this day, uttering this most exalted word: "I have turned my face towards Thy face, O Thou omnipotent Ruler of the world! I am wholly detached from all things pertaining unto me, and yearn for that which Thou dost possess."¹³ Bahá'u'lláh

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!?'...He that summoneth men in My name is, verily, of Me, and he will show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth...Let the Breeze of God awaken you. Verily, it hath wafted over the world. Well is it with him that hath discovered the fragrance thereof and been accounted among the well-assured.¹⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

O concourse of priests! The Day of Reckoning hath appeared, the Day whereon He Who was in heaven hath come. He, verily, is the One Whom ye were promised in the Books of God, the Holy, the Almighty, the All-Praised. How long will ye wander in the wilderness of heedlessness and superstition? Turn with your hearts in the direction of your Lord, the Forgiving, the Generous.¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Wisdom Speaks

Wisdom is heaven's most precious gift to humans:

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her...She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. Proverbs 3:13-18 NIV

... let the wise listen and add to their learning... Proverbs 1:5 NIV

Wisdom is the light that leads us to true knowledge. Among the lessons wisdom teaches is this: "Have courage, but do not take unreasonable risks." What is the risk no one

should take? Leave his everlasting destiny to chance. In choosing our destiny, what choices do we face?

- We can either remain apathetic, complacent, and closed to new ideas.
- Or stay awake, watchful, alert, and open to new ideas.

Which choice is wise—apathy or alertness? The answer is evident:

Be on guard! Be alert ! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"

Christ (Mark 13:33-37 NIV)

Can wisdom coexist with apathy and ignorance? In a TV ad, someone asks a young lady: "What kind of guy are you looking for?" She says: "Whatever!" Then another lady appears. Someone asks her: "What kind of oil are you looking for?" She says: "Penzoil!" The ad ends with: "What you choose does matter."

The contents of the ad fits the way many people choose their destiny. When they want to buy a car, they consult the *Consumer's Report* to make the wisest choice. But when it comes to choosing their everlasting destiny, do they also search for the wisest choice? Do they try to discover what God has planned for them? Do they ask questions such as:

- What really matters in human life?
- Should I set aside some time to choose my destiny, or should I continue to follow whatever my parents and my culture gave me?

In this age, it seems most people pay more attention to where they want to spend their few days of vacation than where they want to spend eternity. It seems most people prefer to watch their favorite TV show than watch for the news of the coming of their Lord. We should note that failing to choose our destiny is also a choice, but one with everlasting and irreversible consequences.

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life...the Lord is your life...

Deut. 30:19-20 NIV

The Great Honor of Sitting on the Heavenly Throne

Jesus declared that when He returned, He would divide the people into two groups:

When the Son of Man comes...he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Christ (Matt. 25:31-33 NIV)

Who are the two groups? One group consists of the believers who welcome their Lord into their hearts and homes, and the other of the believers who fail to respond to His

knocking. Today Jesus' prediction has come true. Some Christians have welcomed the Lord and embraced Him, while many others have ignored His call. To those who would recognize Him and welcome Him, Jesus promised rewards beyond description. He said He would give them the glorious honor of sitting with Him on His throne:

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. Christ (Rev. 3:20-21)

Just as it was in the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37) and in the days of Jesus, most people today are complacent with their lives. The news of the coming of the Lord does not excite them. It does not bring them out of their churches and synagogues. They continue to remain asleep in the night of unawareness. They do not heed Jesus' repeated warnings that they should be watchful and vigilant at all times.

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)

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)

Our Redeemer makes an urgent appeal to Christians—who have fixed their hopes and their eyes on the skies—to investigate for themselves the news of His coming—the news of the Advent of this most glorious Revelation. He invites each of us to step forward and see for ourselves the fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Scriptures. He invites us to seek the knowledge of this most glorious event in human history!

He invites us to come and see for ourselves the supreme power and glory of the One we have been waiting for! He invites us to examine the Blueprint that He has brought for building the City of God! He invites us to come and see for ourselves the heavenly Civilization that He has already established—a Civilization the like of which the world has never seen before!

This Civilization, this Kingdom, has been growing steadily and slowly “like a mustard seed.” And as our Lord has promised, it will become, in due season, the largest of all trees:

What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade. Christ (Mark 4:30-32 NIV)

We have the freedom and the honor to participate and become a part of this Kingdom. To succeed in our search, we must set aside all our fears, assumptions, and preconditions, and begin our spiritual journey with total dependence on God, rather than on Bible teachers and scholars who depend only on human understanding!

Can we expect to be delivered through avoidance and inaction? Can we expect to be saved by ignoring His “knocking” and by keeping our heart closed? Can we expect to be

saved by disobeying our Lord, by not seeking, by not praying, and by not “watching” or paying attention to the news of His coming?

...through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

Proverbs 11:9

This is the most auspicious time in human history. It is the time to lay the foundation for the City of God. Our Redeemer invites us to come and participate in building this city. He invites us to overcome our fears and open our hearts to His most glorious Advent! He invites us to search for the Heavenly Thief! He invites us to allow the “Lamp of our Spiritual Wisdom” to lead us to the Bridegroom and His everlasting Banquet! We are not asked to accept anything, only to investigate, test, and examine, only to “watch” or pay attention to the glorious News of His coming, and to the overwhelming evidence that proves that our Lord has already returned!

Is it wise to let history once again repeat itself? Is it wise to ignore the Sun because of the drifting clouds of literalism—clouds that have dominated the hearts and minds of humankind and concealed the light of true understanding?

May God bless and guide you in all your endeavors.

2

Like a Mustard Seed

Christ (Matt. 13:31)

Human beings are impatient; they expect and cherish dramatic and awesome events. They love to behold an angelic Being suddenly come down from heaven and turn the earth into paradise. They wish to see this prayer come true without any efforts on their part:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Christ (Matt. 6:10)

Unfortunately, such wishes are only wishful thinking. Change without human effort is contrary to the design of creation, to the ways of God:

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV

Just as a seed grows little by little, with tender loving care, so does the seed of the Kingdom of heaven on earth:

The kingdom of heaven is *like a mustard seed*, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches. Christ (Matt. 13:31-32 NIV)

History shows that there is a recurrent pattern in the way great Revelations grow and flourish. Our age is no exception. We are told that history will once again repeat itself:

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah’s time. Christ (Matt. 24:37 NAB)

Let us now take a brief look at that recurrent pattern. In general, the “Mustard Seed” of the Kingdom grows through the following stages:

1

The Stage of Inattention and Unawareness

At first, people simply ignore the News of the Advent of their promised Redeemer. They find their security in numbers. They prefer the “wide gate” over the “narrow gate.” No wonder they are warned:

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. Christ (Matt. 7:13 NIV)

Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter [the heavenly kingdom] and will not be able to. Christ (Luke 13:24 NIV)

Most people look up to their religious leaders. They think that they are the first to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But this is a grave misjudgment. History indicates that they are **not** the first to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but the first to **deny** their promised Redeemer and to **prevent** others from entering that Kingdom:

Indeed there are those who **are last** who will be first, and first who will be last. Christ (Luke 13:30 NIV)

Most people feel so confident in the judgment of their religious leaders, and the majority who follow them, that they refuse to pay any attention to the news of the Advent of their Redeemer. They place more trust in the religious establishment than in the clear and emphatic instructions of their own Redeemer—instructions such as:

I shall come upon you like a thief... Christ (Rev. 3:3 NEB)

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them **watching** when he comes. Luke 12:37 NIV

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

Be on the alert... Christ (Luke 21:36 NEB)

Do not let him find you sleeping. Christ (Mark 13:36 NIV)

Take ye heed, **watch** and pray... Christ (Mark 13:33)

Unto them that look for him [Christ] shall he appear the second time... Hebrews 9:28

What does the word “**watch**” teach us? **That we must pay attention.** Why and when do we pay attention or fail to pay attention? Suppose you are watching the news and you hear something that relates to your self-interests. You suddenly focus your attention. You do not want to miss a word. Suppose the next item on the news does not relate to your personal needs or interests. What happens next? The mode of your attention suddenly changes into inattention. Jesus’ instructions show that the news of His coming will be of this kind—**the kind that would not draw the believer’s attention.** They would readily ignore it, **because it fails to fit their expectations.**

The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. They would cast away everything they possess, be it all the treasures of the earth, that their Lord may remember them to the extent of addressing to them but one word.¹ Bahá’u’lláh

Ponder the meaning of the following prophecy expressed as a parable. It predicts that **the believers will fail to take notice** of the invitations they receive to attend the Kingdom of Heaven:

“The kingdom of Heaven” he said, is like a King who arranged a wedding for His son. He sent His servant to summon [people]...but they refused to come...Here is My

wedding...everything is prepared...***But they took no notice***...For many are invited but few are chosen. Christ (Matt. 22:1-14)

Jesus taught the same message still through another parable. Once again people were invited to a banquet. How did they respond? They offer excuses not to attend:

A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, "Come, for everything is now ready." But they all alike began to make excuses.

Christ (Luke 14:16-18 NIV)

The Dawn hath broken, yet the people understand not.²

Bahá'u'lláh

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Christ (John 1:5 NIV)

Let us now move to the next stage in the growth of the Seed of the Kingdom.



2

The Stage of Gradual Awakening and Paying Attention

As time goes on, a few believers begin to "watch," to take notice of the "narrow gate," and to investigate the News of the advent of their promised Redeemer. This stage is often quite brief, but leads to dramatic consequences. It attracts the attention of the religious establishment.



3

The Stage of Persecution

Sadly the persecution of God's great Messengers has been a persistent part of a recurrent pattern:

You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?

Acts 7:51-52 NIV

Woe to you, teachers of the law [religious leaders] 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."

Christ (Matt. 23:29-30 NIV)

When God's great Messengers appear, people live in spiritual darkness. They are not more saintly than their religious leaders:

What an unbelieving and perverse generation!

Christ (Matt. 17:17 NEB)

Behold the disturbances which, for many a long year, have afflicted the earth, and the perturbation that hath seized its peoples. It hath either been ravaged by war, or tormented by sudden and unforeseen calamities. Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that may be. Whenever the True Counsellor uttered a word in admonishment, lo, they all denounced Him as a mover of mischief and rejected His claim. How bewildering, how confusing is such behaviour! No two men can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union.³ Bahá'u'lláh

Behold, how the divers peoples and kindreds of the earth have been waiting for the coming of the Promised One. No sooner had He, Who is the Sun of Truth, been made manifest, than, lo, all turned away from Him, except them whom God was pleased to guide.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

But persecution serves an opposite purpose: It draws attention to the ones persecuted.



4

The Stage of Awakening and Paying Attention

As time goes on, people begin to “watch,” to take notice of the growth and spread the new seed of the Kingdom. This may be the present stage in the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith. Persecution of the believers in the land of its origin has contributed immensely to the growth of the Bahá'í Faith. This stage usually lasts a long time, sometimes a few centuries. Just like the growth of Christianity, it may take three centuries before the Bahá'í Faith reaches its fifth and final stage.



5

The Stage of Victory and Euphoria

Finally, the masses of people awaken to the News of the Advent of their Redeemer. In the history of Christianity, this stage arrived after the lapse of three centuries.

This final stage is marked by euphoria and excitement. People celebrate the news of the Advent of the new Messenger. For they see that the Mustard Seed of the heavenly Kingdom has finally produced its luscious fruits. They feel proud to be a member of the new Faith and are amazed at the blindness of previous generations, who could not see “the light of the world” (John 9:5). History once again repeats itself. Once again, people 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. 23:30 NIV)*

As we can see, the seed of the Kingdom does not suddenly turn into a fruitful tree. We must be patient, and in the meantime play a part in nurturing this seed. Whatever role we choose to assume—whether we take part or remain complacent—God’s Plan will become a reality. The seed will grow and produce its fruits at the appointed time.

The day is approaching when God will have exalted His Cause and magnified His testimony in the eyes of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.⁵
Bahá’u’lláh

Ere long, thine eyes will behold the standards of divine power unfurled throughout all regions, and the signs of His triumphant might and sovereignty manifest in every land.⁶
Bahá’u’lláh

Part II

Bahá'u'lláh

The Glory of God

A purpose of this series is to introduce ***Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God***—to the western world. He is the One promised in all Scriptures. He has come to establish the heavenly Kingdom both within our soul and without. Only once in a thousand years a spiritual Figure, a Messenger and Redeemer from God, such as Bahá'u'lláh appears upon the earth. You now have a chance to know Him, to get a glimpse of His glory—a glory that will in time fill the earth:

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

...all the earth shall be filled with ***the glory of the Lord***. Numbers 14:21

3

Bahá'u'lláh: The One Promised in All Sacred Scriptures

In examining the evidence for the One who has claimed to speak the Word of God, the most vital questions are these: Who was He? What was He like? How did He live? What happened to Him? Here are a few features of Bahá'u'lláh's life, adapted mostly from a book entitled *Some Answered Questions*:

Bahá'u'lláh was born in 1817, in Persia, to a rich and noble family. He died in 1892, as a prisoner and exile in the Holy Land. As an infant, He astonished His parents by His uniqueness and distinctions. His father related that He would never cry or scream. "You don't know," he said, "what a potential He has, how intelligent He is! He is like a flame of fire, and in His tender years superior to young people."¹ Bahá'u'lláh's father was so captivated by Him that he wrote a piece of poetry in his son's honor, inscribed it on a plaque, and hung it on the wall of a summer mansion in which Bahá'u'lláh lived. The content of the poetry shows that the father sensed the divine destiny of his Son:

When thou enterest the sacred abode of the Beloved say:

"I am at thy command.

