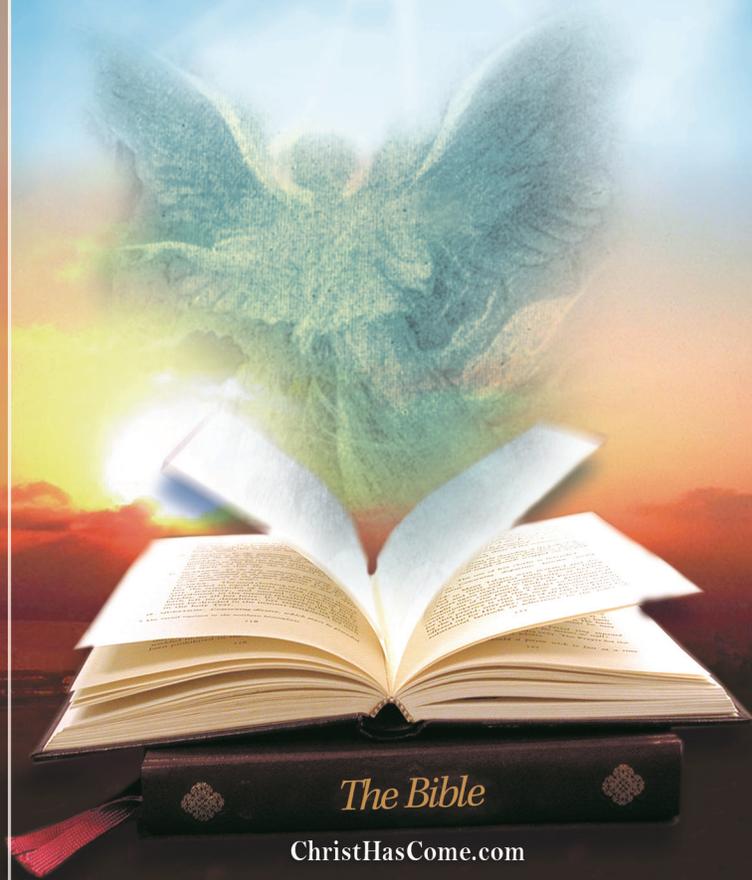


# *Christ Has Come!*



*The Bible*

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# **Christ Has Come!**

*Wake up!...I shall come like a thief!*

*Revelation 3:2-3 NEB*

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***Christ Has Come***

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## *Keywords*

<b><i>Bahá'í:</i></b>	The name of a new religion. A <b><i>Bahá'í</i></b> is a follower of the Bahá'í Faith. <b><i>Bahá'í</i></b> literally means “the follower of light and glory.”
<b><i>Bahá'u'lláh:</i></b>	Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. <b><i>Bahá'u'lláh</i></b> means “Glory of God.”
<b><i>The Báb:</i></b>	The Herald of the Bahá'í Faith. <b><i>The Báb</i></b> means “the Gate.”
<b><i>'Abdu'l-Bahá:</i></b>	Bahá'u'lláh's son and foremost promoter and exemplar of Bahá'í teachings. <b><i>'Abdu'l-Bahá</i></b> means “Servant of Glory.”

***Tributes from  
Religious Leaders and Scholars***

Bahá'u'lláh was not only the supreme genius of the Bahá'í Movement; he was without question one of the supreme spiritual geniuses of history. There have been few in any age to compare with him in point of insight, vision, lofty thought and noble speech.

Dr. John Haynes Holmes, Minister

There was living quite lately a human being of such consummate excellence that many think it is both permissible and inevitable even to identify him mystically with the invisible Godhead...His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with supernatural men...We learn that, at great points in his Career...such radiance of might and majesty streamed from his countenance that none could bear to look upon the effulgence of his glory and beauty. Nor was it an uncommon occurrence for unbelievers involuntarily to bow down...on beholding His Holiness.

Rev. T.K. Cheyne, D. Litt., D.D.

I have been surprised at the depth and devotional character of the best in Bahá'í Scriptures...

Dr. Nels F.S. Ferre  
Formerly President of American  
Theological Society

# What is the purpose of this book?

*Christ Has Come!* is written especially for Christians who have sincere love for Jesus Christ and a genuine desire to obey His commands that they should never become complacent, but rather watch for the news of His return, and pray constantly to become worthy of knowing Him (Luke 21:34-36). It invites them to open their hearts to the One who is knocking:

***Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in...*** Christ (Rev. 3:20)

***Be ready...to let Him in the moment He arrives and knocks.*** Christ (Luke 12:35-36)

***Be always on the watch...that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*** Christ (Luke 21:36 NIV)

This book invites all seekers and lovers of truth to learn about a new religion, ***the Bahá'í Faith***, and the astonishing evidence of its divine origin, as presented by its Founder, ***Bahá'u'lláh***, the Glory of God.

Often when I talk with my friends, colleagues, and students about the Bahá'u'lláh, I offer them something to read. After years of trial and error, I have discovered two problems:

- ***The first problem relates to the state of the mind.*** Most people are skeptical, even cynical about the news of the coming of a new Redeemer from God. They simply brush it aside, like hundreds of other news or claims they hear every day. Christianity alone is divided into thousands of denominations. When people learn that each of them claims exclusive rights to the truth, they lose faith not only in those who make the claims but also in themselves to make a choice. No wonder Jesus asked, "***When the Son of Man comes, will there be faith on earth?***" (Luke 18:8). And Micah predicted, "***The day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion***" (Micah 7:4). This loss of trust and spread of skepticism and confusion instill apathy, indifference, and inaction: "If I can't make a choice, why even try?" "It is safe where I am, in my familiar comfort zone. Why should I venture out?" This attitude is then extended beyond Christianity to all other religions. Love for truth has diminished in many hearts. No wonder Jesus said, "***The love of many will grow cold***" (Matt. 24:12). Today most people seek the pleasures of the earthly kingdom, not the promises of the heavenly.

Some believers hesitate to learn about Bahá'u'lláh for fear of being deceived. Do we need to fear ***every*** news, ***every*** message, ***every*** faith or only ***false*** ones? How can we tell one from the other? Only by investigating. This book does not ask anyone to make any commitment, except to seek and search, except to follow God's directive that we should "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (I John 4:1).

- ***The second obstacle in studying a new religion has to do with time.*** In spite of advanced technology, we are busier than ever before. Most people have to struggle simply to catch up with daily demands. Where can they find time to study a new religion? Recently, when I asked a colleague to read a manuscript of mine, he showed me a big pile of unopened letters and magazines on his desk. On top of his file I saw a magazine called: *Money*. I felt so guilty for asking him to exchange his “Money” for “my manuscript.” Out of courtesy, he said he would read it. I gave him about two months. When I got it back, he had not read a single page! He apologized, and asked for a smaller book. Similarly, when I asked a noted Christian author and scholar if he would read a book about Bahá’u’lláh, he excused himself by saying, “I don’t have time even to respond to my fan’s mail. How can I find time for Bahá’u’lláh?” No wonder Jesus said, “***It will be like the days of Noah***” (Matt. 24:37).

In spite of busy schedules and widespread skepticism, apathy, cynicism, and loss of faith, a few curious seekers and lovers of truth express interest in reading. If I give them a big book, they panic; and if I don’t come to their rescue in time by showing them a smaller one, they may faint! This book should satisfy both groups: those who have lost their faith, and those who may faint! It is written to stir and move many of the skeptics to take notice, to stay awake and wonder! Its tone is direct, candid, and most of all, challenging. The reader is invited, encouraged, and even urged to take a brief flight beyond the dark and gloomy clouds of cynicism and apathy to behold the dawning of a most glorious day in human history.

To adapt to the needs of busy people, I have made the book as small as possible. I hope it will not jeopardize the crammed schedules of busy readers who are invited to devote a few hours of their precious lives to the news of the coming of their Savior and Redeemer—a time they could spend shopping, vacationing, watching TV, surfing the Web, reading a favorite novel, or exploring the latest gossip about a fallen star.

Every book has a “tone.” The word that best describes this book is ***urgent***. There is so much noise in the air, I have raised the volume, for Bahá’u’lláh’s message is urgent. It can make a difference between a world of oneness, peace, and prosperity for all humankind and a world of war, suffering, and misery.

If you feel I have passed my limits in challenging, inspiring, or even urging you to be confident and daring in your journey of the search for truth, I apologize. My only motive for being candid and direct is my deep love for you the reader, who have given me the honor of sharing with you a message of hope that can transform your life, and turn our planet into a place of peace and joy. I have followed this directive:

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. I Peter 3:15

***The purpose of Christ Has Come! is not to convert, but to awaken to the dawning of the greatest day in human history.*** A book can teach, inform, and inspire, but it cannot transform a heart, or “win a soul.” Only God can do that. Suppose you are lying in your bed and daydreaming. Suddenly you see streaks of light flashing behind the window. You arise to take a look. That is the purpose of this book. It throws a few flashes of light at restless dreamers, who don’t mind leaving their comfortable beds to take a look.

What you may want to do *after* looking is *your* prerogative. You can sing and dance out of joy, or go back to sleep and dream. No one has the right to dictate belief. Believing is the most glorious gift from God, offered exclusively to those who have a sincere desire to receive it.

***“Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*** Christ (Rev. 22:17)

Would you force anyone to accept a gift? But it is nice to know there is one for anyone who wants it. That is exactly what this book does. It proclaims that once again the Sun has risen and is shedding its splendors—the gift of a new life—on all those who love the light. That is all.

