

*Bahá'u'lláh's
Epistle to
Christians*

**Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle
to Christians**

Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people. He cried in a loud voice, “Fear God and pay him homage; ***for the hour of his judgment has come!***”

Christ (Rev. 14:6-7 NEB)

“Hath the Hour come?” “Nay, more; it hath passed, by Him Who is the Revealer of clear tokens! Verily, the Inevitable is come, and He, the True One, hath appeared with proof and testimony.”¹

Bahá'u'lláh

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven...

Christ (Matt. 24:36 NIV)

The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth...hath come to pass.²

Bahá'u'lláh

Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth.³

The Báb

Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to Christians

Bahá'u'lláh wrote an Epistle containing His strongest and most urgent appeals to Christians to investigate His claim. This chapter contains most of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle—called *The Most Holy Tablet*—along with biblical references offered by the present author in the footnotes. You may wish to read the Epistle twice, once without looking at the footnotes and again with the footnotes.

As you read it, see if you can remember anyone who has spoken with the power and authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks. Look through any sacred Scripture and see if you can find any epistle like it. It is endowed with an unprecedented power and authority. Only God speaks in this language.

Fear, emotionalism, and attachment to names and numbers cause two short-circuits; one in the heart, the other in the mind. The short-circuit in our hearts prevents us from responding with our “spiritual instinct” to the Word of God. The short-circuit in our minds prevents us from reasoning or thinking in a rational way. Mending these short-circuits are the two challenges every seeker of truth faces.

The Word of God is so supreme, so distinguished, that it shines as brightly as the sun. Can anyone with good eyes fail to see the sun? Bahá'u'lláh testifies to the distinction of divine Word:

Behold, how lofty is the station, and how consummate the virtue, of these verses which He hath declared to be His surest testimony, His infallible proof, the evidence of His all-subduing power, and a revelation of the potency of His will. He, the divine King, hath proclaimed the undisputed supremacy of the verses of His Book over all things that

testify to His truth. For compared with all other proofs and tokens, the divinely-revealed verses shine as the sun, whilst all others are as stars. To the peoples of the world they are the abiding testimony, the incontrovertible proof, the shining light of the ideal King. Their excellence is unrivaled, their virtue nothing can surpass. They are the treasury of the divine pearls and the depository of the divine mysteries...Through them floweth the river of divine knowledge, and gloweth the fire of His ancient and consummate wisdom.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh did not attend school, yet He wrote the equivalent of a hundred volumes, without hesitation or a change of mind! This is not a secret or private miracle, but one visible for all to see for all time.

Once again, Bahá'u'lláh points to the Word of God as the ultimate evidence:

Therefore, should a person arise and bring forth a myriad verses, discourses, epistles, and prayers, none of which have been acquired through learning, what conceivable excuse could justify those that reject them, and deprive themselves of the potency of their grace? What answer could they give when once their soul hath ascended and departed from its gloomy temple? Could they seek to justify themselves by saying: "We have clung to a certain tradition, and not having beheld the literal fulfillment thereof, we have therefore...kept remote from the law of God?"⁵

Read the following Epistle from Bahá'u'lláh with your heart and soul. Ponder its meaning. Allow your "spiritual instinct" to respond. Let your soul bask in its beauty, power, and uniqueness. Try to remember if you have ever heard or seen any human being speak in this language.

*The Most Holy Tablet**

In the name of the Lord, the Lord of great glory.

...Say,[⊛] O followers of the Son![⊛] Have ye shut out yourselves from Me by reason of My Name? Wherefore ponder ye not in your hearts? Day and night ye have been calling upon your Lord, the Omnipotent, but when He [Bahá'u'lláh] came from the heaven of eternity in His great glory, ye turned aside from him...