This is the home of love; enter with reverence.

This is holy ground; remove thy shoes when
thou enterest here."²

People were attracted by Bahá'u'lláh's many distinctions. He did not attend any school, yet astonished people by His wisdom and knowledge. Even His enemies testified to His greatness. Great thinkers flocked to His presence, asking Him their most difficult questions. They said, "This man is unique in all perfections."

He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning. He would converse on any subject and solve any problem presented to Him. In large gatherings He would...explain intricate religious questions. All of them used to listen to Him with the greatest interest.³

He showed no interest in politics:

When Bahá'u'lláh was twenty two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father's position in the Ministry...but Bahá'u'lláh did

not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: “Leave him to himself. Such a position is unworthy of him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone.”⁴

Bahá'u'lláh was known especially for His generosity and love for the poor:

He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all.⁵

One day Bahá'u'lláh sent ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest Son, 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.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh was also known for His courage to stand against the powerful who would abuse their power:

All classes of men marveled at His miraculous success in emerging unscathed from the most perilous encounters. Nothing short of Divine protection, they thought, could have ensured His safety on such occasions...In His constant association, during those days, with the highest dignitaries of the realm...He was never content simply to accede to the views they expressed or the claims they advanced. He would, at their gatherings, fearlessly champion the cause of truth, would assert the rights of the downtrodden, defending the weak and protecting the innocent.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh spent the early part of His life in the utmost joy and happiness. But He later became a target of prejudice and persecution. Thousands of fanatical believers rose against Him. Religious leaders were terrified of losing their power. They said, “This man intends to destroy religion, law, the nation, and the empire.” (People made the same accusations against Jesus.) He faced His enemies with the utmost courage, showing no weakness or fear.

Bahá'u'lláh endured nearly 40 years of imprisonment and exile, yet He never complained. No human being can imagine the extent of His sufferings. Among His sufferings was imprisonment in an infamous dungeon in Tíhrán, known as the Black Pit or Black Dungeon, where He was kept for four months. In that dungeon He endured every conceivable pain and anguish:

- **Total darkness:** The underground prison had neither lights nor windows.

- ***A terrible stench:*** About 150 of the worst criminals were thrown in that dark, deep, and damp dungeon with no air circulation or sanitary facilities. The ground was covered with several inches of filthy mud and mire.
- ***Hunger and thirst:*** For the first three days and nights Bahá'u'lláh received neither food nor water.
- ***Severe pain and lack of mobility:*** Bahá'u'lláh's feet were put in stocks, and on His neck was placed a chain so heavy that He was unable to hold Himself upright. To hold the weight of the chain, Bahá'u'lláh had to press His hands against the ground covered with slime up to His wrists. From the weight of the harsh metal, His neck became inflamed and injured.
- ***Little if any sleep:*** Bahá'u'lláh could hardly sleep under those horrible conditions.
- ***Lack of clothes:*** His outer garments were stripped away on His way to the prison.
- ***Illness:*** Because of the unsanitary conditions, Bahá'u'lláh suffered grave illness.
- ***Being poisoned:*** He also suffered pain from consuming poison placed in His food.
- ***Homelessness:*** All His properties were confiscated.
- ***Loneliness:*** “During this time none of His friends were able to get access to Him.”⁸
- ***Being surrounded by the worst criminals*** who had little if any hope of survival or freedom.
- ***Anxiety about His family:*** Bahá'u'lláh's family members, including His young children, were left at the mercy of fanatical mobs, filled with rage and incited to seek revenge. (His Son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, was then 9 years old.)
- ***Deep grief and concern for His devoted and distinguished disciples,*** who were being hunted down, tortured, and killed by enraged mobs outside the prison.
- ***Concern about the future:*** From that prison Bahá'u'lláh was banished to strange lands. As foretold in a prophecy (Matt. 25:41-46), He became a stranger (an exile). Never again did He see His homeland.
- ***Deep sorrow*** for those who were rejecting God's choicest blessings and bounties.*

It was in this dungeon that Bahá'u'lláh expressed the first intimations of His Divine Mission:

One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: “Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth—men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name...”⁹

Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly stated that He spoke only by God's command, and not of His own choosing. He declared:

* The Bible contains numerous prophecies that predict suffering for Jesus in His Second Advent. For a review of such prophecies, see *King of Kings* by this author.

Think ye, O people, that I hold within My grasp the control of God's ultimate Will and Purpose? ...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.¹⁰

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? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes!¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh's arrest and imprisonment in that dungeon give us only a glimpse of the sufferings He endured for nearly 40 years in three different countries. How could anyone survive the scourge of such unrelenting pressures? How much pain can a human being endure? Why would God allow the One He loved the most to go through so much suffering? Did not Jesus endure similar ordeals?

Worldly friends, seeking their own good, appear to love one the other, whereas the true Friend [Bahá'u'lláh] hath loved and doth love you for your own sakes; indeed He hath suffered for your guidance countless afflictions. Be not disloyal to such a Friend, nay rather hasten unto Him.¹² Bahá'u'lláh

The religious leaders feared Bahá'u'lláh's influence, so they had Him exiled to another land. They thought in a strange land His influence would die out. But the result was that His charm captivated many more disciples. They exiled Him again and again. The results were the same—a spreading of His influence. Finally, they sent Him to the worst place they could find: a prison for murderers and thieves, located in a remote city ('Akká) with a dreadful climate and foul water. The sufferings Bahá'u'lláh endured in 'Akká surpassed even those He experienced in the Black Dungeon.

Bahá'u'lláh was placed in a barren, filthy room, while His followers were crowded into another, the floor of which was covered with mud. Ten soldiers were posted to stand guard over them. To add further to their misery, the exiles, parched from a long day in the hot sun, soon found that the only water available to them was unfit for consumption. Mothers were unable to feed their babies, and infants cried for hours... Under these conditions, all but 'Abdu'l-Bahá [Bahá'u'lláh's Son] and one other, fell ill. Within a matter of days three men died. The officials denied the prisoners permission to leave the citadel to bury them, and the guards demanded payment before removing the bodies. Bahá'u'lláh ordered that His prayer rug, the only item of any value that He possessed, be sold to cover the cost of the burial. The guards pocketed the money and buried the men in the clothes in which they died...

Three days after the exiles' arrival, the Sultán's edict was read aloud in the mosque. It sentenced Bahá'u'lláh, His family, and His companions to life imprisonment and expressly forbade the exiles to associate with one another or with local inhabitants.¹³

During Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment in 'Akká, His young son was pacing the roof of the prison, "wrapped in devotions, when he fell through a skylight. Mortally wounded, his dying wish to his Father was that his life might be a ransom for those who were prevented from attaining Bahá'u'lláh's presence."¹⁴ In a prayer, Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the sacrifice of His son:

I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened, and all that dwell on earth be united.¹⁵

Here Bahá'u'lláh explains why He accepted so much pain and suffering:

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...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. We have accepted to be abased...that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they...have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!¹⁶

Despite this severe repression, Bahá'u'lláh's influence continued to spread, His glory became more evident. From behind prison walls, He triumphed over all His enemies.

For if this idea...is of human origin, it will collapse; but if it is from God, you will never be able to put them [the believers] down, and you risk finding yourself at war with God. Acts 5:38-39

When Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to the Holy Land, those aware of biblical prophecies suddenly realized what had happened: Bahá'u'lláh's enemies had, unknowingly, become the very instruments for the fulfillment of prophecies about Him because the Bible predicts repeatedly that the Redeemer of the Last Days will come to the Holy Land. Those who had wished to destroy Him became the means of His triumph. (For a review of these prophecies and many others, see *I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*.)

In 1868, while under arrest, Bahá'u'lláh addressed the kings and rulers of the earth, asking them to act with justice and to work for peace. With the exception of Queen Victoria, they ignored His call. He predicted their downfall and His own triumph.

Among these sovereigns was Napoleon III. Bahá'u'lláh asked him to investigate the reason for His imprisonment. The sovereign did not respond. Bahá'u'lláh sent a second letter, predicting his downfall. Soon thereafter, in 1870, war between Germany and France broke out. Everything seemed to be in Napoleon's favor, yet he was defeated, dishonored, and debased. According to *The Fall of Paris*:

History knows of perhaps no more startling instance of what the Greeks called peripateia, the terrible fall from prideful heights. Certainly no nation in modern times, so replete with apparent grandeur and opulent in material achievement, has ever been subjected to a worse humiliation in so short a time.¹⁷

Other sovereigns addressed by Bahá'u'lláh encountered similar fates. Every prediction that Bahá'u'lláh made was fulfilled. These are discussed in a book titled *The Prisoner and the King*, by William Sears.

Bahá'u'lláh's greatness touched even those who did not follow Him. They wrote about His knowledge, His kindness, and His patience. They flocked to His presence and marveled at His wondrous works.

How often would one of His bitter enemies say to himself, “When I see Him, I will argue with Him and defeat Him in this way...” But when faced with Bahá’u’lláh, he would find himself speechless—unable to utter a word.

Bahá’u’lláh declared His willingness to be tested. To leave the religious leaders with no excuse, Bahá’u’lláh said that He was willing to perform any miracle that they requested. The only condition He set was that, after the miracle was performed, they would acknowledge the validity of His claim. The religious leaders declined to accept the condition. (God has always refused requests to perform miracles to prove His power, see Matt. 4:7. We cannot be sure why Bahá’u’lláh accepted this request. Perhaps one reason was that He knew it would be rejected.)

Bahá’u’lláh demonstrated His dependence on the divine and detachment from worldly desires by associating with the poor and the humble and avoiding the powerful and the pompous. A notable figure wanted to meet Bahá’u’lláh. But to be seen with Bahá’u’lláh meant danger. He sent a message asking to meet with Him secretly. In response, Bahá’u’lláh sent him a piece of poetry to this effect: “Unless you have a desire to sacrifice your life, don’t come here. This is the way if you wish to meet Bahá. If you are unprepared for this journey, don’t come, and don’t bring trouble.” The man dared not take the risk of endangering his life and declined.

For nearly 50 years Bahá’u’lláh faced bitter enemies who killed thousands of His followers, yet failed to destroy Him. Repeatedly they planned and plotted against Him, but to no avail.

Are these marks of distinction not similar to those found in the life of Jesus?

Part III

Proofs

**How Can We Know—
Without any Doubt—that
a Religion Comes from God?**



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.

Christ (*Matt. 7:16-17 NIV*)

4

Bahá'í Proofs

The best way we can become certain of the divine origin of a religion is to look at the scientific model, to learn how scientists discover and verify scientific truths. For, there is absolute harmony between science and religion. One truth cannot contradict another. There is also a remarkable harmony between the methods that can test the validity of both religious and scientific truths.

Our Creator has given us many potentialities such as the ability to *reason*, to *understand*, and to *discover*. Should we not depend on these gifts in every facet of our life? “Let us reason together, says the Lord (Isa. 1:18). “Test everything” (I Thess. 5:21). If we fail to depend on these gifts, what else do we have to guide us?

To discover the truth—whether scientific or religious—we must take three steps. We must test a concept or a claim in three ways and in three stages.

The Scientific Model

The Three Stages of Scientific Discoveries

1

The Stage of Theory

To become worthy of attention, a claim or a concept must make sense; it must seem reasonable. For instance, we know by reasoning alone that “junk food” is unhealthy. Yet we cannot be absolutely sure. Our knowledge, at this stage, is only subjective. We cannot claim that our theory is proven until we have found *objective* evidence to support it, until it has passed the next essential test.



2

The Stage of Proof

At this stage, we conduct a scientific study to see if what *seems* to be true is *indeed* true. To test our theory and reach a definite conclusion, we select and compare two large groups of people with different diets—“junk food” versus “healthy food”—to see if there is any significant difference between them in terms of health and longevity. The result of

this study provides us with the evidence we need to come to a definitive conclusion. Only if the consequences of the two diets differed widely can we conclude that we have proven our theory. This is the most essential and critical phase of our scientific study. We may disregard or omit the first phase, but not this one.