The purpose of this book is not to present prophecies about Bahá’u’lláh, but rather to smooth the way, to remove the obstacles that prevent you from studying the prophecies. Several books have already been written on the numerous and detailed predictions of previous Scriptures about the coming of Bahá’u’lláh, but very few specifically on the obstacles.

*Christ Has Come!* follows the example Bahá’u’lláh set in a book He wrote in response to a few questions raised by a seeker of truth. He called His response: *The Book of Certitude* (*The Kitáb-i-Íqán*). Most of it deals with questions and objections that prevent people from even carrying out a preliminary examination of Bahá’u’lláh’s mission.

Before a person can learn anything, he must be awakened, he must pay attention. That is why Jesus said so many times, “Wake up!” and “Watch!” He knew only a few of His followers would pay attention to the news of His return. *The Book of Certitude* shakes people out of their slumber, it gets their attention, it changes their attitude about religion, proofs, and prophecies. It helps people overcome their emotional attachments and obstacles, because people are far more emotional than rational, especially about their beliefs. Picture yourself as a Jew who has prayed to Moses for forty or fifty years. Suddenly you hear about a poor young man named Jesus, who claims to be the Lord! Detaching yourself from your emotional attachments to Moses and to your parents, and even your identity, in order to consider the claim of Jesus (which implies being a Christian and not a Jew) may be as hard as removing a piece of gravel from cement by fingernails! ***Unless emotional blocks are overcome, nothing can happen.*** No wonder in the *Book of Revelation*, Jesus repeated the expression, “***He who overcomes***” eight times.

Just like *The Book of Certitude*, the main purpose of *Christ Has Come!* is not to prove the divine station of Bahá’u’lláh, but to awaken the complacent and skeptical masses of people who fail to pay any attention to their spiritual responsibility. Its main goal is to encourage them to move from apathy to action, to take initiative for searching for their heavenly Master.

My ancestors were of Jewish Faith. How ironic that for nearly 2,000 years they kept their hearts and minds closed, and continued to follow one another without taking the time to take a look at the most magnificent gift—Jesus Christ—that Heaven may bestow on humans. And now here am I, a descendent of those people, acknowledging not only the divine station of Jesus Christ, but also recognizing His second advent in the person of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, and proclaiming that truth to Christians! The descendants

of those Christians who invited my ancestors to take a step forward by accepting Jesus Christ are now being invited to do the same! What a blessing to be in this position. What an honor to break this cycle of denial. I can never thank God enough for guiding my steps and helping me recognize not only Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God, but also Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.

*May God bless you and aid you in all your endeavors*

# Part I

## Present Your Case

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

*Isaiah 41:21 NIV*

*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

*1 Thess. 5:21*

## ***What is the Bahá'í Faith?***

The Bahá'í Faith is a new religion God has sent to unify all nations and peoples of the world and to establish a global civilization based on justice, peace, and harmony.

The Bahá'í Faith is not a denomination or a sect—section—of another religion. It is an independent Faith, of the same stature as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Only once in a thousand years does a religion of such stature appear upon the earth.

Bahá'ís, followers of the Bahá'í Faith, believe that a new age has dawned. To protect our planet and its peoples, we must adopt a new global order. This is predicted:

***...the old order of things has passed away...I am making all things new!***

Christ (Rev. 21:4-5)

Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God—Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, predicts that we are on the verge of ***a new world order***. In a little while, all things shall be made new:

***Soon will the present day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead...***<sup>1</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the One promised in all holy scriptures. More about Bahá'u'lláh's mission and station later in this book.

## ***What is Bahá'u'lláh's prime purpose?***

Bahá'u'lláh has come to bring us together. He has come to establish unity and harmony among all nations. This is also predicted:

When that time comes...***I will gather all the nations together.*** [Emphasis added throughout.]

Joel 3:1-2

***It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory*** [Glory of God].

Isaiah 66:18

Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, has come to make us aware of our spiritual destiny, to remind us of the purpose for which we were created, to teach us and inspire us to live in joy, happiness, and harmony, and ***to extend our love to all the peoples of the world:***

***Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancor. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind.***<sup>2</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

## ***What are some of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?***

- ***Independent investigation of truth.*** Each individual, whatever his or her parents' beliefs, must search for truth with an open and unbiased mind. A great deal of suffering in the world can be traced to ignorance. Most people simply assume that what they have received from their parents is the truth. They inherit their beliefs just as they inherit their genes, generation after generation. If peoples of all religions investigate the truth with open and impartial minds, they will find one light of truth behind the various shades of conflicting traditions and beliefs.
- ***Unity of humankind.*** All nations must work together in perfect harmony and peace. We are all citizens of one planet, the cells of one body: the humankind. We must work together to create a new global civilization: "the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).
- ***The purpose of religion is to unify humanity,*** to join people in love and harmony. But today it is often a source of dissension and prejudice among the peoples of the world. This is the exact opposite of the true purpose of religion. If a remedy intensifies the disease, it should be avoided.
- ***All great religions come from the same Source.*** They unfold an ever-evolving truth; they manifest the divine wisdom progressively according to the needs and maturity of humankind. ***Recognizing and respecting other great faiths is the most vital step toward unity and peace.***
- ***Religion and science are perfect partners.*** Their harmony must be recognized and their powers integrated. By decoding religious symbolism, the Bahá'í Faith demonstrates the unity—indeed the oneness—of these two vital forces in society.
- ***Prejudice—racial, national, religious, ethnic—must be uprooted.*** Prejudice is a false perception that justifies selfish and egotistical desires and demands; it is a veil that distorts the truth and obscures reality.
- ***Gender discrimination must be abolished.*** Equal opportunities and rights should be provided for both men and women. One's excellence depends on nobility of character, not on one's gender.
- ***Universal education must become a reality.*** It must enlighten and uplift the minds and hearts of all humanity. True knowledge expands and enriches human perception and vision.
- ***Schools must teach both knowledge and nobility.*** Wealth without virtues is worthless. Education of children is the key to the success of the new global civilization.
- ***It is essential to establish universal peace.*** Global war in our time means the virtual destruction of our planet and its people.
- ***Extremes of wealth and poverty must be eliminated,*** both through laws and through individuals' recognition of their spiritual responsibilities.

- Work done in a spirit of service is worship.
- ***Diversity among peoples and nations must be cherished and prized***, for diversity enriches the world and enhances human perception.
- ***A universal auxiliary language must be adopted*** and learned throughout the planet.
- ***A global order must be established*** to regulate international relations. A planetary community cannot live by laws and regulations dictated by national self-interest.
- ***Our life's purpose is to know, to love, and to serve God by serving others***. The most clear and convincing evidence of our love for God is our love for all humankind.
- ***We are in essence spiritual beings***. To live in peace and contentment and enjoy an abundant life, we must recognize our role in the grand cosmic plan of creation. Without knowing and loving God, no human being can reach his or her full spiritual potential.
- ***Virtues are the most distinguishing mark of humans***. Without them we are poor and desolate even though we may live in the most magnificent mansions. We must constantly strive to adorn our souls with heavenly jewels, such as justice, kindness, charity, forgiveness, chastity, courage, courtesy, and humility.
- ***God made us to be the most joyful beings***. All the misery and suffering we endure comes from disobeying the divine laws and ignoring our spiritual mission. True happiness, both in this world and the next, comes from recognizing God's latest Redeemer and Teacher and faithfully following His teachings.
- ***Our purpose here is to prepare our souls for hereafter*** : to enter the next life in a state of "the utmost purity and sanctity" and "detachment" from this world.

***The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.***<sup>3</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

### ***When and where did the Bahá'í Faith begin?***

The Bahá'í Faith began in 1844 in Persia with the declaration of a young man who called Himself the Báb, meaning ***the Gate***. The Báb claimed to be the Herald of a great Savior and Redeemer from God. He said His purpose was to prepare the way for His coming and to sacrifice His life as a sign of His love for Him and for all humanity. The corrupt religious and political leaders feared the spread of His message and the loss of their powers. They combined their influence to execute Him in July 1850, by a firing squad of 750 soldiers.

In 1863, 13 years after the Báb was executed, a man entitled Bahá'u'lláh—meaning ***Glory of God***—declared Himself to be the One promised by the Báb and all the great Teachers and Messengers of the past. He too like the Báb was feared and rejected by the religious and political leaders of the time. Once again, they combined their efforts to prevent the spread of His Message. They imprisoned and banished Bahá'u'lláh from country to country. He too like the Báb sacrificed His welfare for the good of the world. He died in 1892 as an exile in the Holy Land.

What Bahá'u'lláh endured during some forty years of exile and imprisonment is beyond anyone's understanding. Here is one among countless references He makes to His 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 within this most mighty Stronghold 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.***<sup>4</sup>

For 50 years Bahá'u'lláh set an example of absolute love, patience, humility, honesty, and integrity. He condemned deception in the harshest words. Even under the most severe trials, He did not change course. Is it conceivable that during all those decades and in spite of all His sufferings, He was concealing a deception in His heart? Christians have asked the same question about Jesus:

Is it conceivable that a person whose life is judged by even His most hostile opponents to be the most noble, the most pure, the most truthful...should have continuously deceived others throughout His life? Is it possible that while Christ was designing a religion which placed the highest premium upon truth, which condemned all liars to eternal fire, which proclaimed Himself truth incarnate, that He was living all along an uninterrupted lie?<sup>5</sup>

Even such a skeptic and unbeliever as Rousseau at last admitted, “Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.” Perfect holiness, perfect wisdom, perfect power, perfect love, all combined to convince us that Jesus is Lord of all.<sup>6</sup>

The distinguishing features of the lives of Jesus, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh are identical. You can verify this fact by reading several historical references available. For a list of publications that present biblical evidence on the divine station and mission of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, see the appendix at the end of this book.