Consider those who rejected the Spirit^{*} when He came unto them with manifest dominion. How numerous the Pharisees who had secluded themselves in synagogues in His name, lamenting over their separation from Him, and yet when the portals of reunion were flung open...they disbelieved in God, the Exalted, the Mighty. They failed to attain His presence, notwithstanding that His advent had been promised them in the Book of Isaiah as well as in the Books of the Prophets and the Messengers. No one from among them turned his face towards the Dayspring of divine bounty except such as were destitute of any power amongst men. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name. Moreover, call

* The footnotes do not belong to the original text. They are added by this author as an aid to those who may wish to study the links between Bahá'u'lláh's Words and the Bible.

⊛ The word "say appears frequently in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings. It is an abbreviation of the expression: *Thus says the Lord*.

⊛ Perhaps a reference to the passage: "No one knows *the Son* [Jesus] except the Father..." (Matt. 11:27).

* The Spirit of God, a title bestowed on Christ, in both the Islamic and the Bahá'í Scriptures.

thou to mind the one who sentenced Jesus to death. He was the most learned of His age in His own country,* whilst he who was only a fisherman* believed in Him. Take good heed and be of them that observe the warning.

...We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation. Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened? Fear God, O followers of the Spirit, and walk not in the footsteps of every divine [religious leader] that hath gone far astray. Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgment and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.

...Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error. He, verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time.* Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His

* Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to Annas, who was the most prestigious, influential, and learned religious leader among the Jews at the time of Jesus. He served as the high priest and had several sons who also occupied that position. His son-in-law (Caiaphas) was the presiding high priest at the trial of Jesus. Because of Annas' prestige, Jesus was *first* led to him for a preliminary trial and *then* to Caiaphas. Annas and Caiaphas pronounced the same verdict: death. Caiaphas said: "It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50).

* Peter.

* Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to these verses:

I [Jesus] have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me...They [the Jews] said, "Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph; we know his father and mother. How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" (John 6:38, 42).

utterances. Thus instructeth you the True One, could ye but perceive it.

...the Burning Bush calleth aloud: "He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty." Say, Lo! The Father is come,[☉] and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: "Ye cannot bear it now."^{*} And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it. Better is this for you than all that ye possess. Verily He is nigh unto them that do good. The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favored angels hath come to pass.^{*} Say, verily, He hath testified of Me, and I do testify of Him.[☉] Indeed, He hath purposed no one other than Me. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded and understanding soul.

Though beset with countless afflictions, We summon the people unto God, the Lord of names. Say, strive ye to attain that which ye have been promised in the Books of God, and walk not in the way of the ignorant. My body hath endured imprisonment that ye may be released from the bondage of self. Set your faces then towards His countenance and follow not the footsteps of every hostile oppressor. Verily, He hath consented to be sorely abased that ye may attain unto glory,

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

* "I [Jesus] have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

☉ "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3, Also Mark 13:32). "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36).

☉ "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

and yet, ye are disporting yourselves in the vale of heedlessness. He, in truth, liveth in the most desolate of abodes for your sakes, whilst ye dwell in your palaces.

...Lo! He is come in the sheltering shadow of Testimony, invested with conclusive proof and evidence, and those who truly believe in Him regard His presence as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. Blessed is the man who turneth towards Him, and woe betide such as deny or doubt Him.

Announce thou unto the priests: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. Step out from behind the veil in the name of thy Lord, He Who layeth low the necks of all men. Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. ❖

Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son* and hath exalted His Cause. Cast away, O peoples of the earth, that which ye have and take fast hold of that which ye are bidden by the All-Powerful, He Who is the Bearer of the Trust of God. Purge ye your ears and set your hearts towards Him that ye may hearken to the most wondrous Call which hath been raised from Sinai...

❖ "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak..." (John 16:13).

* "...when he, the Spirit of truth, comes...He will bring glory to me [Christ]..." (John 16:13-14).

The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His [Jesus'] transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Bahá'u'lláh (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 85-86).