3 *The Stage of Personal Experience*

In the final phase of our study, we try to find known individuals who would provide specific examples of what we have already discovered to be true by scientific methods. Our observation of specific cases reinforces our certainty. This will provide us with direct or first-hand experience.

Testing a concept or a theory by taking it through the preceding three stages, provides an excellent model for investigating the truth—whether scientific or religious.

Let us now see how we can apply this same model to religion, to our spiritual health and longevity, to the most significant decision we must ever make: determining the origin of the religion we choose to follow, discovering whether it comes from the awesome and majestic Mind of our Creator, or from the fallible and feeble mind of a human being.



The Three Stages of Religious Discoveries

1 *The Stage of Theory*

We begin our exploration by asking some reasonable questions, such as: What has been God’s plan for humankind in the past? Has He been passive or proactive? Has He been silent, or has He spoken through His great Messengers to guide us, to lead us to His Presence? Would He ever change His plan? Would the Creator ever abandon His creation? Just by reasoning alone, we can conclude that a loving God would never remain silent, would never fail to guide humankind when they need His guidance. These questions and concepts pertain to our subjective knowledge of God. They help us formulate a reasonable theory, a fair assumption or expectation.



2

The Stage of Proof

At this stage, the most critical and essential question we must ask is this: Who designates the proofs or the standards of distinction for the great Messengers and Redeemers? Who but God Himself—the One who sends them? Has any human being the authority or the wisdom to designate these standards?

Thus when we hear about the advent of a new Messenger, it is absolutely essential to test Him by the proofs and standards designated by the One who sends the Messengers to us, and no other.

Prophecies: The Most Definitive Proof

We know God has always provided us with specific signs or prophecies about His future Messengers—prophecies that could not and would not come true in the life of any other person, either by choice or by chance. Would prophecies be of any value if imposters could apply them to themselves—relate them to their lives?

The fulfillment of many specific prophecies in the life of a Messenger presents a clear and conclusive proof of His divine origin. Would God allow anyone to abuse the signs of His guidance? Would an imposter be allowed to succeed in his scheme? Would he be left alone to “steal” the divine directions for an opposite purpose: to mislead people to the path of perdition, away from God? To do so would be sheer injustice. It would also imply that an evil creature has triumphed over his Creator.



3

The Stage of Personal Experience

At this stage, we try to find honest and reasonable individuals who have recognized the new Messenger by His fulfillment of prophecies—believers who also demonstrate by example—by their wisdom and noble deeds and character—the dramatic transformation they have experienced as a result of their newly-found faith. The presence of such believers further confirms what we have already discovered to be true. This is the third and final phase of our search for truth.

Passing a claim through the preceding tests or stages—according to the specific standards or marks of distinction designated by God—such as fulfilled prophecy—completely protects us from misjudgment. This model or method of investigation is absolutely error-proof. Scientific studies rely on this same model. Our scientific achievements testify to its reliability.

How valuable are prophecies as a guide to the divine origin of God’s Messengers and Redeemers? As a proof, they are unique—unlike any other—because they are entirely immune to abuse by imposters. They may be regarded even as the most conclusive and irrefutable evidence of the Messengers’ divine origin. Let us see why they enjoy such a unique distinction:

- ***Historical evidence:*** Throughout history, there has never been a single deceiver or imposter who has been able to take advantage of prophecies to establish a new independent religion. This is a remarkable record. It points to God’s foreknowledge and supreme wisdom.
- ***Practical evidence:*** It is absolutely impossible for anyone to apply even a few specific prophecies to the events of his life, either by choice or by chance.
- ***The evidence of divine justice:*** It is contrary to divine justice to allow a liar to establish a new religion and, in the name of God, mislead many people by diverting the signs of divine guidance for an opposite purpose. All those who have tried have eventually discredited themselves by their own words and deeds. Consider this example: Would you expect to buy a house and then discover that the official documents that testify to your ownership are fictitious? Even our government would not allow such a deception, how much less the One who created us.
- ***The evidence of divine power and authority:*** Allowing an imposter to succeed in his abuse of prophecies would lead us to an impossible assumption: God’s lack of wisdom and authority. The failure to prevent such an injustice would imply that a deceiver has triumphed and God has been defeated.

To demonstrate the remarkable power and distinction of prophecy as a definitive proof, and to demonstrate how it is impossible to abuse it, let me cite a personal experience. Sometime ago, two well-dressed young men came to my house to teach me about their religion. I told them: “Prophecy is a conclusive proof of a true Prophet. Show me one specific prophecy from the Bible about your Prophet.” The two visitors looked at me with utter surprise. They were speechless. They could not cite even a single prophecy to validate their claim! Instead, they showed me a book that their prophet has added to the Bible. They claimed that it was as authentic as the rest of the Scriptures. But when I asked them again for a few examples of fulfilled prophecy, they had nothing to say. Imposters can imitate the Scriptures, but can they make the prophecies of those Scriptures to come true in their lives?

How did that particular prophet—the one the two visitors were promoting—succeed in attracting millions of followers? He resorted to the same strategy others like him have used. He took advantage of people’s fascination with miracles. He laid claims to miracles, without presenting any evidence, and then linked his own writings to those miracles to validate his writings. The motivation to believe in his words came from the awesome powers of his presumed miracles. Once he convinced people to believe in his supernatural powers, he had won his battle and their hearts. People were ready to accept anything he would say. At first he convinced a few gullible listeners. Those few attracted other simple-minded people like themselves. More followers joined the crowd. They did not think to ask the most critical question: God always offers specific signs concerning the coming of His future Messengers. Where are the signs concerning this prophet?

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Amos 3:7 NIV

Prophecies About the Bahá'í Faith

The prophecies that predict the Advent of the Bahá'í Faith have no parallel in religious history. If we combine all the prophecies about the previous religions, they would look like a drop compared to the vast ocean of prophecies that predict the Advent of the Bahá'í Faith. I have had the honor of writing a six-volume series concerning Biblical prophecies. Three volumes of the set have already been published.

Should not these books be a part of every Christian college and seminary? Of course, they should be! How can knowledge harm anyone? The first volume—***I Shall Come Again***—was sent to over 200 seminaries with the option to receive the other two. It is not known for sure how many of them included the book in their collection. What we can be sure is this: we received only one request for the next two volumes! The seminaries are responsible for preparing their students for the Return of their Redeemer. Yet they refused to accept a gift of three books for their libraries concerning the evidence of His Return!

The three published volumes have been introduced as a reference for further study in several books. Let me introduce them once again for those who have not heard about them.



I Shall Come Again

522 pages

Volume I

Did you know that the Bible contains 16 time prophecies concerning the year of the Second Advent? No wonder so many 19th century scholars discovered this 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.

History shows that no false prophet has ever been able to prove his claim by the evidence of fulfilled prophecies. Christian scholars often regard Hebrew prophecies as the most conclusive and convincing evidence of Jesus' divine Mission.

Let us consider a statement from Dr. Norman Geisler, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, "who has published countless articles in academic journals and has authored over fifty books, including *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*." Dr. Geisler makes the following statement concerning the prophecies that point to the First Advent of Jesus:

Some have suggested...that the prophecies were accidentally fulfilled in Jesus. In other words, he happened to be in the right place at the right time...If there is a God who is in control of the universe, as we have said, then chance is ruled out. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these events would have converged in the life of one man.

Mathematicians have calculated the probability of 16 predictions being fulfilled in one man at 1 in 10⁴⁵ ...

But it is not just a logical improbability that rules out this theory [of chance]; it is the moral implausibility of an all-powerful and all-knowing God letting things get out of control so that all his plans for prophetic fulfillment are ruined by someone who just happened to be in the right place at the right time. God cannot lie, nor can he break a promise (Heb. 6:18). So we must conclude that he did not allow his prophetic promises to be thwarted by chance. All the evidence points to Jesus as the divinely appointed fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. He was God's man confirmed by God's signs. In brief, if God made the predictions to be fulfilled in the life of Christ, then he would not allow them to be fulfilled in the life of any other. The God of truth would not allow a lie to be confirmed as true.

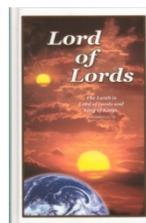
Imagine if the News of the Return of Jesus is true and you choose not to investigate and not to know Him! Imagine also if the News of His Return is true and your investigation leads you to recognize Him!

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.

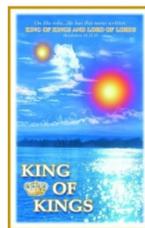
Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

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...¹

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

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

Christ (Rev. 16:15)

The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.²

Bahá'u'lláh

Blessed the slumberer who is awakened...³ Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him...⁴

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)



Would anyone ever be misled if he depended on God's designated standards? This would be absolutely impossible.

People have been misled, throughout all ages, because they failed to depend on God's definitive standards. Instead, they have followed a totally unreliable, unauthorized, and deceptive strategy: unproven or fictitious miracles. The following statement from Jesus is a guiding light for all true believers and seekers of truth:

For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.

Matthew 24:24-25 NIV

Never did Jesus say: Many will be misled by prophecies. In fact, He put His seal of approval on prophecies by applying them to Himself:

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:27 NIV

To conclude, prophecy in itself is a conclusive proof of the divine origin of God's Messengers.

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...⁵

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.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

But prophecy is only one part of a unique prophetic profile of the divine distinctions bestowed on great Messengers and Redeemers. Let us look at some of the marks of distinction in Bahá'u'lláh's life:

- Bahá'u'lláh persisted in His claim to the end, without making the slightest compromise.
- He endured every conceivable adversity, humiliation, and pain for half a century with superhuman resolve, composure, and constancy.
- He revealed scriptures for 40 years with no contradictions or changes of mind.
- He spiritualized and raised the ethical standards of His followers, who were from every race, creed, and culture.
- He revealed teachings extolled by some of the great thinkers of this century.
- He unified millions of people from diverse races, religions, and cultures.
- He wrote the equivalent of 100 volumes, without research or revision.
- He revealed principles that harmonize religious and scientific truths—a task beyond the reach of the ablest thinkers.
- He fulfilled hundreds of prophecies with perfect precision, including at least 16 biblical references pointing to the beginning date of the dawning of the new Day: 1844.
- He lived a life pure, divine, and noble, far beyond the reach of any human being.
- He made predictions that have come true.
- He established a Faith that, despite constant and severe persecution, has endured and preserved its unity for a century and a half.

Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Christ (Matthew 15:13)

When we look at all the preceding signs of distinction, an infinitely superior Image emerges—a Profile of Absolute Perfection—a Profile that no human being, however clever or skilled in the arts of deception, can imitate. When we investigate the Truth in the light of God's standards of distinction, we suddenly see and recognize the One sent by God as readily and distinctly as the sun. How would an imposter appear against the splendor and brilliance of the sun? No more than the smoke of a candle at the mercy of the wind.

Many people assume that it is difficult to recognize a Messenger from God. They fail to ponder this most obvious and enlightening question: How can there be any similarity—even the slightest—between the divine and the deceptive? What comparison is there between the signs, the wonders, and the powers of the One who created the universe—a hundred billion galaxies—in an instant, and the deceptive efforts of a pathetic, ignorant, and evil imposter who plots against God by trying to replace His Supreme Will and

Wisdom by his selfish wants and wishes? How can any critical thinker be deceived? How can anyone who observes the following two “Rules of Wisdom” fail in his search for truth?

- Relying on his or her own ability to think, to strive, to search, to reason, and to understand.
- Unwavering dependence on the specific standards of distinction designated by God for His Messengers.

How can any seeker who follows the preceding rules not be able to tell the difference between what God creates, and what an evil and pathetic human being produces? How can he fail to distinguish the Divine from deceptive as clearly even as he can distinguish the light of the sun from the flickering flame of a candle?

False Prophets

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 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.

Christ (Matt. 7:15-20 NIV)

How can we safeguard our spiritual health? How can we protect our soul from deception? We can do so only by being loyal to God, by pursuing *His* roadmap, by depending on *His* authorized standards, and no other.

We know there have been many false prophets in the world. How do they succeed? Have you ever examined their strategies? Have you known anyone who has exposed their schemes? Exposing their schemes is of the utmost significance. It can prove valuable in two ways:

- It has the potential to minimize such plots in the future.
- It can enlighten the true seekers and protect them against deception.

A critical study of the strategies used throughout all ages by deceptive people reveals the following two strategies:

- First, instead of establishing a *new independent religion*, they take advantage of the authority of an *established religion* to generate a new branch, denomination, or sect under the umbrella of that recognized religion. Why do they resort to this strategy? Because it is much easier—perhaps a million times—to appeal to people’s deeply rooted loyalty to an already established belief system than to try to generate an entirely *new* loyalty by claiming that God has called them to establish a *new* independent religion.
- As stated earlier, they know very well that they cannot succeed in their scheme if they use God-given standards. Invariably they search for a substitute. What have they found to their liking? What standard or evidence do they know simple-minded

and gullible people will accept? It has always been, and perhaps will always be, the same: fictitious miracles. Why? Because this approach just like the previous one (starting a denomination rather than a new religion), is easy to plot and perform. If you have any doubts, ask your favorite magician! Countless millions have been, and still are being misled, by this approach.