### ***Does Bahá'u'lláh claim to be the return of Christ?***

***Yes, He does, and He presents a mountain of evidence to prove His claim. Yes, Bahá'is believe that:***

## Christ has come again!

*Return, O Lord, how long?*

Psalms 90:13

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning...*

Psalms 130:5-6

*Come, Lord Jesus.*

Revelation 22:20

*He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: "Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!"<sup>7</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs?<sup>8</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*He, in truth, hath come unto the world in His most great glory, and all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*Followers of the Gospel...behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice...announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation...<sup>10</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*Know thou of a certainty that the Day Star of Truth hath, in this Day, shed upon the world a radiance, the like of which bygone ages have never witnessed. Let the light of His glory, O people, shine upon you, and be not of the negligent.<sup>11</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

Most people live by untested and unproven assumptions. They simply assume that they can understand the meaning of the prophecies of the Second Advent. The Jews made, and are still making, that same assumption about the prophecies of *their* Scriptures. Can any priest, pastor, evangelist, or rabbi be sure of the accuracy of his interpretation? *Even one false assumption can prevent us from being objective and open-minded.*

The Jews rejected Jesus mainly because of one false assumption: the Messiah must be a political figure, a king with military might. *It did not matter how much evidence Jesus presented. That false assumption kept their hearts and minds closed to their Messiah. Could not a similar false assumption prevent Christians from recognizing their expected Redeemer?* Awareness of this human weakness is absolutely essential: it makes us humble. *Without humility the heart remains callous and closed.*

...He will save *the humble* person.

Job 22:29

He guides *the humble* in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psalms 25:9

Bahá'u'lláh invites all seekers and lovers of God to awaken to the glorious dawn of a new day. His voice is loud and clear:

*The Dawn hath truly brightened and the light hath shone forth and the night hath receded. Happy are they that comprehend. Happy are they that have attained thereunto.<sup>12</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*Behold Him manifest and resplendent as the sun in all its glory.<sup>13</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

*The Dawn hath broken, yet the people understand not. The signs have been ushered in, while He Who hath revealed them is overwhelmed with manifest sorrow. Indeed I have endured that which hath caused the world of existence to lament.<sup>14</sup>*

Bahá'u'lláh

After two millennia of hoping, praying, waiting, and wishing, the glorious news of the return of the Master to establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven must make every other news pale into utter nothingness. It should be the talk of every town and every temple, the joy of every heart and every home.

***Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.***

Psalms 96:11-13

***In this day...His Spirit hath pervaded all things. Such is the outpouring of His grace that the pen is stilled and the tongue is speechless.***<sup>15</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

The news of the advent of the great day of the Lord should move every lover of God to ecstasy and exhilaration, yet many respond to this greatest, most joyous, and most magnificent news with indifference, skepticism, even fear and avoidance. Instead of searching and finding the facts, they look for excuses, for reasons to justify a response of avoidance and non-involvement. Instead of investigating the message, they choose to ignore it. Why? What motivates so many to act this way? What would they lose by searching?

It all seems incredible, yet this has been the norm, the way the masses of believers have responded to the news of the advent of God's great Teachers and Messengers. This has been the trend throughout all ages: People pray for the coming of their Redeemer, but as soon as He comes, they reject Him, ridicule Him, even torture Him and crucify Him! Then centuries later, their children build magnificent shrines on their tombs (Matt. 23:29). The new generations can't understand why their ancestors could have been so negligent, so blind to the light of truth. They believe they are much wiser. Had they lived then, they think, they would not have been so blind. After all, they know, they are a different breed of people. And they always make this claim:

***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)

Does the nature of human beings change? Are the people of this age holier, kinder, more dedicated and faithful than those of past ages? Are they wiser, more trusting, or more spiritual? No, knowledge advances, but human nature—the inner core of human beings—does not change from age to age.

As the earth revolves and moves through cycles of day and night, so does the human life on this planet. God's great Messengers and Redeemers come in the dark hour of the night, when people are sound asleep, when a spirit of deep slumber has overcome the inhabitants of the earth, when they live in a dream world of fantasy and illusion. To them their dreams—their theories and theologies—are real. A person does not know he is dreaming until he wakes up. That is why Jesus used the metaphor of "thief in the night" and repeatedly asked His faithful followers to be awake and watchful at His coming (Luke 12:39-40). And that is why this book is written: to invite you to investigate.

Bahá'u'lláh not only declares a message of joy and fulfillment to those awakened by the dawn, but also a warning to the sleepers and dreamers. He calls them to leave their comfort zone, to face the challenge, to recognize their accountability before God, and to

remember the grave consequences of conforming, instead of choosing their spiritual destiny. Note the authority with which He speaks:

***ALAS! ALAS! O LOVERS OF WORLDLY DESIRE!***

***Even as the swiftness of lightning ye have passed by the Beloved One, and have set your hearts on satanic fancies. Ye bow the knee before your vain imagining, and call it truth. Ye turn your eyes towards the thorn, and name it a flower. Not a pure breath have ye breathed, nor hath the breeze of detachment been wafted from the meadows of your hearts...***<sup>16</sup>

## ***Did not Jesus promise to come from heaven?***

Yes, He did. Most people fail to recognize that in His First Advent He made the same exact claim:

***...no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man...*** Christ (John 3:13)

***I [Jesus Christ] have come down from heaven...*** Christ (John 6:38)

What did Jesus mean by the “I”? Did He mean His body, or His Spirit? Which one came from heaven?

***The reality of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the perfections of Christ all came from heaven.***<sup>17</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

These verses clearly indicate that ***the language of heaven***, which God speaks, differs from ***the language of the earth***, which people speak:

***The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth.*** The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

Christ (John 3:31-34)

What do the preceding verses from Jesus about His heavenly descent, and many verses like them, teach us? ***That the way God speaks is different from the way we speak, that His great Messengers and Redeemers use many similes, metaphors, and parables, that they often speak in symbolic or spiritual language.*** The essence of Jesus Christ was His Spirit. That Spirit always is in heaven and always comes from heaven. Bahá’u’lláh’s Spirit—the Spirit of God—also came from heaven.

What kind of eye sees the Spirit? The inner eye. Every seeing eye that looks at Bahá’u’lláh finds ***the Glory of God*** in Him as clearly as he or she can behold the sun.

The seeing always requires sincerity, attention, and investigation. That is why Jesus repeatedly urged us to “***watch***,” to remain awake and inquisitive:

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

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)

***Be always on the watch***...that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Christ (Luke 21:36)

Among the instructions Jesus provided to help Christians recognize Him at His Second Advent, two words stand out:

✿ *Watch*

✿ *Thief*

Jesus placed much emphasis on these two ordinary words, which do not need any interpretation. Yet seldom, if ever, Bible teachers ponder their meaning. They simply gloss over them. They do not want to wake up and lose their fondest and most splendid dreams: Seeing their Lord with thousands of angels descending from heaven.

To ponder the meaning of the word “watch” it is helpful to see how the dictionary defines it:

- To look or observe attentively or carefully; be closely observant
- To stay awake at night while serving as a guard, sentinel, or watchman
- To keep up on or be informed about: *watch the election returns*
- The act or process of keeping awake or mentally alert, as for the purpose of guarding

If Jesus had intended to return from the sky, why would He repeatedly ask us to “*pay attention*”? And why would He compare His coming to that of *a thief*? The concept of “full visibility” is the antithesis of “*coming like a thief*” and the urgent need to “*pay attention*.” The definitions offered for “watch” are a perfect match for a Redeemer who walks among people without being recognized as a Redeemer. Only by close attention at His Spirit—which is visible only to receptive people—can His true identity become visible. Only *then* will everyone with an “eye”—*insight*—be able to see Him.

The definitions of the word “watch” are also a perfect match for this prediction:

***Wake up!...I shall come upon you like a thief!***

Christ (Rev. 3:2-3 NEB)

It is ironic that most Christians fail to “pay attention” to a word that means “*pay attention!*” Similarly, they gloss over the word “*thief*” without pondering its literal meaning and its profound implications.

Jesus emphasized the two critical words—“watch” and “*thief*”—to draw attention to the News of His Return. He had full knowledge that Christians would fail to do so. He knew that one false assumption—Christ from the sky—would prevent His followers from paying close attention to the News of His Return just as one false assumption—the Messiah as a King—prevented the Jews from paying attention to the rest of the prophecies—the ones that their “itching ears” (II Tim. 4:3 NIV) did *not* want to hear. If Christians practice the literal meaning of these two most critical words, they will be guided to their hearts’ desire: Recognizing their expected Redeemer.