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!"? Well is it with the man who hasteneth unto Him. Verily, he is numbered among them whose names will be eternally recorded* and who will be mentioned by the Concourse on High. Thus hath it been decreed by the Spirit in this wondrous Tablet. 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. Follow ye the Way of the Lord and walk not in the footsteps of them that are sunk in heedlessness. Well is it with the slumberer who is stirred by the Breeze of God and ariseth from amongst the dead, directing his steps towards the Way of the Lord. Verily, such a man is regarded, in the sight of God, the True One, as a jewel amongst men and is reckoned with the blissful.

Say: In the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West have appeared the signs of His dominion.* Ponder this in your hearts, O people, and be not of those who have turned a deaf ear to the admonitions of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Praised. 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.

O concourse of bishops! Ye are the stars of the heaven of My knowledge. My mercy desireth not that ye should fall upon the earth. My justice, however, declareth: "This is that which the Son hath decreed." And whatsoever hath proceeded out

* Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:35).

* Revelation 2:15; 21:27.

* "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:27).

of His blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered.* The bells, verily, peal out My Name, and lament over Me, but My spirit rejoiceth with evident gladness. The body of the Loved One yearneth for the cross, and His head is eager for the spear in the path of the All-Merciful. The ascendancy of the oppressor can in no wise deter Him from His purpose. We have summoned all created things to attain the presence of thy Lord, the King of all names. Blessed is the man that hath set his face towards God, the Lord of the Day of Reckoning.

O concourse of monks! If ye choose to follow Me, I will make you heirs of My kingdom; and if ye transgress against Me, I will, in My long-suffering, endure it patiently, and I, verily, am the Ever-forgiving, the All-Merciful...

I never passed a tree but Mine heart addressed it saying: "O would that thou wert cut down in My Name, and My body crucified upon thee."...

Say: Blessed the slumberer who is awakened by My Breeze.♦ Blessed the lifeless one who is quickened through My reviving breaths. Blessed the eye that is solaced by gazing at My beauty. Blessed the wayfarer who directeth his steps towards the Tabernacle of My glory and majesty. Blessed the distressed one who seeketh refuge beneath the shadow of My canopy. Blessed the sore athirst who hasteneth to the soft-flowing waters of My loving-kindness.

* Most likely Bahá'u'lláh refers to this prophecy: "...and the stars shall fall from heaven..." (Matt. 24:29).

Bahá'u'lláh states that *stars* symbolize religious leaders. They "fall" when they fail to turn to the new Source of Light. For biblical evidence, see *In the Clouds of Glory*.

♦ "Be alert, be wakeful. You do not know when the moment comes. It is like a man away from home: he has left his house and put his servants in charge, each with his own work to do, and he has ordered the doorkeeper to stay awake. Keep awake, then, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. Evening or midnight, cock-crow or early dawn—if he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to everyone: Keep awake" (Mark 13:33-37).

Blessed the insatiate soul who casteth away his selfish desires for love of Me and taketh his place at the banquet table* which I have sent down from the heaven of divine bounty for My chosen ones. Blessed the abased one who layeth fast hold on the cord of My glory; and the needy one who entereth beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle of My wealth. Blessed the ignorant one who seeketh the fountain of My knowledge; and the heedless one who cleaveth to the cord of My remembrance. Blessed the soul that hath been raised to life through My quickening breath and hath gained admittance into My heavenly Kingdom. Blessed the man whom the sweet savors of reunion with Me have stirred and caused to draw nigh unto the Dayspring of My Revelation. Blessed the ear that hath heard and the tongue that hath borne witness and the eye that hath seen and recognized the Lord Himself, in His great glory and majesty, invested with grandeur and dominion... Upon him rest My mercy, My loving-kindness, My bounty and My glory. Bahá'u'lláh
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 9-17

* The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet." But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them (Matt. 22:2-6, see also Matt. 25:1-13).

"Blessed is the man who will sit at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15).

References

1. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 131-132.
2. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 11.
3. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 41.
4. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 205.
5. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 220.