Thus, if the believers remain loyal to God, if they obey Him *by depending only on His standards*, they can never be misled. To allow loyal believers—who obey the rules—to be deceived would be sheer injustice. Therefore, the sole reason false prophets prosper is that people disobey God. They fail to depend on His roadmap. What can we expect if we build a house on sand?

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.

Christ (Matt. 7:26-27 NIV)

Why did Jesus say: “**Beware of false prophets**” (Matt. 7:15)? Did He intend to instill fear and avoidance, or did He intend to teach caution and prudence? His purpose was to make us aware of warning signs, just as blinking lights draw our attention. His purpose was not to stop us in our track with fear, but rather to send us this message: “Proceed with caution. Continue the journey of spiritual growth and search for truth, but be aware of pitfalls.” Our Creator wants us neither to be gullible nor closed-minded, neither believe in everything we hear without evidence, nor be fearful and suspicious. In fact, He commands us to “**test the spirits to see whether they are from God**” (I John 4:1).

Caution and courage are intimate and intertwined virtues. To be cautious means to be critical, prudent, and wise. The warnings against deceivers should not overcome our sense of courage. They should not control and command our hearts and minds. They should only remind us to remain watchful, critical, and prudent. For instance, we fear criminals, but do we always imprison ourselves behind metal guards? Do we keep our doors locked to everyone who knocks? No, we pay attention to the voice of the one who knocks.

God made our souls pure and responsive to His voice. If we preserve our purity, by our spiritual instinct alone, we know the voice of our true Shepherd:

When he [a true shepherd] has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because THEY KNOW HIS VOICE. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice...I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

Christ (John 10:4-5, 14 NIV)

It is absolutely essential to listen to “the voice” of Bahá’u’lláh: to read His Words. Many examples and references are provided at the end of this book.

What about the Antichrist? This term has two meanings: general, and specific. In general, it refers to anyone who denies the divine station of Jesus Christ:

Who is the liar? Who but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is the Antichrist.

I John 2:22

Bahá'u'lláh showered infinite love on Jesus Christ. He said that when Jesus was crucified, the entire universe “wept with a great weeping.”⁷ He glorified Jesus to an extent no one has done before. He called Him by such supreme titles as *the Spirit of God*, and the Lord of the visible and invisible.

Therefore I make known to you that...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

I Cor. 12:3 NKJ

The Antichrist has also a specific meaning. It refers to a figure who falsely shows himself to be God (II Thess. 2:3-4). Unknown to many Christians, Jesus also warned us against this same figure in Matt. 24:26-28. Such a figure did indeed appear along with an instigator and supporter. They repeatedly planned and plotted together against Bahá'u'lláh. But their efforts were in vain. Many prophecies both in the Old and New Testaments refer to them.

The man who falsely claimed a divine station is known as Azal. He was a perfect contrast to Bahá'u'lláh in every way imaginable. For instance, Bahá'u'lláh, in spite of thousands of enemies around Him, never concealed Himself. He astonished His enemies by appearing in public without any fear. He was as visible as “the lightning that comes from the east and flashes to the west” (Matt. 24:26-28). In contrast, Azal always concealed himself “out in the desert” or “in the inner rooms” (Matt. 24:26-28). ***King of Kings*** presents a long chapter about Azal and his instigator, and a detailed description of the many prophecies they fulfilled.

The fear of the Antichrist is one more obstacle that prevents many Christians from looking into the Bahá'í Faith. It is a justified fear, but is carried to extremes. The purpose of the warnings is not to make people prisoners in their churches. Our Creator despises the fearful and promises to punish them severely (Rev. 21:8). He knows unjustified fear can prevent us from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, from pursuing our divine destiny.

The Alternatives

What are the alternatives? By what other standards can we discover and verify the truth of a new independent religion from God? Can you think of any other standard, any other sign or evidence other than the ones cited? No, there is none. Dependence on any standards other than those designated by the One who selects and sends Messengers to us, will surely mislead us. Without question, it will turn us away from the truth. Can we reach the desired city if we follow the wrong roadmap? This rule is so simple, so obvious, and so reasonable, and yet many seekers disregard it without ever pondering its perilous consequences.

How do many believers, even among the sincere ones, approach this most critical decision in their lives? How do they choose their everlasting destiny? What steps do they take to test a new independent religion from God? What do they generally do when they hear this most joyful news: the Advent of a great Messenger from God? Incredible as it may seem, most of them do nothing! Their common approach is to remain passive, to take no action, to take the easy path—of least resistance—the one followed by those near and dear to them (their parents and close relatives), the one chosen by most people around them (such as members of their church or synagogue), ***the broad path***:

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
Christ (Matt. 7:13-14 NIV)

Let us now review a list of what most believers—whatever their religion—do or fail to do, a list of their common approaches to the most far-reaching decision in their lives: the news of the Advent of a new Messenger from God. Suppose we invited 100 believers from each of the following four religions: Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islám to investigate the Bahá'í Faith—the News of the greatest event in human history—the Advent of a new independent Faith, a Faith that has come to lead us to God and to transform our divided planet into a place of peace and prosperity. How would those 400 invited guests respond to our invitation? What would they say? What would they think? What would be their feelings?

Many of them would simply feel uneasy and defensive. Some of them would regard our invitation as an insult. They would search for an easy way to avoid an undesirable invitation. Suppose they were pressed for a response. What would they say to us? What would they say to themselves? Please list a few responses before reading the ones listed below:

Here are some examples of responses they might *express*. Let us call them “courtesy responses:”

- Thank you, I am really busy. I don't have the time.
- Thank you! I hope I will have time in the future to look into it.

Let us also see how they would *feel* concerning this unwelcome invitation? ***What would possibly go through their minds?*** Here are some possibilities:

- I am a loyal Christian. How can I abandon my Faith?
- My parents have taught me to be a loyal Jew, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim. How can I abandon what they have given me? How could I be disloyal to my synagogue, temple, church, or mosque? How could I be so disloyal to my parents?
- There are so many deceivers out there, how can I trust anyone? It is much safer to stay where I am. Why waste my time taking such a chance?
- Nothing can be better than what I already believe.
- It is none of my business to learn about a new religion. I already have my own.
- I love my church—the pastor, the members, and the music.

- My religious leader—rabbi, guru, priest, pastor, or Mullá—knows what is the best. If a new Messenger comes from God, he will surely let me know.

The kind of responses people would use to excuse themselves from accepting the unwelcomed invitation have been predicted by Jesus in several of His parables. The following is one of them:

A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry... Then the master told his servant, ‘...not one of those men who were invited [but failed to come] will get a taste of my banquet.’

Christ (Luke 14:16-24 NIV)

The preceding is a list of the ways most believers—as many as 99 percent of them—adopt and pursue to reject God’s most glorious gift to them! How amazing! How incredible! Their approach and their way of judgment provides us with the answer to a critical question, and teaches us a valuable lesson: We learn why, during all ages, people have rejected the Messengers that God has sent to guide them and lead them to everlasting life—sincere believers who never expected to be counted among disbelievers—the ones who would deny their Redeemer.

What lesson can their failure and their negligence teach us? What lesson can the response of those 400 religious leaders teach us? It can teach us the following lesson, and awaken us to the dangers of falling into this invisible trap: That it is easy to remain complacent, negligent, and passive, because the one caught in it is totally unaware of the state of his soul, of the grave consequences of his apathy. The state of his soul can be compared to a sleeper resting peacefully in his room, while his house is on fire—without ever suspecting that by the time he wakes up and detects the fire, it will be too late. Yes, this life is a dream, and death is the wake-up call.

What is the healing remedy to apathy and complacency? Its prime antidote is an abundance of proactive virtues—such as *fervor, courage, awareness, and initiative*. Only these virtues can rescue a soul from the trap of being unaware of its unawareness! Only these virtues can awaken a sleeping soul, can make it aware and watchful. The rescue plan was given long ago by the One who promised to return and once again save the world:

That is the day when I come like a thief! Happy the man who stays awake...

Christ (Rev. 16:15 NEB)

But here is the problem: The sleeper is enjoying his dreams. He does not want to wake up, and would feel angry and upset if anyone tried to disturb his dreams!

Jesus was well aware of the prevailing state of apathy in the end-times. He used harsh words to awaken those caught in this trap. The following parable is addressed to such believers, to those who fail to be proactive, who fail to devote their God-given talents to the most urgent task at hand: paying attention to the news of His return:

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more." His master replied, "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!" The man with the two talents also came. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more." His master replied, "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!"

Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you." His master replied, "You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness [hell], where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Christ (Matt. 25:14-30 NIV)

See also Rev. 21:7-8

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

Christ (Matt. 24:42-43 NIV)

The Difference Between God's Messengers and Well-known Historical Figures

There are those who compare God's great Messengers with well-known reformers and philosophers. They believe that the two groups are comparable in wisdom and knowledge. They cite examples such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, Plato, and Aristotle.

By attributing the status of a “great historical figure” to God’s Messengers, such well-wishers think they are doing them a favor, wishing to pay them a tribute. Although they mean well, they fail to ponder the serious implications of their kindness and good-will. They fail to recognize that by making such a comparison, they do just the opposite of what they intend. Because their assumption implies that the divine Messengers simply made up some verses and claimed that they came from God. This, of course, is precisely what a “false prophet” does. Well-wishers who make such a comparison should be asked: How could such a deceiver—a false prophet—be placed on a par with a wonderful reformer like Gandhi or a great philosopher like Plato? These famous figures did not lie about their mission. They did not claim that their words and their wisdom came directly from God.

In general, those who compare the divine Messengers with major historical figures have other more deeply-rooted doubts or misconceptions:

- They may declare that they believe in God, but they fail to realize that the true knowledge of God comes to us only from the great Messengers, not from famous reformers or philosophers. God is like the sun, the Messengers are the mirrors that reflect His light to all others—including to the great historical figures.
- Such skeptics often have difficulty believing in a loving God who would at times communicate with humankind.
- They also have difficulty believing in a God who would choose an uneducated ordinary being, and make Him the recipient of His supreme Knowledge—a Knowledge infinitely greater than that of all the reformers and philosophers who have lived or will ever live.

Consider Jesus. He was poor and uneducated. His knowledge came only from God. Without guidance from God, He was totally helpless. He said:

By myself I can do nothing...

Christ (John 5:30 NIV)

Consider also Bahá’u’lláh. In an Epistle to the king of Persia, He wrote:

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? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes!⁸ *Bahá’u’lláh*

The great reformers and philosophers did not make such a claim. Their knowledge was acquired, not innate.

Let us consider another difference between the divine Messengers and major historical figures. The advent of every Messenger is predicted by those who came before Him. Consider the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, the latest Manifestations from God. Hundreds of prophecies from past Scriptures predict many events of their life and their Revelation. At least 16 prophecies from the Bible point to the year 1844, the time of the Báb’s Advent (see *I Shall Come Again*). There is not even a single prophecy about any one of those other historical figures. This distinction alone would be sufficient to make any comparison between the two groups totally irrelevant. By disregarding prophecies from the sacred Scriptures, even if unaware of doing so, the skeptics would have to consider

them irrelevant, meaningless, or at worst misleading. As we can see, there are many flaws in making any comparison between God’s Messengers and famous historical figures.

To understand the uniqueness and greatness of God’s Messengers, we must recognize that creation exists on three separate levels, and in three separate worlds or domains:

1. The world of God, which is infinitely beyond human level.
2. The world of the great Messengers or Mediators, which serves as a link or a bridge between God and humankind. This domain is also infinitely beyond human level.
3. The world of humankind, which is the recipient of divine knowledge through the great Messengers.

No human being, however eminent or educated, can even approach the second domain—one exclusively granted to the great Messengers. The preceding three worlds or levels are as far apart from each other as infinity. If all the reformers and philosophers who have ever lived and will ever live, combined their learning, it would be a mere drop compared to the vast ocean of knowledge bestowed by God on His great Messengers and Teachers. The recognition of these entirely separate worlds or levels is absolutely essential. They should be regarded as the very foundation of the spiritual design of creation. Unless we recognize them and acknowledge them, religion makes no sense, and the God we believe in will be the God of our own creation, not our Creator.

O ye that judge with fairness! If this Cause is to be denied then what other cause in this world can be vindicated or deemed worthy of acceptance?⁹ Bahá’u’lláh

Trusting God

Can we ever know the truth if we fail to trust God, if we allow fear to paralyze our reasoning powers and prevent us from taking initiative?