This book is written for this very purpose: to make you *watchful and aware of the greatest news the world has ever known*. It is written to help you watch or pay close attention to the astonishing and gradual growth of the small Seed of the Kingdom to a flourishing and fruitful tree, which now encompasses over 2,000 ethnic, racial, and tribal groups. It is written to help you become conscious of a Faith that from a humble beginning has grown so fast as to become the second most widespread religion in the world. In time, it will be embraced by all humankind, its branches will spread into every heart and every home:

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)

At the beginning of the spring only the few, exceptionally favored seeds will sprout, but *when the season gets in its full sway, and the atmosphere gets permeated with the warmth of true springtime, then masses of flowers will begin to appear, and a whole hillside suddenly blooms*.<sup>18</sup> Shoghi Effendi

If you are open minded and have a sincere desire for truth, you will want to read more and learn more, you will want to behold God's new Garden and the luscious fruits it offers to you and every lover and seeker of truth. You will want to see the splendor of *the Celestial Flower* that is now in full bloom:

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a *Flower hath begun to bloom*, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. *Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower*, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel... will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.<sup>19</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

### ***How do we know Bahá'u'lláh's interpretation is accurate?***

Bahá'u'lláh declares repeatedly that He says nothing of Himself, *that everything He teaches comes from God*. Jesus made exactly the same claim:

The words that I speak to you *I do not speak on My own authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Christ (John 14:10)

I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. *This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing*.<sup>20</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The traditional interpretation of prophecies among people do not come from God. They come mostly from professors of theology, who pass their beliefs to pastors and priests. And they are often in conflict with each other. Consider this statement from Christian author Dr. Robert Lightner, a professor of theology at Dallas Seminary School:

***Christians, members of the same heavenly family, are engaged in a nasty fight with each other over last events...*** We may not want the people of the world to know about our struggles and conflicts, but they do anyway. Great shame and disgrace has already been brought to the cause of Christ by us over evangelical eschatologies [events related to the end of the age].

The evidence of the fight is overwhelming. I wish I did not have to belabor the point, but the purpose in giving these facts is to arouse readers to the reality of the fight so that everyone can be part of easing the tension. The conflict I have exposed here does not thrill me; it saddens me.<sup>21</sup>

And again:

You have a right to know why men of God who agree on all the essential fundamentals of the faith differ so widely and battle so tenaciously over prophecy.<sup>22</sup>

Further, ***the Scripture casts doubt on the interpretation of every theologian, every pastor, every priest, and teacher of the Bible. It declares that no one but God has the wisdom to know the true meaning of the Word of God.*** The failure of Jewish theologians to understand Hebrew prophecies clearly confirms the critical significance of all these divine directives:

But first note this: ***no one can interpret any prophecy of the Scripture by himself.***

II Peter 1:20

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

***The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us...***

Deut. 29:29

***O my beloved! Immeasurably exalted is the celestial Melody above the strivings of human ear to hear or mind to grasp its mystery! How can the helpless ant step into the court of the All-Glorious?***<sup>23</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

If this is the guidance God has given us, should we not honor it? Even St. Paul, the great Apostle, is humble enough to say, "***We know in part.***" He acknowledges the limits of human understanding. ***Should we then continue to insist that theologians are right, as did the masses of Jewish leaders and scholars at the time of Jesus? If we do, are we faithful to God?*** Compare Bahá'u'lláh's qualification to interpret the Word of God with theologians' qualification:

### ***Theologians***

Theologians may be the most wonderful people, but they acquire their knowledge from other theologians. What they know and think ***is subject to all human***

### ***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God***

Bahá'u'lláh's knowledge is innate. He speaks ***only*** the Word of God. He presents the most convincing evidence to prove His claim, among them ***the fulfillment of***

*weaknesses.* (See the statements by Dr. Lightner, quoted earlier.) At this point in history, a prime reason preventing them from recognizing the fulfillment of prophecies is their failure to investigate the News of the Second Advent. I do not know even one pastor or Christian scholar who has read even one volume of Bahá'u'lláh's writings.

*hundreds of prophecies.* In addition to prophecies, He presents many other proofs. (See the topic, "What evidence is there for Bahá'u'lláh?" presented earlier.)

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

**SAY:**\* *This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth.*<sup>24</sup>

*Indeed He [Bahá'u'lláh] is a Light which is not followed by darkness and a Truth not overtaken by error.*<sup>25</sup>

*Say: This is the Voice of God... This is the Source of the commandment of God, did ye but judge it fairly.*<sup>26</sup>

Who is *the true judge*? Do we judge our Redeemer with *our* truth, or does He judge us with *His* truth?

Declare His glory [Glory of God] among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.  
*He is coming to judge the...peoples with His truth.* Psalms 96:3,13

*The Eternal Truth is now come.*<sup>27</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

*The Sun of Truth shineth resplendently, at the bidding of the Lord of the kingdom of utterance, and the King of the heaven of knowledge...*<sup>28</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Who knows the mysteries? Where can we find the hidden pearls of truth and wisdom? Only in the Ocean of God's knowledge:

*Cast away, in My name that transcendeth all other names, the things ye possess, and immerse yourselves in this Ocean in whose depths lay hidden the pearls of wisdom and of utterance, an ocean that surgeth in My name, the All-Merciful.*<sup>29</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

On one side we have our Redeemer who speaks with divine authority; on the other we have theologians who speak with human authority. Who would you trust? Which side has a clear edge over the other? As we noted, Dr. Lightner admits bitter disagreement among theologians. What does this imply? *That understanding the true meaning of prophecies is beyond human comprehension. Should we continue to falsely assume that theologians are right, that tradition must dictate the truth? Wasn't it for this very false assumption that the people condemned and crucified Jesus?* As Christian scholar Dr. Ray Stedman notes, the same is happening today:

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\* The word "Say," in the form of a command, appears frequently in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. It indicates that the Speaker is the Spirit of God. It is equivalent to the biblical expression, "Thus says the Lord."

Instead of people submitting themselves to the judgment of the Word of God, we have people submitting the Word to their own judgment!<sup>30</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh states that religious leaders are “doubtful of, and dispute about, the theological obscurities of their faith,”<sup>31</sup> and yet they claim to know “the essential mysteries” of the Word of God. Thus they continue to wait for prophecies to be fulfilled *according to their interpretations*. He concludes by saying, “*Wait ye even as those before you are waiting!*”<sup>32</sup> We know, of course, *the Jews are still waiting!* Jesus alluded to this continuous waiting and thinking, on the part of religious leaders, that the Master is delaying His coming (Luke 12:45).

Who understands God’s Word? God or the people? The Glory of God, Bahá'u'lláh, has brought for us *the perfect Standard or Balance* from the Speaker of the Word. Should we not test the accuracy of every belief or interpretation by *His* Balance, by His Standard?

*Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book [Bahá'u'lláh's Word] itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men. In this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds possess must be weighed...*<sup>33</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

...when perfection [the Glory of God] comes, the imperfect disappears. I Cor. 13:10

*For it behooveth no man to interpret the holy words according to his own imperfect understanding, nor, having found them to be contrary to his inclination and desires, to reject and repudiate their truth.*<sup>34</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

...His [Bahá'u'lláh's] revealed Word is the Balance.<sup>35</sup> The Báb

Should we continue to judge the accuracy of God’s supreme knowledge by theologians’ fallible and often divisive assumptions? Should we continue to be wise in our own eyes?

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord...* Prov. 3:5,7

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus asks:

*Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?* Rev. 5:2

In His answer Jesus disqualifies every Bible teacher, every interpreter of the Word of God, every theologian. He emphasizes this most critical message by declaring that no human being, whether he or she lives on earth or in heaven, can even look at the scroll, let alone open it. Is it possible to emphasize a message more than He did in the following verse?

*But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.* Rev. 5:3

Jesus finally gives us the good news of the coming of the Redeemer of our age, the only One “*who is able to open the scroll and its seven seals*” (Rev. 5:5).

Bahá'u'lláh has broken the seven seals of the scroll. This is the great Festival of God, the time to be intoxicated with a new outpouring of His grace and the fresh “Wine” of heavenly knowledge:

*The seal of the choice Wine of His Revelation hath, in this Day and in His Name, the Self-Sufficing, **been broken. Its grace is being poured out upon men.** Fill thy cup, and drink in, in His Name, the Most Holy, the All-Praised.<sup>36</sup>* Bahá'u'lláh

Consider this well-known verse:

For all have sinned, and fall short of *the glory of God*... Romans 3:23

Bahá'u'lláh means *the Glory of God*. Read the verse once again with the word *Bahá'u'lláh* in place of *the glory of God*, and see how clearly it invalidates all human interpretation except Bahá'u'lláh's:

For all have sinned and fall short of *Bahá'u'lláh*...

What can we expect from those who have sinned except a mixture of truths, half-truths, and falsehoods? *Even one false assumption about one key word or prophecy can veil the truth, can prevent us from our Lord.* The one critical word that caused the people of Israel to stumble was: *King. The Glory of God* is absolute perfection. In knowledge and wisdom, no one can come even close to Him. In the light of His knowledge everything fades away (I Cor. 13:10).

For *we know in part* and we prophesy in part, but *when perfection* [Christ] *comes, the imperfect disappears.* I Cor. 13:9-10

Note how Jesus spoke to Pharisees, the ones who claimed to know the true meaning of the Scriptures, who believed they could clearly *see* the truth:

For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and *that those who see may be made blind.* John 9:39

Who were the ones who recognized Jesus? The humblest among the Jews who said, "We do not know; *we do not see. You* are the Messiah; show us the truth; teach us the true meaning of our Scriptures." What happened to the ones who claimed to have perfect eyes? The intense light of Jesus, the Anointed One of God, made them blind, "I have come into this world *that those...who see may be made blind.*"

How clearly history is once again repeating itself. Bible interpreters, who have little insight into the mysteries of God, who are asked to wait for the Lord to bring to light "what lies hidden in darkness" (I Cor. 4:5) continue to claim true knowledge of the Scriptures! They believe *they* are the only ones who *see* the truth! By claiming true knowledge, they "transgress their limits," just like a little child who claims authority over his or her parents.

*Transgress not thy limits, nor claim that which beseemeth thee not. Prostrate thyself before the countenance of thy God, the Lord of might and power.<sup>37</sup>* Bahá'u'lláh

Only the humble, who prostrate themselves before the supreme might and majesty of God, who empty their hearts from ego, and their minds from unverified assumptions, illusions, and false interpretations, have room for the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord.