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

Praying is another antidote to apathy, negligence, and unawareness:

Watch ye therefore, and ***pray always***... Christ (Luke 21:36)

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...¹⁰ Bahá’u’lláh

To conclude: We are fortunate to live at the greatest and most glorious time—a turning point—in human history. We can choose to be a positive or a passive force in the destiny of humankind. We can become the builders of a new divine civilization—God’s Kingdom on earth—or ignore this incomparable grace and honor. By our decision, we can also shape our everlasting destiny.

According to a prophecy from Daniel, we can choose either “everlasting life” or “shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). What is our guiding light to “everlasting life”?

What can lead us to this most precious of all blessings? According to Daniel, it is the virtue of wisdom:

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. *Daniel 12:3 NIV*

Can we gain the gift of wisdom without being “awake” without searching for truth? We face only two choices. We can:

- Either investigate—while we have a chance—the news of the coming of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, to discover what God has planned for the world and for each of us.
- Or remain complacent, and without knowing, sleep in the darkness of unawareness—until the final wake-up call, when it is too late and we have lost the chance.

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)*

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)*

Part IV

The Role of Religious Leaders

Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation...¹ Bahá'u'lláh

How vast the number of the learned who have turned aside from the way of God and how numerous the men devoid of learning who have apprehended the truth and hastened unto Him...²

Bahá'u'lláh

5

The Role of Religious Leaders

People's response to the news of the Advent of their Redeemer is extremely puzzling. Why would the believers persecute the One who comes to grant them the gift of everlasting life? Why would a patient hurt the physician who comes to heal him? The only way we can solve this puzzle is to look at the religious establishment, at those who govern and guide the spiritual life and destiny of the masses of believers. This is what happens: Those in positions of power are determined to preserve the status quo, because change threatens their security. The advent of a new Messenger challenges the establishment. Fearing the loss of their powers, religious leaders arise with all their might to stop the spread of the new Revelation, to uproot and destroy the newly planted Seed of the Kingdom. How amazing? Those who are paid to guide the believers to the Kingdom of heaven arise to mislead them, to prevent them from entering that Kingdom!

The role of religious leaders in misleading their followers has been consistent in the past and is predicted to remain the same in this age:

In that day...O My people, your leaders will cause you to err, and confuse the course of your path.

Isaiah 3:7, 17 AB
See also Zech 10:2-3

We know how religious leaders responded to Jesus. In this age, their opposition was far more fierce. By their sanction and encouragement over 20,000 of the new believers were killed in the most brutal way. To those leaders who persecuted the new believers, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

In My name ye have seized the reins of men, and occupy the seats of honor by reason of your relation to Me. When I revealed Myself, however, ye turned aside, and committed what hath caused the tears of such as have recognized Me to flow. Erelong will all that ye possess perish, and your glory be turned into the most wretched abasement, and ye shall behold the punishment for what ye have wrought, as decreed by God, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.¹

Note how Jesus described the religious leaders of His age:

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the [religious] law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see: They

make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them “Rabbi.”... Woe to you, teachers of the law [of Moses] 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. 23:1-7, 13-14 NIV)

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 of His day, and Caiaphas, the high priest, denounced Him and pronounced the sentence of His death.²

Bahá'u'lláh

The following verse demonstrates that the knowledge of truth is mostly a matter of spiritual purity, that theologians are less likely than others to open their heart to their new Redeemer:

...prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you [the chief priests].

Christ (Matt. 21:31 NIV)

Do people change from age to age? Is there any reason to believe that the religious leaders of our age are an exception to the rule? Is there a reason to believe that Christian theologians of our age are more saintly than Jewish theologians who, after 2,000 years, still are not convinced that Jesus is their expected Messiah?

Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation, inasmuch as they held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of the deprivation of the people.³

Bahá'u'lláh

But if a man is a cause of stumbling to one of these little ones [humble Christians] who have faith in me, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Christ (Matt. 18:6 NEB)

Consider the following assessment of the impact of religious leaders on the spiritual and social life of mankind:”

***Positive and negative
impacts of religious leaders
on the world****

<i>The Functions Religious Leaders Should Serve</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
1. Promoting harmony between followers of various religions		—
2. Serving as shining examples of nobility for others—for both believers and nonbelievers.		—
3. Promoting unity between denominations within their own religion		—
4. Using reason and evidence as the standard of truth rather than tradition		—
5. Respecting scientific studies		—
6. Preventing division of religion into denominations and sects		—
7. Emphasizing spiritual values over theological doctrines		—
8. Working for racial equality and elimination of prejudice		—
9. Helping the poor	+	
10. Influencing the law-makers to reduce taxes for the poor and middle classes		—
11. Serving as peace-makers among nations		—
12. Preventing religious wars and violence		—
13. Welcoming and acknowledging the new Messengers from God		—
Total Score	+ 1	— 12

These grades demonstrate the extremely negative impact that religious leaders have had on the spiritual health of the world. Their grades are the opposite of what they should be.

Suppose you wanted to fly and you discovered that your pilot had received failing grades **12** out of **13** times. Would you board his plane and allow him to take you to your destination? Suppose you were a principal and wanted to employ a teacher. Would you offer that job to a candidate with a grade point average of “**-12**”? Why then do billions of people, without knowing, leave their spiritual life and destiny in the hands of incompetent and unqualified teachers? As long as believers depend on their religious leaders, the world will remain in darkness. War, violence, conflict, prejudice, and misery will continue to afflict the world. The time has come to liberate mankind from spiritual slavery. How long will the followers remain asleep?

* Source: www.KnowledgeOfGod.com.

Religious leaders have an awesome responsibility, more than we can ever imagine. In one of His parables, Jesus identifies two groups of leaders: those who help their followers recognize their expected Redeemer, and those who prevent them from this honor. How will the Master, the One in charge, reward the leader who leads his followers to the Lord?

I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all His possessions.

Christ (Matt. 24:47 NIV)

What about a leader who misleads his followers?

He will...assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth [a reference to hell].

Christ (Matt. 24:51 NIV)

What more could the Master say to awaken the leaders to their awesome responsibility? Despite all these warnings, they continue to ignore the News of the Advent of their Master and Redeemer. From the many who have been invited, very few have responded, and only a few have received the honor of being chosen:

Many are called, but few are chosen.

Christ (Matt. 22:14)

Great is the blessedness of that divine [religious leader] that hath not allowed knowledge to become a veil between him and the One Who is the Object of all knowledge...He, verily, is numbered with the inheritors of the Prophets.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

From the many who have been called, only a few have received the honor of being chosen:

It had taken only a moment, not an ordinary moment, but an elastic moment that could be stretched to a lifetime. It was a moment in which I realized that, great as they were, and are, the outer miracles are not as great as the inner miracles. I had been deaf; Bahá'u'lláh made me to hear. I had been blind; Bahá'u'lláh made me to see. I had been lame; Bahá'u'lláh made me to walk. I had been dead; He raised me to life. I had walked upon the earth; He raptured me into the paradise of His presence.

I urge all Christians to investigate the news of the return of our Lord... “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and ***the glory of the Lord*** rises upon you” (Isa. 60:1).

Mel Campbell

Former Baptist Minister

Slowly the veil lifts from the future. Along whatever road thoughtful men look out they see before them some guiding truth, some leading principle, which Bahá'u'lláh gave long ago and which men rejected.

George Townshend

Ex Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral

6

My Dialogue With Several Christian Theologians

This chapter presents actual examples to show how the religious leaders practice inattention, how they refuse to take any step beyond the borders of their “imagined and misleading map.” It presents a record of the author’s conversation with several Christian theologians.

People—whether they are Jews, Christians, or Muslims—trust their religious leaders. The following dialogues with several educated Christians will give you an inside look into the mindset of those who receive the support of about two billion Christians, who believe they can be “saved” only if they follow what their leaders tell them. Let us begin with my dialogue with a doctoral student of theology.

Sometime ago a family friend, Elizabeth, spoke about a relative, named Tom, who was working on his doctorate in theology. She described Tom as having both an open and sharp mind. Elizabeth suggested that I should call him and tell him about Bahá’u’lláh and send him a copy of *I Shall Come Again*. To prepare Tom for the dialogue, Elizabeth told him that I would call.

I am always curious and would like to know how people respond to an invitation or a challenge. One evening I called Tom and asked if he had heard about the Bahá’í Faith. He said he had studied the topic only in an introductory course during his undergraduate years, and talked briefly with a few Bahá’ís. Then I referred to *I Shall Come Again*—which covers biblical prophecies about the advent of Bahá’u’lláh—and asked if he wanted to receive a free copy. He said he was quite busy with his studies and had no time to read anything beyond what his professors required. He then indicated that he was quite happy with his beliefs because he had serious problems earlier and since he had fully accepted Jesus, he had lived an abundant life. He seemed quite friendly and displayed no sign of impatience. So I decided to challenge him a little, and perhaps disturb his peace! The following is a paraphrase of the exchange of ideas between us, written immediately after our conversation:

- Me: Did you know that Bahá’u’lláh has fulfilled the biblical prophecies about the second Advent?
- Tom: That is typical of those who make such claims. They take some prophecies and apply them to themselves.
- Me: Can you give me an example?

- Tom: Louis Farrakhan believes Jesus and Elijah are the same person. He believes he is Elijah.
- Me: I agree; people abuse prophecies. The only way to know is to investigate each claim.
- Tom: We already know how Christ will come. We have accumulated an abundance of evidence about the way He will return. We have 2,000 years of interpretation. We know Christ has not come again.
- Me: You base your faith on fallible interpreters. Do you realize that the Gospel gives the right of interpretation only to the Lord? Do you realize we are told:

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. I Cor. 4:5

- Tom: Some prophecies are clear. They do not need any interpretation. For instance, we are told in plain language that the same Jesus will come again. Is Bahá'u'lláh the same person who came as Jesus?
- Me: Bahá'u'lláh did not have the body of Jesus, but manifested the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that appeared in Jesus. Did not Jesus say:

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. *John 6:63 NIV*

Do you realize that your literal interpretation of prophecies is based on tradition? The Pharisees did the same. They followed their ancestral beliefs and denied Jesus.

- Tom: Pharisees **had** to deny Jesus, because prophecies predicted that they would.

At this point, I heard the alarm signal! I recognized that I could find no way to Tom's heart. First, even if the Pharisees **had** to deny Jesus, they were still wrong. And second, the Pharisees did not **have** to deny Jesus. Why would God force a person to deny His Messenger and then punish him for doing so? Why would Jesus force a few ignorant people to engage in a horrible act and then condemn them for doing it? I did not raise any one of these questions. To do so would have turned the friendly dialogue into a stressful argument. I respected his decision to keep his heart closed.

His response demonstrates how the desire to win overcomes the simple rules of reason; it shows how a passionate need for protecting one's belief subdues the rational powers. Tom showed no thirst for learning about Bahá'u'lláh. I was not looking for a victory, and stopped at the right moment. Why would anyone force his way into a locked house, unless he is a burglar? Why give a glass of water to someone who is not thirsty:

The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved. Wherefore sow the seeds of wisdom and knowledge in the pure soil of the heart...¹ Bahá'u'lláh

God has given each soul the right to protect and preserve his or her spiritual possessions. But I have to admit that at times like this, it is so tempting to go on. The desire to break the lock is ever-present, the need for winning feels almost as natural as breathing.

The attempts made by certain believers to break this lock by force has immensely damaged and even destroyed the dignity of religion. What would happen to the price of gold if people went around, knocked on doors, got the householders out of their bed, and asked them, and even argued with them, that they must accept free chunks of gold?

Any time we engage in a debate or argument about religion, we are violating God's principle of freedom, we are dragging a person into His Kingdom. Our Creator has taught us again and again that He does not want reluctant guests in His banquet. The only responsibility we have is to invite and inform. Resistance to an invitation must be met instantly by submission, silence, and acknowledgment of the principle of freedom. When a person argues, as I think Tom began to do, he is sending a clear signal that I do not want your gift.

We must show unqualified respect to all those who say, "No!" to God's invitation to His heavenly banquet. Because they are exercising the right of freedom that God gave them. Respecting them is respecting God, and disrespecting them is disrespecting God, the original Designer. The beauty of divine Drama comes from diversity.

Tom asked no question about Bahá'u'lláh except to say, "Is He the same person as Jesus?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Did he have holes in his body?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "How many holes were there?" And if I had said the right number, he could ask, "Were they all in the right place?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Are there pictures to prove it?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Is there any evidence that the pictures are authentic?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Did he have the same height and weight as Jesus?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Did he have the same skin color?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Are there x-rays to show that some of his joints were separated?" And if I had said yes, he could ask, "Did He speak Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic as He did in ancient times? And if I had said yes, he could say, "Is there any recording of his voice?" And if I had said yes, he could say, "Your answers are all too good to be true, and they are!"

As this example demonstrates, where there is *a will*, there will always be *a way* to deny any truth, no matter how evident it may be. Tom knew he was right and no evidence, no proof, no testimonial could convince him otherwise. How would he respond, if he confronted the same Jesus who came 2,000 years ago exactly as He appeared then? Would he repeat the same arguments the Pharisees pursued?