God does not come to visit us on top of a mountain. Only when we descend to the valley of humility can we find Him and follow Him:

*Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee.<sup>38</sup>* Bahá'u'lláh

***Every soul that walketh humbly with its God, in this Day, and cleaveth unto Him, shall find itself invested with the honor and glory of all goodly names and stations.***<sup>39</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

How painful the following pronouncement of Jesus must have been to Jewish theologians, who were experts in Hebrew and Greek and could argue the tiniest theological points for days and weeks, but were powerless to enter the kingdom of God:

I tell you the truth...the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you [the religious leaders].  
Christ (Matt. 21:31)

If we are truly sincere believers and lovers of truth, we can't have double standards, and we can't pick and choose, and we will not ignore or deny God's commands:

1. By reason alone we know we err. Why then insist on the accuracy of our private personal interpretation? "Let us reason together, says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18).
2. The conflict among theologians presents us with a clear evidence of our weaknesses and lack of understanding.
3. The Scriptures specifically command us to let the Lord to decipher the mysteries, ***to let HIM "bring to light what is hidden in darkness"*** (I Cor. 4:5). Why do religious leaders and teachers disregard this command?
4. The Scriptures specifically single out prophecies as a topic that should not become a subject of one's private personal interpretation. "***No one***" we are told "***can interpret any prophecy of the Scripture by himself***" (II Peter 1:20). Why do religious leaders and teachers also ignore this command?
5. The Scriptures specifically teach us that the word of God must be "***discerned spiritually***" (I Cor. 2:14). Why do so many believers also violate this divine directive?
6. The first advent of Jesus presents us still with further evidence that insisting on the accuracy of traditional interpretation can be extremely unwise. It can lead us to deny our Lord.

Do we need more evidence to show us that starting with untested assumptions and preconceived notions is not the way to begin our search for the most precious gift that God may bestow on His children—the gift of faith?

Note the harmony between the following statements from Daniel and Christ:

***...the words are kept secret and sealed till the time of the end.*** Daniel 12:9

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "***I will open my mouth in parables, I will [continue to] utter things hidden since the creation of the world.***"  
Christ (Matt. 13:34-35)

These things ***I have spoken to you in figurative [concealed] language***; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language... Christ (John 16:25)

Consider also this verse:

When the Lord comes *he will bring into the light of the day all that at present is hidden in darkness...* I Cor. 4:5

God has kept His promise. “Things hidden since the creation of the world,” truths spoken in “figurative language,” mysteries kept “hidden in darkness” have been brought “into the light of the day” by *the Glory of God*:

*Through Him [Bahá'u'lláh] hath appeared that which had been hidden from time immemorial and been veiled from the eyes of men.*<sup>40</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

*The promise is fulfilled...Every hidden thing hath been brought to light, by virtue of the Will of the Supreme Ordainer...*<sup>41</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

By the righteousness of the Almighty! Every hidden thing hath been manifested through the power of truth. All the favors of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men...Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.<sup>42</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

This is the time of joy and celebration, the hour of the great Banquet of God, a time of rejoicing, when we can look at *the Bride*—the inner meanings and mysteries of the Word of God—in all her beauty and splendor:

*The mystic and wondrous Bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favor, been made manifest...I bear witness, O friends! that the favor is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established.* Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal. In this wise hath the divine favor been fully vouchsafed unto you and unto them that are in heaven and on earth. All praise to God, the Lord of all Worlds.<sup>43</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

We have the honor of attending the most magnificent Wedding in human history. The Lamb of God has come with His beautiful Bride—the Word of God—and invites all seekers and lovers of God to His most glorious Banquet. The heavenly Bridegroom has arrived with celestial splendor. He shines with the Glory of God. His Bride is pure, radiant, and beautiful. She is dressed in a “fine linen.” You have the supreme and most enviable honor of being invited to this stupendous celebration, wearing apparels as clean as “the righteous acts of the saints:”

*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb [the Redeemer] has come, and His wife [the Bride] has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.* Rev. 19:7-8

O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: “*He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God’s Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise.*” Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: “*Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!*” and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings: “*Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!*” O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him

*into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.*<sup>44</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The time of arguing about minute theological theories has passed. The time to dig into the root meanings of Hebrew and Greek words has come to an end. ***The Root of all Knowledge has come.*** The beautiful Bride of heaven has made herself ready. She invites all seekers and lovers of truth to her glorious wedding Banquet. How blessed are those who hear the call:

*Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!...Come and gather together for the supper of the great God...* Christ (Rev. 19:9,17)

*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...*

*Blessed are they that have attained His presence...*

*Blessed the man who...hath arisen from among the dead to celebrate My praise.*

*Blessed is he that hath been enraptured by My wondrous melodies and hath rent the veils asunder through the potency of My might.*<sup>45</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

## ***What is the difference between Christian and Bahá'í interpretation?***

Virtually all the differences between Christian and Bahá'í interpretation can be traced to this one point: ***Which prophecies are literal, which prophecies are spiritual?*** All the differences pertain to this question: What should we expect from a Redeemer, ***spiritual*** miracles, such as creating a new ***spiritual*** world—where there is peace, love, joy, and justice—or ***physical*** miracles, such as creating a new physical world by changing or overriding the law of nature?

***All the differences between traditional Christian and Bahá'í interpretation can be traced to the violation of the following biblical verses by the masses of Christian theologians:***

*This is what we speak...expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words...the things that come from the Spirit of God...are spiritually discerned.* I Cor. 2:13-14

*The letter kills, but the Spirit [also spirit KJV] gives life.* II Cor. 3:6

*Judge not according to the appearance...* Christ (John 7:24)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the authorized interpreter of the Bahá'í writings, confirms:

***All the texts and teachings of the holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally.***<sup>46</sup>

All the differences between Christian and Bahá'í interpretations are linked to this weakness in human nature:

*You judge by worldly standards.* John 8:15

*You are looking only on the surface of things.* II Cor. 10:7

***Who knows which prophecies are literal, which prophecies are spiritual?*** The One who speaks with divine authority, who proclaims the Word of God, or pastors and priests, who present the thoughts and assumptions of theology professors? ***If you resolve this one question, you will be able to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as readily as you can recognize the sun.***

Religious history shows that “literal-mindedness” is perhaps the deadliest disease, yet today it persists unabated among the believers of all denominations. A few enlightened Christian scholars warn against it, but only a handful listen. Consider this statement from Christian scholar Oswald Allis:

Literal interpretation seems to make Bible study easy... ***But the New Testament makes it plain that literal interpretation was a stumbling block to the Jews. It concealed from them the most precious truths of Scripture...*** He [Jesus] came to fulfill the law and the prophets. ***But the fulfillment which He offered the Jews was so different from their literal and carnal desires and expectations that they sent their King to Calvary.***<sup>47</sup>

Consider also this warning by another Christian leader and scholar Dr. James Kennedy. This statement alone should awaken and move every true and sincere believer in Jesus Christ:

The great Princeton theologian of the last century, Dr. Charles Hodge, said that ***the Old Testament is filled with some 333 prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ. In spite of that...they crucified Christ because of a misunderstanding about what the Messiah was really coming to do.*** And we should because of that 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 and scholars] are wrong as well*** [emphasis added].<sup>48</sup>

Oswald Allis in his book *Prophecy and the Church* warns us repeatedly against dogmatism and the prevailing prejudice among today's interpreters of prophecy:

***The dogmatism with which many writers on unfulfilled prophecy express themselves regarding things to come is deplorable.*** The facility with which they ignore the views of all who differ from them is inexcusable. And the finality with which they put forth their prophetic programs has a tendency to discredit the whole subject of prophecy in the eyes of thoughtful and judicious students of the Bible. We need to remind ourselves constantly that ***while the Word of the Lord standeth sure, our own understanding of that Word may be faulty and imperfect. We need to remember that we are not prophets.***<sup>49</sup>

Consider one more warning from another Christian scholar, Dr. David Reagan:

Christians today have become overwhelmed by the tidal wave of books that contain sensational new truths about the future. Especially alarming is that ***many of these prophecy authors claim to possess special revelations given to them by God's Word, yet their views widely contradict one another.***<sup>50</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá declared the same message long before Dr. Reagan:

***Look at the Gospel of the Lord Christ and see how glorious it is! Yet even today men fail to understand its priceless beauty, and misinterpret its words of wisdom.***<sup>51</sup>

These warnings are self-evident. Why then do so many believers ignore them? Why do so many assume that they know for sure which prophecies are literal, which prophecies are symbolic? Is it not for the following reason?

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

Have you noticed that books on myths have recently become popular? Noted psychotherapist Rollo May has written a book to show how urgently the people of our time crave for myths to give meaning and purpose to their lives. His book is called: *The Cry for Myth*. Here is how it is introduced:

In this book ***Dr. May shows how myths...can provide meaning and structure for all who seek direction in a morally confusing world.***<sup>52</sup>

The title of the book is enough to show the fulfillment of the biblical prophecy. St. Paul speaks of ears that “***itch***” for hearing myths; Dr. May speaks of hearts, eyes, and ears that “***cry***” for myths. ***Does St. Paul’s prophecy exclude Christian and Jewish theologians?*** Does it exclude scholars who interpret the prophecies of the Second Advent? Can any group of believers, any denomination, any evangelist, any priest, any pastor, any scholar claim an exception to St. Paul’s prediction?

Now compare the prophecy of the Old Testament about the ***first*** advent of Jesus with the prophecy of the New Testament about His ***second*** advent. Both prophecies refer to the prevalence of ***false doctrines*** at the time of each advent:

***First Advent:*** [Jesus said:] Hypocrites! It was you Isaiah meant when he so rightly prophesied: This people honors me only with lip service, while their hearts are far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless; ***the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.***  
Christ (Matt. 15:7-9)

***Second Advent:*** For the time will come when men [Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc.] ***will not put up with sound doctrine.*** II Timothy 4:3

Consider the following statement from Jesus. It implies two languages, one spoken by God, the other by His creatures:

***The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth.*** John 3:31

What does Jesus mean by “the one who comes from above”? He means Himself. Did He come from above? Only spiritually. How does the one who “is from the earth” speak? “As one from the earth.” We, human beings do not claim to have come “from above,” unless, of course, we are astronauts or alien visitors!

Bahá’u’lláh asks us to set aside everything that is ***earthly***:

*...they that tread the path of faith, they that thirst for the wine of certitude, must cleanse themselves of all that is earthly.*<sup>53</sup>

We are fascinated by physical miracles, and see them as the ultimate evidence. But God sees differently.

***The Lord does not see as man does.***

I Samuel 16:7

A literal interpretation of biblical prophecies points to a complete transformation and reordering of the universe. Everything must change: the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth and all its creatures. The metaphoric interpretation points not to the transformation of the universe, but to the transformation of the human heart. Ponder this verse: “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). Why would God change something that is already good? The earth is perfect, but because of greed and selfishness, we are destroying it. The earth need not change; *we* need change. The literal interpretation gives the responsibility of turning the earth into heaven totally to God; the metaphoric interpretation gives that responsibility to us. Then what role does God play? His role is to provide the blueprint and the guidance we need to create heaven first in our souls and then extend it beyond.

In a talk delivered in 1912 in the United States, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasized the need for understanding the spiritual meanings of sacred Scriptures:

All the texts and teachings of the holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally. I, therefore, pray in your behalf that you may be given the power of understanding these inner real meanings of the Holy Scriptures and may become informed of the mysteries deposited in the words of the Bible so that you may attain eternal life and that your hearts may be attracted to the Kingdom of God. May your souls be illumined by the light of the Words of God, and may you become repositories of the mysteries of God, for no comfort is greater and no happiness is sweeter than spiritual comprehension of the divine teachings.<sup>54</sup>

### ***What prophecies has Bahá’u’lláh fulfilled?***

According to scholars, the Bible contains some 1,800 prophecies about the Second Advent. ***Bahá’u’lláh has fulfilled every one of them, either literally or spiritually. Not a single prophecy remains unfulfilled.*** These prophecies and the evidence of their fulfillment are presented in three large volumes:

***I Shall Come Again***, 522 pages

***Lord of Lords***, 634 pages

***King of Kings***, 510 pages

If this fact surprises you, consider the following analogy. Suppose at this moment the most spectacular kaleidoscopic display of colorful lights is taking place in the sky above you. Could you see the display if you were sound asleep? Could you see it if you were not watching? Could you see a single beam of light if you were looking down?

That is exactly what is happening. The beaming lights are everywhere, but ***you can see them only if you enter a new dimension of awareness***. You can see them only if you follow Jesus' command that you must ***watch***. You can see them only if you look. Note how clearly the Scriptures have confirmed this fact, and yet people continue to ignore it:

What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" Christ (Mark 13:37 NIV)

...be ye yourselves like unto men ***looking*** for their Lord... Christ (Luke 12:36)

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

Why did Jesus emphasize the following point?

***Be awake...I shall come upon thee as a thief.*** Christ (Rev. 3:2-3)

Does He ask us to be awake physically or spiritually? The warning to stay awake can be relevant ***only to an event that can be missed***. The message is clear. ***We can miss Jesus in His second coming as people did in His first coming***. We can miss the most splendid display of heavenly light. Without looking or watching—investigating—we will stay asleep in the dark dimension of unawareness. Consider also this verse:

...thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, ***thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.*** Deut. 4:29

Why do we need to search with ***all*** our heart and soul? Because ***half-hearted*** search will ***not*** lead us to the Lord. If we do not leave our self behind, if we do not obey God's commands, if we simply insist on the accuracy of our own theories and illusions, we will be unable to see the Son who has come in the glory of His Father with His new name ***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God***. Once again note how clearly Jesus links "***seeing***" with "***obeying***:"

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...***Whoever has my commands and obeys them...I...will...show myself to him.*** Christ (John 14:18-21)

The purpose of this book is not to point to the prophecies Bahá'u'lláh has fulfilled, but to motivate you to investigate them.

***What is the most relevant and rational  
proof of divine distinction? What is  
the most distinctive mark of a  
Redeemer from God?***

The following is the most clear, emphatic, and direct answer Jesus offered to that question. There is none like it:

***You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*** Christ (Matt. 7:16-20 NKJ)

In one of His books—*The Book of Certitude*—Bahá'u'lláh offers this response:

Greater proof than this there is none,  
 nor ever will be:  
*“This proof is  
 His Word;  
 His own Self,  
 the testimony of His truth.”*<sup>55</sup>

Let us now explore Jesus’ reference to “**fruits**” in the light of the preceding statement from Bahá’u’lláh. To recognize a Redeemer, we need to examine three proofs that constitute the various facets of the same single proof:

- **“His Word:”** God’s Word reflects God Himself. It is *the fruit* of His supreme knowledge and wisdom. Can a human being, with a pure heart, mistake human word for God’s Word, or God’s Word for human word? This is absolutely impossible. Bahá’u’lláh’s Word radiates brightly as the sun, but can anyone see that radiance without reading? Can we know Jesus without reading the Gospel? Examining at least one of Bahá’u’lláh’s works is absolutely essential.
- **“His Self:”** The character, the spiritual attributes, and the quality of life manifested by the One who makes a claim must be perfect. It must reflect the greatness, the beauty, and the glory of God. It must be a life of absolute purity, dedication, and self-sacrifice. This is the *first* and the most direct *fruit* of a Redeemer from God. Can we have any idea about Jesus without knowing how He lived and how He sacrificed everything He had in His love for God and humankind? Can we make any judgment about Bahá’u’lláh without studying His life of absolute self-sacrifice, purity, and perfection? “His Self” and “His Word” are mirror images. That is why Jesus is called “the Word” (John 1:1).
- **“The testimony of His truth:”** God always testifies to the truth of His own Word. The “fruit” of God always comes with a special label. The phrase, “**Thus says the Lord,**” repeated hundreds of times throughout the Bible, is that label. That same divine testimony, that same mark, but in its abbreviated form, “**Say**” appears in the writings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh thousands of times. It is used as a command from God. The divine voice asks Bahá’u’lláh to say or declare the message that follows.

Let us consider first a few examples from the Bible:

For **thus says the Lord of hosts:** “Once more I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,” **says the Lord of hosts...**” The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,” **says the Lord of hosts.** “And in this place I will give peace,” **says the Lord of hosts.** Haggai 2:6,7,9

“...let us reason together,” **saith the Lord.** Isaiah 1:18

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” **declares the Lord.** Jeremiah 29:13-14

As you read the following examples from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, mentally substitute “*Thus says the Lord*” for the word “*Say*.” It may help you appreciate the divine authority and testimony embedded in all of Bahá'u'lláh's works.

**Say:** O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men.<sup>56</sup>

**Say:** True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it.<sup>57</sup>

**Say:** This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth.<sup>58</sup>

**Say:** He Who is the Unconditioned is come, in the clouds of light, that He may quicken all created things with the breezes of His Name, the Most Merciful, and unify the world, and gather all men around this Table which hath been sent down from heaven.<sup>59</sup>

**Say:** O concourse of monks! Seclude not yourselves in your churches and cloisters. Come ye out of them by My leave, and busy, then, yourselves with what will profit you and others.<sup>60</sup>

Fear God, O people, and follow not the doubts of such as shout aloud, who have broken the Covenant of God and His Testament, and denied His mercy that hath preceded all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth.<sup>61</sup>

**Say:** This is the Voice of God, if ye do but hearken. This is the Day Spring of the Revelation of God, did ye but know it.<sup>62</sup>

**Say:** O people! Fear ye God, and turn not away disdainfully from His Revelation.<sup>63</sup>

**Say:**... This is a matchless Day. Matchless must, likewise, be the tongue that celebrateth the praise of the Desire of all nations, and matchless the deed that aspireth to be acceptable in His sight.<sup>64</sup>

God's “*testimony of His truth*” is also verbalized in phrases or sentences, such as the following from the words of both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh:

**Christ:** I am one who *testifies* for myself; my other *witness* is the Father...  
John 8:18

**Bahá'u'lláh:** The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself *testifieth* to the truth of these words.<sup>65</sup>

**Christ:** The one who comes from above... *testifies* to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent *speaks the words of God*...  
John 3:31-34

**Bahá'u'lláh:** Unto this *testifieth* He Who is the King of the realm of grace...<sup>66</sup>

**Bahá'u'lláh:** God *testifieth* and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been said was the truth...<sup>67</sup>

**Bahá'u'lláh:** The Tongue of God *testifieth* to the truth of My words,

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

Revelation 19:9-10

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

John 3:11

through Mine own Word that speaketh the truth, and embraceth and comprehendeth all things.<sup>68</sup>

**Bahá'u'lláh:** God, Himself, knoweth and *testifieth* to the truth of My words.<sup>69</sup>

**Bahá'u'lláh:** Unto this *beareth witness* the Lord of Names...<sup>70</sup>

“*The testimony of His truth*” may also include certain signs cited in the Scriptures. This passage from Bahá'u'lláh, which also includes the word “*Say*,” may enlighten the point:

Say: I am come to you, O people, from the Throne of glory, and bear you an announcement from God, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. In mine hand I carry the testimony of God, your Lord and the Lord of your sires of old. Weigh it with the just Balance that ye possess, the Balance of the testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God. If ye find it to be established in truth, if ye believe it to be of God, beware, then, lest ye cavil at it, and render your works vain, and be numbered with the infidels. It is indeed the sign of God that hath been sent down through the power of truth, through which the validity of His Cause hath been demonstrated unto His creatures...<sup>71</sup>

What does Bahá'u'lláh imply by “*the Balance of the testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God*”? He implies the signs they have specified as the standard or evidence of truth. By far the most significant among these signs are prophecies. Scholars indicate that about a third of the Bible pertains to this topic. Most of them relate to the coming of the Redeemer of our time. If prophecy were not significant, would God devote a third of His words to it? Christian scholar Dr. David Reagan makes this observation:

Revelation 19:10 says that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Thus, if prophecy is properly taught, there is no reason for it to divert anyone’s attention away from Jesus. In fact, it should *emphasize* the centrality of Jesus.<sup>72</sup>

The Book of Psalms asks us to “keep,” observe, or pay attention to God’s testimony and to seek Him:

***Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!***

Psalms 119:2

The following statement was written to show the divine origin of the Bible. ***It applies equally to Bahá'í Scriptures:***

Charles Wesley, the famous hymn writer, said that the Scriptures obviously were either written by good men and angels; or by bad men and demons; or, thirdly, by God. Now, they could not have been merely written by good men or angels because over 2,600 times in the Old Testament alone, they claim they were written by God. Also, it is incredible that good men could lie about the same subject 2,600 times. How frequently we read, “Thus saith the Lord... Thus saith God Almighty... There came the Word of God unto the prophets saying...”

Could the Scriptures have been written by bad men? Is it conceivable to suppose that bad men or demons authored a book which claims to lift mankind and which, in fact, historically, has done so to the highest level of morality and purity, which demands the most exacting standards of righteousness, and which proclaims upon all sinners a most dreadful doom? Would bad men write such a book which declares that all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire? It is inconceivable, to say the least. Therefore, concluded Wesley, the only alternative is that the book was written by God.<sup>73</sup>

Some people love prophecies, others show no interest. But everyone can benefit from studying them. In examining the evidence a new Redeemer presents, our personal interest or preferences should not limit our choices. Prophecies show how intimately God is involved in the events of history and specifically in the advent of His great Redeemers. Studying them is like reading history written by God in advance of events. It is mostly the story of great Messengers, but one written by God Himself. What an honor to read such a story written by such a supreme Author!

The value of prophecies as evidence is progressive. The greater their number, the more their persuasive powers. Imagine the number of fulfilled prophecies in the Bahá'í Revelation: about 1,800. To get a glimpse of their fulfillment, you must read at least an entire volume on the topic. Several sources are introduced later.

Not only there is an emotional block but also mental or factual. The main mental block to success in the spiritual journey is the adoption of *wrong standards*. How can a good house be found? City officials apply specific standards to every new house. They make sure that the carpentry, plumbing, and the electrical systems meet those standards. Suppose they began to judge a house by its door knob, color, or the density of the grass that surrounds it. What will happen? They will fail in their duty. They will mislead the people. Suppose a woman wants to get married and be happy. She needs to establish some fundamental standards, such as good character, physical health, intelligence, and spirituality. Suppose she chooses height, weight, and the shape of ear and nose as the standard. Will she succeed in her marriage? Suppose she says, "His first name must be David, his last name Dreary, and he must come from New York. Will she succeed in her search? Suppose a person wants to choose an occupation. Instead of paying attention to fundamental standards—interest, ability, and need—he chooses the first job that comes along. Will he succeed in his choice?

Apply the same principle to religion. God has also established standards for the faiths He sends. By far the most significant is "By their fruits ye shall know them." Why do people fail to follow God's standards? Why do they disregard the divine directions? Why do they ignore the fruits and cling to the miraculous, which God has condemned as the standard of judgment?

If you read only one volume of Bahá'u'lláh's writings with a pure heart and look at the fruits He has produced—the Faith He has established and the followers He has inspired—you will recognize Him as surely as you recognize a loved one you meet every day. If you use the wrong standards, you will see nothing and hear nothing. In the journey of the search for truth, recognizing and applying the divine standards is the first and foremost requirement.

The purpose of religion is to bring joy to our hearts and justice to the world. If a religion can do both, why should we reject it? You eat an apple because it is tasty and healthy. Would you want to eat an apple just because it performs gymnastics in the air? Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, has come with the healthiest and most delicious fruits. Why should we expect to see those fruits come down directly from the sky? As long as the fruits are good, what difference does it make where they come from or how they come to us? Why should we reject a good fruit because it comes from a humble human being who lives among us and suffers for our sake?

### ***What other evidence is there for Bahá'u'lláh?***

The evidence for Bahá'u'lláh is overwhelming. Some of the following proofs would require at least a chapter, others several volumes:

- Bahá'u'lláh persisted in His claim to the end. He declared Himself the One promised in all sacred Scriptures, without making the slightest compromise.
- He exchanged a life of wealth and luxury for pain and prison. He endured every conceivable adversity and humiliation for half a century with superhuman resolve, composure, and constancy.
- He revealed scriptures in the most beautiful language for 40 years, with no contradictions or change of mind.
- He spiritualized and raised the ethical standards of His followers from every race, creed, and culture.
- He attended no school, yet 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 more than 100 volumes, without any previous preparation or research.
- 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. (For details, see Part III.)
- He lived a life so pure, so divine and noble as to be beyond the reach of any human being.
- He made many predictions that have come true. (See *The Challenge of Bahá'u'lláh*.)<sup>74</sup>
- He established a Faith that is now the second most widespread religion in the world. He planted a celestial Seed that, despite constant and violent storms of persecution, has endured, and continues to grow. He planted a heavenly Tree that

has preserved its purity and integrity for a century and a half. The Tree has fulfilled two significant standards and passed two critical tests: those of **enduring** and **bearing wholesome fruits**.

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

Christ (Matt. 15:13)

**You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?**

Christ (Matt. 7:16)

**Are not such achievements worthy of our attention?** You have an opportunity to study each of them later at your convenience.

### ***Is it difficult to recognize a new Redeemer?***

This topic is so critical, so complex, it needs an entire volume. Because of the infinite variety of people, the answer to this question is quite complex. Briefly, for those whose faith is based on true love and absolute devotion and obedience to their Master, the journey of the search for truth is extremely pleasant and easy. God's Messengers and Redeemers shine as brightly as the sun. Jesus called Himself "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Bahá'u'lláh likens the brightness of the heavenly glory in His Spirit with the light of the sun. Believers motivated by absolute trust in their Lord look with their hearts and minds fully open. The openness allows them to see and discover the same heavenly Spirit in Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, as they have witnessed in Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God.

**Those whose faith in Jesus is based on fear of losing what they have or being deceived, fail to look with open hearts and minds.** They search for a "reason" to avoid looking and seeing.

Why are ye **fearful**, O ye of **little** faith?

Christ (Matt. 8:26)

There is no fear in love... **perfect love drives out fear**...

I John 4:18

Everyone has a choice, **but every choice has consequences**. That is the beauty and wonder of being a human being. God allows all kinds of flowers to grow in His glorious garden. Some of them reach high into heavens to touch the heart of God, others stay close to the ground. They prefer the security and comfort of remaining low rather than the challenge and adventure of growing high and facing the winds of destiny.

To see how difficult it can be for some people to recognize Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, look at these 22 obstacles or tests. As we shall see later, Jesus calls them **traps**. **Even one of them, if strong enough, can separate the soul from the truth**, can ensnare a person in the darkness of sleeping and dreaming:

- Being apathetic, having no interest in religion.
- Being closed-minded, dogmatic, prejudiced.
- Following the majority, assuming that they are the best judges.
- Depending on religious leaders who regard tradition as the truth.

- Feeling satisfied in one's "comfort zone."
- Fearing the loss of one's beliefs.
- Not understanding the symbolism behind prophecies, being literal-minded, expecting earth-shaking or miraculous events.
- Being too busy to find and devote time to one's spiritual destiny.
- Living by assumptions and loving illusions and myths.
- Being worldly and selfish; not looking beyond self-interest.
- Distrusting and disliking the commitment and the discipline required for being a member of an "organized" religion.
- Disliking or not wanting to obey the laws of God.
- Not wishing to alienate friends or family members.
- Being argumentative.
- Lacking sincerity.
- Fearing a loss of status.
- Lacking faith, being cynical or negative.
- Lacking self-confidence in one's ability to question and investigate.
- Being emotionally attached to one's beliefs or traditions.
- Being negligent, careless, inattentive, unmindful, and unwatchful.
- Lacking humility. Being "wise in one's own eyes."
- Lacking knowledge; not hearing the new message.

In 27 A.D., when Jesus declared Himself the promised one of the Jews, there were only a few belief systems in the Jewish world. In today's world, there are thousands of religions, denominations, sects, and cults, some of them with dangerous beliefs. Fraud and deception are rampant. According to *Prime Time Live*, one in every six Americans is swindled by a con artist *every year*, for a total of 40 billion dollars.<sup>75</sup> Gaining people's attention and their trust to look for the Spirit and Splendor of God in Bahá'u'lláh is a hundred times more difficult today than it was at the time of Jesus.