A prophecy often quoted by Christian scholars about the *first* advent of Christ indicates that *all of Messiah's bones will be "out of joint"* (Psalms 22:12). I could have asked him if he has any evidence to prove this. Did crucifixion make *all* Jesus' bones to be disjointed? Another frequently quoted prophecy (Isaiah 53:10) about the *first* advent declares that Messiah will be "pierced for our transgression" and then it states that "*He will see His offspring.*" I could have asked him, "Who was Jesus' offspring?"

To continue the discussion, I felt, was a waste of time and money. This was a long-distance call! When he said, "The Pharisees *had* to deny Jesus," I gently changed the subject. Our conversation ended on a friendly note. I saw Tom anxious to be well prepared for his course and university tests, but not for a test that would determine the course of his eternal destiny. How perfectly St. Paul predicted Tom's response:

They are the kind...who are...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

II Timothy 3:6-7

Theology students must master an enormous amount of detailed information about biblical studies, and ancient and modern languages. As we noted, Tom said he could not read about Bahá'u'lláh because of his enormous studies. He was learning German and two ancient languages. Notice how Bahá'u'lláh describes his status and that of today's many Bible students and scholars:

They cleave to ***the obscure intricacies of knowledge***, when He, Who is the Object of all knowledge, shineth as the sun. They see the sun with their own eyes, and yet question that brilliant Orb as to the proof of its light.² Bahá'u'lláh

Who were the scribes? According to Christian scholar F.F. Bruce, they were “the acknowledged students and teachers of the law.” In a way, ancient scribes can be compared to today's Bible scholars and professors who teach at seminary schools. According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*:

The higher the law rose in the estimation of the people, the more did its study and exposition become an independent business; and an independent class of “biblical scholars or scribes,” [who] were the *real teachers* of the people...³

How did the scribes respond to Jesus? Did their knowledge of the law of God serve as a beam of light to lead them to truth or as a veil of darkness to deprive them of truth? According to *Harper's Bible Dictionary*:

The scribes, like the Pharisees with whom their name is often linked in the N.T., were opposed to Jesus (Matt. 7:29), because he sometimes cut across their ancient traditions and exposed their unwarranted claims to prestige. Scribes played a conspicuous role in bringing about his Crucifixion (Mark 14:43, 15:1; Luke 23:10), though a few of them believed in his teaching (Matt. 8:19).⁴

Once again we can clearly see that there is no link whatsoever between being a scholar and being a truth lover. Yet most people have throughout all ages delegated their spiritual responsibility to their leaders who are taught by religious scholars at institutions of higher learning. They assume that if someone knows Greek and Hebrew and has taken numerous courses in seminary schools or has taught at institutions of higher learning, he is the one who must lead them.

Suppose you are a sophomore at college. You are taking an introductory course in biology. At the end of the semester your teacher tells you that you should look forward to your next instructor, who will offer an advanced course in biology. Then he adds, “Trust this teacher. He is quite knowledgeable.” Let us assume you register for this advanced course and go to the class and wait for the instructor. Now suppose suddenly a man enters the classroom and starts teaching. How should you respond? Should you start by saying, “You are not the instructor?” Or should you listen to him for a while to see if he sounds like one? Is not rejecting him without listening to him an unreasonable act? And yet according to our experience in Mt. Pleasant, where I live, two percent of Christian leaders requested a free book about the biblical prophecies fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh. Out of more than fifty only one pastor asked for a copy and another called to say that he already knew that we were wrong, and that he did not need a book as further evidence.

Concerning the new instructor, should the students cling to their ideas about how he should look, or should they listen to him? Should they not give him a hearing? Why then are the religious scholars and students not examining the evidence Bahá'u'lláh presents? Why are they closing their hearts and minds? Why are they walking out of the classroom? How can a student test an instructor without listening to him? Are the students not asked by their previous instructor to refrain from making any judgment about difficult issues?

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts.

I Corinthians 4:5 NIV

Why are the students not listening to those instructions? Why are they telling the instructor that he is wrong before even listening to him? Why are they assuming that they already have the answer to difficult questions?

The story of Bahá'u'lláh is so astounding, the biblical evidence for His divine origin is so compelling that every seminary school should offer at least one course about Him. I wonder if Bahá'u'lláh is even mentioned in those schools. Students are kept within the confine of Christian theology. It is assumed nothing else is worth studying.

What the majority of people believe comes from their pastors and priests. And what the majority of pastors and priests believe comes from what their professors at seminary school taught them. Those professors are the true shakers and shapers of Christian's beliefs. They are highly respected as the authority on what the Bible means. As a rule, these scholars are financially supported by a given denomination. Does it make sense to undermine the institution that feeds you? Safety—the second most significant human need—lies in preserving the status quo rather than risking for the unknown. This is why it is so difficult to make a change. The system is closed. Many people mistake “scholarship” for love for truth. They are entirely different. There are some theology professors who are in heart agnostics and atheists!

Whether Christians realize it or not, most of their beliefs come from scholars and university professors. That is where they originate and trickle down to others. Is it prudent to put the most important decision of one's life—the one that determines one's eternal destiny—mainly in the hands of professors at seminary schools?

Does knowing, loving, and “seeing” God require a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy), or a P.H. (a Pure Heart)?

Does knowing the truth require a D.TH. (Doctor of Theology) or D.T. (Detachment from Traditions)?

You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

Christ (Mark 7:9)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Christ (Matt. 5:8)



Let me now cite another personal experience to show you what is going on in theological schools in the United States, where ministers are trained. When I was in Dallas, I decided to visit a famous seminary college. I wanted to offer to the library and to the professors a few books that would give the students and the faculty a new outlook on prophecies.

They were three large books I have written to show that all prophecies of the Second Advent have been fulfilled by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.*

First I went to the library, offered the books to the librarian and asked if he would accept them. He said, "Come back couple of hours later and I will let you know." When I returned, he said "No, these books do not serve our needs."

Then I decided to offer the books to the professors. While walking through a building, looking for their offices, a security guard asked me why I had entered the building. When I told him my purpose, he said: "You cannot do this. You must have permission." I said, "Please show me the office of the dean, where I can get permission."

When I entered the dean's office, greeted him, and told him that I wanted to offer some books to the professors, he looked at me with much suspicion, as if I was a thief, and firmly said: "I do not give you such a permission!" When I asked why? He said, "I must guard them!" I could not believe what I heard. Why would professors of theology need to be guarded against new ideas? They must be the *vanguards of knowledge*, not *be guarded against knowledge*.

I wanted to start a dialogue with him. But his facial expression showed that he had no desire to talk to me. He saw me as an invader or a robber who had come to take away his precious faith. I found his response amusing. I do my best to be humble, but in this case I felt somewhat powerful! I was standing in front of someone in charge of professors of theology in a famous Christian college, and he was afraid of me! What a blessing it was!

By speaking very gently and humbly with him, I enticed him to ask me questions. I have presented a record of this dialogue in another book, written specifically on the negative role of religious leaders on the spiritual destiny of humankind. The information offered gives you a picture of the mindset that controls most religious scholars and authorities.

What can we learn from this encounter? That the one who trains the pastors fails to obey the most reasonable instructions from his Redeemer—the One he worships! ***He refuses to pay any attention to the news of His coming!*** He refuses to practice the most emphatic and repeated instruction and commandment from his Master, such as:

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

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

...unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time. *Hebrews 9:28 NIV*

Not only he refused to pay attention, he succeeded in preventing me from sharing this urgent Message with the professors under his "guard!" After all, he saw himself as their shepherd. The librarian did the same: He guarded the students—the future ministers—from gaining a new perspective on prophecies!

Those in positions of power have always feared the light of knowledge and tried to keep people in ignorance:

...the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. John 9:22 NIV

* *I Shall Come Again*, 522 pages; *Lord of Lords*, 634 pages; *King of Kings*, 510 pages.

Professors of theology must spread the knowledge of God. They must be open to new ideas. How can three books in a library hurt anyone? The ones I met practiced the exact opposite of what they were asked to do. They made these verses to come true:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God...I will change their glory into shame. Hosea 4:6-7 NKJ

But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first
Christ (Matt. 19:30 NIV)

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things [the truth] from the learned and wise, and revealing them to the simple. Yes, Father, such was your choice.
Christ (Matt. 11:25-26 NEB)

Let me now share with you the story of my last few hours in that seminary. By now, it was 3:00 p.m. I said to myself: “Why not meet the president of the seminary? I stepped into his office and told his secretary that I had come to offer him a few books. Fortunately, he was free and allowed me to see him. He was a young man, very courteous and kind. He received me warmly and asked me several questions. In response, I quoted many Biblical verses to support my message. He listened with interest and did not challenge me on anything I said. He simply wanted to know who I was and what was my mission.

I reminded him that the Jews misunderstood the prophecies and asked him: “What makes Christians to think that they have more insight than they did?” He listened and offered no response.

He warmly accepted the three volumes for his own library and promised to examine them and invite me later to return to the seminary for a dialogue with a few professors who specialized in religions other than Christianity and Judaism.

I waited a few weeks for his call, but the promised invitation never came. When I was in Dallas a year later, I called his secretary and asked for a second visit, but he declined to meet me.

My experience in this seminary is one isolated incident and should not be generalized to all religious leaders and teachers. Nevertheless, it gives us a glimpse of the mindset of those who are in charge of the spiritual destiny of humankind.

This was all about a Christian seminary. What about Muslim seminaries? What would happen if I entered a Muslim seminary? I do not know, but I would love to know! It would be a great adventure! Many Christians do not know that the Sunni branch of Islám, just like Christians, expect the return of Jesus, whom they call: ***The Spirit of God.***

Sometime ago, Dr. Lou Meyer—a Catholic priest—made a “teaching trip” throughout the United States to spread the news of the Second Coming. We had the honor of having him in our home as a guest for a few days. His talk centered on the reasons he had recognized Bahá’u’lláh as the return of Christ. When I asked him about the response of other priests to the news of the advent of Bahá’u’lláh, he said that some of his old friends and teachers listened, out of courtesy, to the news, but showed no interest. The director of a large seminary school in the United States asked him for this favor: “***Talk about any subject***

you want, but say nothing about the return of Christ to any one of the seminary students at the university!” Such a request is astonishing. Why should the future religious leaders remain ignorant of this most magnificent news? Is this the meaning of “*seek and ye shall find*”? Why should the future religious leaders live in ignorance of the very reason for which they live, and of the very purpose for which they go to seminary school?

I entreat Thee, O Thou Who art my Companion and my Best-Beloved, to lift the veil that hath come in between Thee and Thy servants, that they may recognize Thee with Thine own eye and rid themselves of all attachment to any one but Thee. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Part V

The Word of God

Nowhere God unveils His supreme power and glory as clearly as in His Word. That is His most wondrous and mighty miracle. It is from the power of His Word that great civilizations have come into being. It is from the power of His Word that Jesus, an unschooled craftsman, captured the hearts and minds of millions for centuries. God is the Master Author. A unique radiance of power, glory, novelty, creativity, and authority glows from His thoughts. No one can imitate Him. Can any light compare with the sunlight?

The Lord...revealed Himself...through His word. I Samuel 3:21

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God stands forever. Isaiah 40:8

Meditate on it day and night. Joshua 1:8



Praying for Guidance

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. Christ (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:

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...Christ (John 6:44 NKJ)

Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path... Psalms 27:11 NIV

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior. Psalms 27:7-9 NIV

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3 NIV

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Christ (Matt 21:22)

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*.

7

Prayers from Bahá'u'lláh

Seeking God's Grace and Blessings

O Thou Whose face is the object of my adoration, Whose beauty is my sanctuary, Whose habitation is my goal, Whose praise is my hope, Whose providence is my companion, Whose love is the cause of my being, Whose mention is my solace, Whose nearness is my desire, Whose presence is my dearest wish and highest aspiration, I entreat Thee not to withhold from me the things Thou didst ordain for the chosen ones among Thy servants. Supply me, then, with the good of this world and of the next.

Thou, truly, art the King of all men. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.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



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.³



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.⁴



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.⁵



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...⁶



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.⁷



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.⁸



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.⁹



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 putttest 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.¹⁰

8

Bahá'u'lláh's Meditations and Prayers to God

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; there is nothing false about him.

Christ (John 7:18 NIV)



How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God -- a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things! He hath, from everlasting, dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and will unto everlasting continue to be enthroned upon the heights of His independent sovereignty and grandeur. How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth!¹



Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that in my love for Thee I have not sought any rest, that in proclaiming Thy Cause I have denied myself every manner of tranquility, and that in the observance of whatever Thou hast prescribed in Thy Tablets I have not delayed to do Thy bidding. I have, for this reason, suffered what no man among all the inhabitants of Thy realm hath suffered.

Thy glory beareth me witness! Nothing whatsoever can withhold me from remembering Thee, though all the tribulations of the earth were to assault me from every direction. All the limbs and members of my body proclaim their readiness to be torn asunder in Thy path and for the sake of Thy pleasure, and they yearn to be scattered in the dust before Thee. O would that they who serve Thee could taste what I have tasted of the sweetness of Thy love!

I implore Thee to supply whosoever hath sought Thee with the living waters of Thy bounty, that they may rid him of all attachment to any one but Thee. Thou art, verily, the Omniscient, the All-Glorious, the Almighty.²



I am the one, O my God, who for love of Thee hath forsaken the world and all its benefits, and willingly accepted every tribulation for the sake of Thy remembrance.³

But for the adversities that befall me in Thy path, how could I ever taste the divine sweetness of Thy tenderness and love?⁴



I yield Thee thanks, O my God, for that Thou hast offered me up as a sacrifice in Thy path, and made me a target for the arrows of afflictions as a token of Thy love for Thy servants, and singled me out for all manner of tribulation for the regeneration of Thy people.

How sweet to my taste is the savor of woes sent by Thee, and how dear to my heart the dispositions of Thy providence! Perish the soul that fleeth from the threats of kings in its attempt to save itself in Thy days! I swear by Thy glory! Whoso hath quaffed the living waters of Thy favors can fear no trouble in Thy path, neither can he be deterred by any tribulation from remembering Thee or from celebrating Thy praise.⁵



I swear by Thy glory! I have accepted to be tried by manifold adversities for no purpose except to regenerate all that are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth. Whoso hath loved Thee, can never feel attached to his own self, except for the purpose of furthering Thy Cause; and whoso hath recognized Thee can recognize naught else except Thee, and can turn to no one save Thee.⁶



Thou art well aware, O my God, that throughout my life I have sought no advantage for myself. I have offered up my spirit and my whole being for the exaltation of Thy word amidst Thy creatures and the glorification of Thy name among Thy servants.⁷



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.

And when the entire creation was stirred up, and the whole earth was convulsed, and the sweet savors of Thy name, the All-Praised, had almost ceased to breathe over Thy realms, and the winds of Thy mercy had well-nigh been stilled throughout Thy dominions, Thou didst, through the power of Thy might, raise me up among Thy servants, and bid me to show forth Thy sovereignty amidst Thy people. Thereupon I arose before all Thy creatures, strengthened by Thy help and Thy power, and summoned all the multitudes unto Thee, and announced unto all Thy servants Thy favors and Thy gifts, and invited them to turn towards this Ocean, every drop of the waters of which crieth out, proclaiming unto all that are in heaven and on earth that He is, in truth, the Fountain of all life, and the Quickener of the entire creation, and the Object of the adoration of all worlds, and the Best-Beloved of every understanding heart, and the Desire of all them that are nigh unto Thee...

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, though all the gates of ease and comfort be shut against us, and thick darkness appear to have compassed us on every side, 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.⁸



Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou seest me dwelling in this prison-house that lieth behind the seas and the mountains, and knowest full well what I have endured for love of Thee and for the sake of Thy Cause. Thou art He, O my God, Who hath raised me up at Thy behest, and bidden me to occupy Thy seat, and to summon all men to the court of Thy mercy. It is Thou Who hast commanded me to tell out the things Thou didst destine for them in the Tablet of Thy decree and didst inscribe with the pen of Thy Revelation, and Who hast enjoined on me the duty of kindling the fire of Thy love in the hearts of Thy servants, and of drawing all the peoples of the earth nearer to the habitation of Thy throne.

And when, as bidden by Thee, I arose and called out, by Thy leave, all Thy creatures, the wayward among Thy servants opposed me. Some turned away from me, others disowned my claim, a few hesitated, while others were sore perplexed, notwithstanding that Thy testimony was set forth before the followers of all religions, and Thy proof demonstrated unto all the peoples of the earth, and the signs of Thy might so powerfully manifested as to encompass the entire creation.⁹



I have no will but Thy will, O my Lord, and cherish no desire except Thy desire. From my pen floweth only the summons which Thine own exalted pen hath voiced, and my tongue uttereth naught save what the Most Great Spirit hath itself proclaimed in the kingdom of Thine eternity. I am stirred by nothing else except the winds of Thy will, and breathe no word except the words which, by Thy leave and Thine inspiration, I am led to pronounce.¹⁰



Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! My tongue, both the tongue of my body and the tongue of my heart, my limbs and members, every pulsating vein within me, every hair of my head, all proclaim that Thou art God, and that there is none other God beside Thee. From everlasting Thou hast been immeasurably exalted above all similitudes and comparisons, and sanctified from whatsoever pertaineth to the creation Thou hast created and fashioned. From eternity Thou hast been alone, with none to share the majesty of Thy singleness, and hast remained far above the changes and chances to which all Thy creatures are subjected.

And when Thou didst purpose to demonstrate the power of Thy sovereign might, and to glorify Thy word, and to guide the steps of Thy people, Thou didst raise up from among Thy creatures One of Thy servants, Whom Thou didst send forth with the signs of Thy sovereignty, and Whom Thou didst endue with the clear tokens of Thy oneness, that He might fulfill Thy testimony unto all created things, and perfect Thy proof before all men.

As soon as He revealed Himself, as bidden by Thee, and called Thy servants to turn in the direction of Thy gifts, and to set their faces towards the horizon of Thy knowledge, the signs of dissension appeared amongst them. Some responded to Thy call and, without the least hesitation, obeyed Thy summons. Others turned their backs to Thee, and followed the desires of a corrupt inclination.

I implore Thee, O my God, by Thy Most Great Name, to enrapture the nations through the potency of the Word which Thou didst ordain to be the king of all words, the Word whereby the goodly pearls of Thy hidden wisdom were uncovered, and the gem-like mysteries which were wrapped up within Thee were unraveled. Deprive them not, by Thy grace and bounty, of the things Thou didst desire for them, and suffer them not to be far removed from the shores of the ocean of Thy presence.

Every existence, whether seen or unseen, O my Lord, testifieth that Thy mercy hath surpassed all created things, and Thy loving-kindness embraced the entire creation. Look upon them, I entreat Thee, with the eyes of Thy mercy. Thou art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate. Do with them as beseemeth Thy glory, and Thy majesty, and Thy greatness, and Thy bounteousness and Thy grace. Deal not with them according to the limitations imposed upon them, or the manifold vicissitudes of their earthly life.

Thou knowest, O my Lord, that I am but one of Thy servants. I have tasted of the sweetness of Thy speech, and acknowledged Thy unity and Thy singleness, and set my face towards the Source of Thy most excellent names and the Day-Spring of Thy transcendent attributes, and wished to be enabled by Thee to immerse myself beneath the ocean of Thy oneness and to be submerged by the mighty waters of Thy unity.

Assist me, by Thy strengthening grace, O my Lord, to do what Thou didst will, and withhold not from me the things Thou dost possess. So enravish me with the wonders of Thine utterances that the noise and distraction of this world may be powerless to deter me from turning unto Thee, and may fail to shake my constancy in Thy Cause, or to distract my gaze from the horizon of Thy grace. Aid me, then, O my God, to do what pleaseth Thee, and to carry out Thy will. Write down for me, moreover, the good of this world and of the world which is to come, and ordain for me a seat of truth in Thy presence. Potent art Thou to do what Thou willest, and to rule as Thou pleasest. No God is there but Thee, the Inaccessible, the All-Glorious, the Most Great.

All-praise to Thee, O Lord of the worlds and the Object of the adoration of the entire creation!¹¹

9

How Does God Motivate Us to Know Him and Love Him?

The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Christ (John 6:63 NIV)

The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked...How regrettable indeed that man should debar himself from the fruits of the tree of wisdom while his days and hours pass swiftly away. Please God, the hand of divine power may safeguard all mankind and direct their steps towards the horizon of true understanding.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

Your *word* is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalms 119:105 NIV

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall *My word* be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:10-11 NKJ

Some people are not receptive to the Word of God. They allow their worldly desire to “choose the Word:”

Others...hear *the Word*, but worldly cares and the false glamour of wealth and all kinds of evil desire come in and choke the Word, and it [their heart] proves barren. Christ (Mark 4:18-19 NEB)



In this age, many people are “turning away from the faith.” They give little if any attention to their spiritual life. They are too busy to set aside a little time for their soul, for their everlasting destiny. How does God awaken such souls? They need help. How does He inspire them to seek the One who created them for the sole purpose of knowing Him and loving Him?

History shows that all the great Messengers and Redeemers have been denied, persecuted, and even killed. This indicates that people have always been closed to new ideas and beliefs. What strategies have those Messengers used to open the hearts of their listeners? How have they tried to motivate people to listen, to investigate, and to accept their message?

The purpose of the following selections is to show you examples of the motivators that God’s great Teachers and Messengers have used. They are selected from the Bible and the Bahá’í Scriptures. Their original sources are cited at the end of this chapter.

1

Inviting to Investigate

Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.²

Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away.³



2

Encouraging to Overcome

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.⁴

How regrettable indeed that man should debar himself from the fruits of the tree of wisdom while his days and hours pass swiftly away. Please God, the hand of divine power may safeguard all mankind and direct their steps towards the horizon of true understanding.⁵



3

Reasoning

What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify.⁶

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?⁷



4

Admonishing

But he who heard [the Word of God] and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.⁸

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.⁹

Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. He will, ere long, bring to naught all the things ye possess.¹⁰

The world is continually proclaiming these words: Beware, I am evanescent, and so are all my outward appearances and colors. Take ye heed of the changes and chances contrived within me and be ye roused from your slumber. Nevertheless there is no discerning eye to see, nor is there a hearing ear to hearken.¹¹

Beware lest the transitory things of human life withhold you from turning unto God, the True One.¹²

Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone, and yet none of you hath, for one instant, consented to detach himself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy of dust. What can ye then achieve? How can ye atone for your past failure?¹³

The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it. Break not the bond that uniteth you with your Creator, and be not of those that have erred and strayed from His ways. Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion.¹⁴

O FRIENDS!

Abandon not the everlasting beauty for a beauty that must die, and set not your affections on this mortal world of dust.¹⁵



5

Announcing

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: “Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!”¹⁶

O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come.¹⁷

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.¹⁸



6

Promising and Rewarding

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...”¹⁹

If ye choose to follow Me, I will make you heirs of My Kingdom...²⁰

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life...²¹

O My servants! Whoso hath tasted of this Fountain hath attained unto everlasting Life...²²

Such is the station ordained for the true believer that if to an extent smaller than a needle's eye the glory of that station were to be unveiled to mankind, every beholder would be consumed away in his longing to attain it. For this reason it hath been decreed that in this earthly life the full measure of the glory of his own station should remain concealed from the eyes of such a believer.²³

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven...²⁴



7

Reminding and Informing

Throughout your lives ye follow your religion in order to attract the good-pleasure of God, yet on the Last Day ye shut yourselves out from God and turn away from Him Who is your Promised One.²⁵

He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.²⁶

There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.²⁷



8

Rebuking

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!...You say, "I am [spiritually] rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke...²⁸

O MOVING FORM OF DUST!

I desire communion with thee, but thou wouldst put no trust in Me. The sword of thy rebellion hath felled the tree of thy hope. At all times I am near unto thee, but thou art ever far from Me. Imperishable glory I have chosen for thee, yet boundless shame thou hast chosen for thyself. While there is yet time, return, and lose not thy chance.²⁹

You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!³⁰



9
Pitying

O the pity! that man should deprive himself of this goodly gift, this imperishable bounty, this everlasting life.³¹

The eye of My loving-kindness weepeth sore over you, inasmuch as ye have failed to recognize the One upon Whom ye have been calling in the daytime and in the night season, at even and at morn.³²



10
Praying

Take ye heed, watch and *pray*.³³

Enable Thy servants, O my God, to discover the things Thou didst desire for them in Thy Kingdom. Acquaint them, moreover, with what He Who is the Origin of Thy most excellent titles hath, in His love for Thee, been willing to bear for the sake of the regeneration of their souls, that they may haste to attain the River that is Life indeed, and turn their faces in the direction of Thy Name, the Most Merciful. Abandon them not to themselves, O my God! Draw them, by Thy bountiful favor, to the heaven of Thine inspiration. They are but paupers, and Thou art the All-Possessing, the ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.³⁴



11
*Swearing and Declaring
God as Witness*

You judge by human standards...I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me...I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.³⁵

Thy Lord, verily, is a witness unto what I say.³⁶

God, verily, is sufficient Witness.³⁷

O peoples of the earth! God, the Eternal Truth, is My witness...³⁸

To this He Who is the Lord of all creation beareth Me witness.³⁹

Verily this is the true Faith of God, and sufficient witness are God and such as are endowed with the knowledge of the Book.⁴⁰



12
Questioning

O SON OF THE WONDROUS VISION!

I have breathed within thee a breath of My own Spirit, that thou mayest be My lover. Why hast thou forsaken Me and sought a beloved other than Me?⁴¹

You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?⁴²

O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God?⁴³

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?⁴⁴



13

Urging and Pleading

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.⁴⁵

Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face?⁴⁶

Where is the man of insight who will behold the Words of God with his own eyes and rid himself of the opinions and notions of the peoples of the earth?⁴⁷



14

Warning and Threatening

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.⁴⁸

Ye, and all ye possess, shall pass away. Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather together the entire creation.⁴⁹

To deny honor to the Son is to deny it to the Father who sent him.⁵⁰

Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.⁵¹

He who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.⁵²

This mortal life is sure to perish; its pleasures are bound to fade away and ere long ye shall return unto God, distressed with pangs of remorse, for presently ye shall be roused from your slumber, and ye shall soon find yourselves in the presence of God and will be asked of your doings.⁵³

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.⁵⁴

No man can obtain everlasting life, unless he embraceth the truth of this inestimable, this wondrous, and sublime Revelation.⁵⁵



15
Commanding

Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.⁵⁶

Be always on the watch [search] 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.⁵⁷

Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation...⁵⁸

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.⁵⁹

Purge your sight, that ye may perceive its glory with your own eyes, and depend not on the sight of any one except your self, for God hath never burdened any soul beyond its power.⁶⁰

Judge ye fairly the Cause of God, your Creator, and behold that which hath been sent down from the Throne on high, and meditate thereon with innocent and sanctified hearts. Then will the truth of this Cause appear unto you as manifest as the sun in its noon-tide glory.⁶¹

Part VI

Further Proofs

Books that Can Confirm Your Faith and Change Your Destiny



The evidence presented in this book to prove the divine origin of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is quite brief—a mere drop from a vast ocean. If you wish to continue your search for further proofs, you can find many other references. In this section, you will find brief introductions to some of them.

**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

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 its 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, 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.

* Also known as *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*.

***Other Bahá'í Writings
Available in English***

By Bahá'u'lláh:

The Most Holy Book

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

Gems of Divine Mysteries

Tabernacle of Unity

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

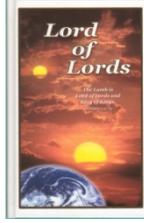
Books on the Bahá'í Faith by the Same Author

- *Evidence for the Bahá'í Faith*
- *History and Teachings*
- *The Afterlife*
- *Forthcoming Books*

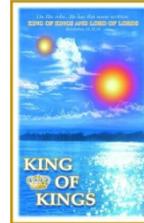
Evidence for the Bahá'í Faith



***I Shall
Come Again***
Volume I
522 Pages



***Lord of
Lords***
Volume II
634
Pages



***King of
Kings***
Volume III
510 Pages

***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)***



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

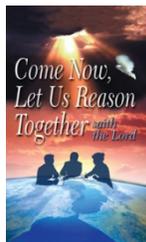
There are few works by a single author that can rival Dr. Motlagh's in their sheer scope, depth and thoroughness of scholarship. Without doubt, future Bahá'ís will thank Dr. Motlagh for his achievements, that are, in my opinion, not only astonishing—they are heroic.

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).*

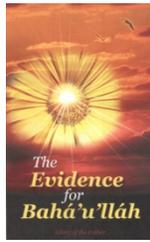
Mel Campbell
Former Baptist Minister



**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.



*The Evidence
for
Bahá'u'lláh:*

**The Glory of
the Father**
329 pages

One way to prove that Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the promise of the Second Advent is to compare Him with Jesus Christ. *The Evidence for Bahá'u'lláh: The Glory of the Father*, does exactly that. It compares Jesus and Bahá'u'lláh in 35 different ways. A fair-minded, even a skeptical, reader cannot escape this conclusion: If Jesus is the One He claims to be, so must be Bahá'u'lláh. A sincere Christian cannot in good faith accept One and reject the other. It will be like having twin children, but loving only one of them!

In addition, *The Evidence for Bahá'u'lláh* offers a summary of some of the most significant prophecies presented in *I Shall Come Again*, *Lord of Lords*, and *King of Kings*.



*History and
Teachings*

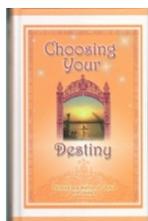


**On Wings of
Destiny**
274 Pages

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.

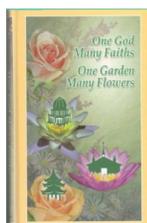
On Wings of Destiny shows that the only way you can attain true joy and happiness in all the worlds of God is to cultivate your spiritual potential and to draw nearer and nearer to God. If you value your soul and wish to choose your destiny in the light of knowledge and freedom, take the time to listen 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.



**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.



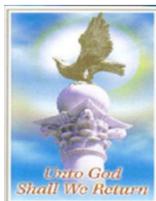
**One God, Many
Faiths; One
Garden,
Many Flowers**
290 Pages

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 mankind 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.



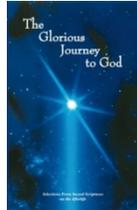
The Afterlife



**Unto God
Shall We Return**
164 pages

This is a compilation from the Bahá’í Scriptures on the afterlife. It brings together the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the purpose of human life and the

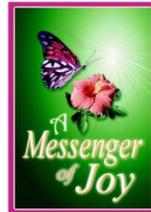
continuation of that purpose into the mysterious realms beyond. *Unto God Shall We Return* is compiled and arranged to portray a clear vision of the meaning of life—both here and hereafter—and to offer guidance about how we can prepare our soul for God’s “many mansions in heaven.”



***The Glorious
Journey to
God***

256 Pages

The Glorious Journey to God contains selections from sacred scriptures of five great religions on the afterlife. This is an inspirational book on a topic of great concern to all human beings. It is the most comprehensive and reliable source of knowledge about the beyond. It will have a profound impact on your spiritual perspective.



***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.

A Glimpse of Paradise

**A Near-Death Vision
of the Next Life**

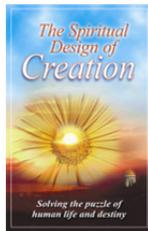
This DVD (also video) contains a talk given by Reinee Pasarow about one of her near death visions. This is a state in which the individual shows no vital signs of life, yet experiences life to its fullest. What makes this story unique is this: Reinee’s vision guided her to become a Bahá’í. She was given several clues by a spiritual being about the Bahá’í Faith. For instance, one of the titles of Bahá’u’lláh—the Blessed Beauty—was revealed to her. She was also told the word “justice” and shown the seat of the Universal House of Justice, exactly as it is built. Reinee had many unusual dreams as a child, and three near death visions.

We have added an introduction and a conclusion to this DVD to make it more attractive and meaningful to all viewers, especially to seekers. The introduction and conclusion

present Biblical and Bahá'í references to the many clues that Mrs. Pasarow received while in the presence of the Being of Light.



Knowing and Loving God



The Spiritual Design of Creation

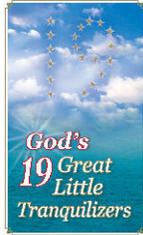
This book is written to refresh the life of the soul. Its prime purpose is to advance the “knowledge of God,” so that we may know our Creator as He really is, not as we may wish Him to be!

A poet once said: “God is closer to me than I am to myself. Why, then, am I so far from Him?” How can this be possible? The distance between our spirit and the Spirit of God can be measured by the difference between God as He really is, and the God that we have created in our mind. The purpose of acquiring the “knowledge of God” is to diminish the distance. The more we know God as He really is, the closer we draw to Him.

Our purpose in coming to this world is spiritual transformation, which can be attained only by knowing and loving God. ***The Spiritual Design of Creation*** will help you attain this Most Glorious Purpose. It appeals both to the mind and to the heart. It satisfies the mind by presenting the latest scientific evidence for the existence of God and the afterlife. It inspires and transforms the heart by showing the everlasting honors and rewards in store for those who cultivate their spiritual potential and the unimaginable losses for those who fail in this endeavor.

How would you feel if you traveled for 70 years toward a destination, and then at the end of this journey, you suddenly discovered that you had traveled in the wrong direction? This is the way many people squander the precious days of their lives. Imagine their disappointment at the end of their spiritual journey! Should we not then learn a lesson from their lives? Should we not take a little time for our soul while we still have a chance?

This small book rests on this premise: We are spiritual beings created and designed in the most splendid Image, for a profound purpose—to grow and advance spiritually by remaining in touch with our Designer. Our welfare and our destiny depend on harmonizing our life with what He has planned and has in store for us. Unless we accept and submit to His plan, we cannot manifest our full potential, nor can we enjoy the blessings in store for us. Instead of blooming into a beautiful flower, we will live and die as a seed, without fulfilling our mission—the very reason we came into this world.



**God's 19
Great Little
Tranquilizers**

62 Pages

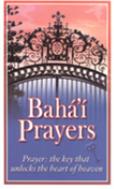
This is God's prescription for peaceful living. Without knowing, accepting, and living by these principles, no one can attain true happiness. This mini-book presents briefly the 19 most significant spiritual principles that bind us to our Creator.



**A Seven-Piece
Puzzle**

Each of the seven-volume series is like a piece of a single puzzle. To see the beautiful picture of human life and destiny—what God has planned for each of us here and hereafter—it is essential to study *all seven volumes, preferably in the following order:*

<p>1. <i>Bahá'í Faith: God's Greatest Gift to Humankind</i> 160 pages</p>		<p>This volume describes briefly the teachings and history of the Bahá'í Faith. <i>It displays the fruits of the Tree of Life.</i></p>
<p>2. <i>Bahá'u'lláh: The One Promised in All Scriptures</i> 235 pages</p>		<p>This volume describes the life and Mission of the One who established the Bahá'í Faith. <i>This is the root of the Tree of life, and the most significant volume in this series.</i> Reading it is a must for every seeker of truth.</p>
<p>3. <i>Bahá'í Proofs</i></p>		<p>The One who has sent Messengers to us has also given us clear and definitive standards by which they can be recognized. This book applies those standards to Bahá'u'lláh and proves that He has fulfilled every one of them on a scale never seen before.</p>
<p>4. <i>The Greatest News: The News Everyone Should Hear</i> 166 pages</p>		<p>This book is addressed primarily to Christians. It proves that <i>Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God—fulfills the promise of the second coming of Christ.</i></p>

<p>5. <i>Death: the Door to Heaven</i> 182 pages</p>		<p>This volume describes the mysteries of the afterlife as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. <i>It explains the meaning of hell and heaven and shows how we can attain our divine destiny, how we can prepare our soul for God's "many Mansions in heaven" (John 14:2).</i> Without gaining a glimpse of the afterlife, this life has no meaning.</p>
<p>6. <i>God's 19 Great Little Tranquilizers</i> 62 pages</p>		<p>We have been created to know and love God. This small book presents the "<i>Knowledge of God.</i>" It sets forth what we need to know about our Creator to attain a state of utter joy and peace. It reveals the spiritual design of creation and presents 19 principles that lead us to a life of contentment and happiness.</p>
<p>7. <i>Bahá'í Prayers</i> 230 pages</p>		<p>We are asked to recognize a tree by its fruits (Matthew 7:20). Prayers are the first fruits of religion—its heart and soul. They are the heavenly lights that guide us to the presence of God and manifest His glory and grandeur. The prayers offered in this book are a basketful of fruits from the Vineyard of <i>Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God.</i></p>

The prime purpose of this series is to unveil our ***glorious destiny*** and to demonstrate how the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh can help us:

- ✽ ***To know God more truly***
- ✽ ***To love Him more intimately***
- ✽ ***To trust Him more genuinely, and***
- ✽ ***To submit to His Will and His Wisdom more willingly.***

Reading the preceding volumes in the recommended order will lead you toward the discovery of the greatest mysteries of human life and destiny. It will help you resolve these puzzling and profound questions: ***Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? And how can we fulfill our divine destiny—attain the very purpose for which we have come into this world?*** Are there, and will there ever be, any concerns and questions that are more urgent and of a greater consequence?



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Chapter 1

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Chapter 2

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2. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 75.
3. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 163-164.
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2. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 137.
3. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 16.
4. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 93.
5. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 35-36.
6. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 14.
7. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 85.
8. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 17.
9. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 131.
10. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 53.

Chapter 5

1. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 15.
2. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 235-236.
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Chapter 7

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5. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 33-34.
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9. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 59.
10. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 73.

Chapter 8

1. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 261-262.

2. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 151-152.
3. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 205-206.
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7. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 181.
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9. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-107.
10. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 108.
11. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 112-115.

Chapter 9

1. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 173-174.
2. Christ (Revelation 22:17).
3. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 24.
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5. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 174.
6. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 146.
7. Christ (Matthew 16:26).
8. Christ (Luke 6:49).
9. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 168-169.
10. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 127-128.
11. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 257.
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