This is a most supreme challenge of our time. And that is why this book was written. This multiplicity of beliefs has caused enormous confusion. It has made many Christians extremely skeptical, even fearful of every claim they hear. They have heard so many lies and so many deceptive claims, no news, no message, no amount of evidence, can get their attention. People live in desperate need, but do not know where to turn, who to trust. They go to their churches and cling to what they have for fear of losing it. They feel like a tourist wearing an expensive piece of jewelry and walking in a dangerous neighborhood at night.

Living in this great day of the Lord, yet not being able to find the Lord is a tragedy of enormous proportions. It is so serious, Jesus referred to it as "the great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21, see also *The Book of Certitude*, p. 32). The tragedy of our time may truly be called "the spiritual holocaust." The sufferings the masses of humankind endure are so vast and severe, the blessings they miss are so magnificent and glorious, it breaks the heart of Heaven.

We should make every effort to understand the reasons behind people's skepticism and sympathize with their dilemma. It is unfair to put all the blame on truth seekers. Some of the blame lies in the difficult age in which we live.

Perhaps the best rule for finding the truth is following *the Golden Rule*: Treat others the way you expect to be treated. The Golden Rule offers this clear and critical lesson to all seekers and lovers of truth: In examining or testing the truth of *another* religion, expect from yourself what you would expect from those who test the truth of *your* religion. What kind of person do you think can recognize your faith? Suppose you are a Christian. Do you think a closed-minded, complacent, apathetic, or fearful Buddhist, Jew, or Hindu can recognize the divine station of Jesus? Can such a truth seeker accept Jesus if he or she begins with preconceived notions? Can such a seeker know Jesus without sincere desire, persistent efforts, and continuous praying for guidance? Expect these conditions also from yourself. That is what the Golden Rule teaches.

If you think you have not done enough Bible studies to be able to recognize Bahá'u'lláh, then ask yourself: "When Jesus came what kind of people recognized Him? Bible scholars or ordinary people?" If you wonder why Christian leaders do not acknowledge Bahá'u'lláh, ask yourself, "Why didn't Jewish leaders acknowledge Jesus?" If they had accepted Him, would He be crucified? Have you ever met a Christian who was previously a rabbi? I do not recall even hearing about a single case. As soon as a reason or an excuse dawns in your mind, turn it around and see how you would expect a seeker of *your* faith to resolve it.

Following the Golden Rule in your journey of the search for truth is one of your most valuable spiritual assets, one of your most reliable guides. Make every effort to observe it at every step of your search. It helps you descend from the drifting clouds of imagination and high expectations to the solid earth of reality. If you appreciate the obstacles others face in validating the truth of your faith, then you will be more fair, more realistic in relation to the obstacles you will face in *your* study of the Bahá'í Faith. To be objective, take a few minutes and list all the conditions a person must meet to have a good chance of recognizing your faith. Then use that list as your own guide.

To awaken your sense of fairness, you will often be asked, throughout this book, to recall the events of the first advent, the obstacles the Jews faced especially at the dawning of Christianity. The first advent is a laboratory in which we can discover all the needed lessons for the second.

Consider the obstacle of starting your spiritual search with preconceived ideas and expectations. Many of those who hear about Bahá'u'lláh respond by saying, "I think," "I believe," "I am sure," and then set conditions that they believe must be met. If you start your spiritual journey with "I think" and "I believe," if you begin by setting conditions, you will not advance even one step. To move forward, you must reverse the order: *First* listen carefully to the One who claims to be Redeemer and the Lord of all humankind, and *then* state your position.

All our thoughts are "earthly"; they come from fallible minds. Bahá'u'lláh declares that everything He teaches is heavenly; it comes from God. How can we know "the heavenly" if we test it by the standard of "the earthly"? Note Bahá'u'lláh's guidance:

*...they that tread the path of faith, they that thirst for the wine of certitude, must cleanse themselves of all that is earthly...They should put their trust in God, and, holding fast unto Him, follow in His way. Then will they be made worthy of the effulgent glories of the sun of divine knowledge and understanding, and become the recipients of a grace that is infinite and unseen, inasmuch as man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious...nor partake of the cup of divine nearness and favor, 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.<sup>76</sup>*

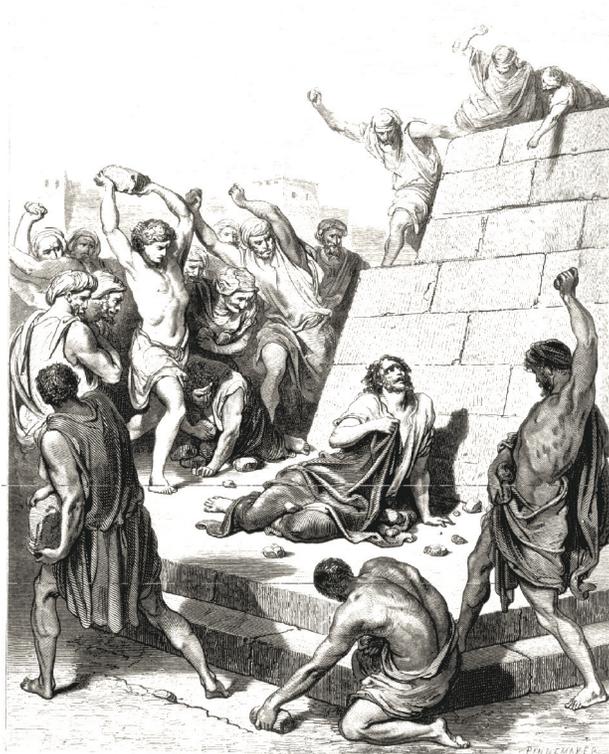
## *The Martyrdom of Stephen*

What kind of people are throwing stones at Stephen? What would you do if you were in their place? These few Pharisees were acting according to their conscience. They wanted to destroy a deceiver before he had a chance. They thought they were defending the truth. Were they evil? No, by today's standards, most of them were wonderful people. It is believed St. Paul was one of them. Before becoming a Christian, he was a meticulous follower of the Laws of Moses, yet he persecuted Christians to protect his Jewish heritage. He saw them as deceivers and destroyers.

If these people were law abiding believers, why then did they throw stones? Because they wanted to obey the laws of Moses. They were as faithful to their beliefs as the religious people of our time. Why then did they engage in such cruel act? Because of *a few spiritual weaknesses, such as a mind molded and closed by centuries old traditions.*

When the Bahá'í Faith appeared people did what they have always done: they killed thousands of its new followers with the utmost cruelty. But today in many countries that is not allowed. In place of stone, people can "throw" widely-accepted words, assumptions, and traditions molded and made as solid as stone through the passage of centuries. Many do not realize that those "stony" assumptions and traditions did not come from heaven. They came out of the minds of fallible people, with every weakness imaginable, and then passed from generation to generation as a heritage.

May we invite you not to come to a quick verdict, not to throw your "stones" before you have fully investigated the message of the new Redeemer: Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.



***There are so many people  
who claim to possess the truth.  
What makes Bahá'u'lláh different?  
How can I make sure I will not be deceived?***

The evidence Bahá'u'lláh presents is overwhelming. Be absolutely certain of this fact: among all those who have made or are making any claims, Bahá'u'lláh shines as brightly as the sun. Can anyone with a sound mind mistake the sun for a candle?

If you can find anyone who presents as much as one percent of the evidence Bahá'u'lláh presents, you deserve the highest prize. In my research over the span of over 40 years, I have been unable to find even one example. The truth of the extreme contrast between Bahá'u'lláh and others becomes evident to you *only as a result of investigation*. Is there any way to discover this truth except to investigate? Is there any way to find a gem except to search? Is there any way to know except to study? Can we “find,” without “seeking”? Does “the door” open without “knocking”?

Further, deceivers have always existed. *What would have happened if people had failed to learn about Jesus because of fear of being deceived?*

By investigating Bahá'u'lláh's mission you have nothing to lose. But by failing to embark on this magnificent adventure, you may deprive yourself of the most glorious gift that God may bestow on humans: everlasting life in the presence of God.

***Why some Christians don't investigate  
Bahá'u'lláh's claim?***

Most Christians feel a strong attachment to the name Jesus Christ. *They fear abandoning or losing Him. To observe caution, they simply avoid hearing about any other name.* They see their faith as a jeweled ring on their finger, one that may slip and fall any moment. For protection, they keep their hands closed. This fear is irrational. The same fear prevailed during the first advent: “*Do not fear, little flock,*” Jesus declared to fearful Jews, “*for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*” (Luke 12:32). A faithful believer should not fear the loss of his or her faith. Jesus used the parable of the talent to discourage, even to condemn, such fears. He called His fearful servant “*wicked and lazy*” (Matt. 18:32). When we examine the life and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, we encounter these delightful surprises:

- *Our original jeweled ring does not slip and fall.*
- *A new ring, equally beautiful and radiant, emerges and dazzles our eyes.*

The parable of the talent tells the final destiny of those who have *an abundance* of faith based on love, and those who have just *a trickle* of faith based on fear:

*...to everyone who has [true faith], more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.*

Christ (Luke 19:26)

The following verses lend further support to that parable. They show that at the time of Jesus' return many *keep His Word but lose their faith*:

***“I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name” (Rev. 3:8). “Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die” (Rev. 3:2). “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). “At that time many will turn away from the faith” (Matt. 24:10). “They will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject its real power” (II Tim. 3:5).***

Some Christians respond with fear and avoidance to the news of the advent of Bahá'u'lláh because of warnings and admonitions such as this:

***Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*** You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Christ (Matt. 7:15-20)

As you see, in this most significant pronouncement, Jesus covered three critical points:

- Warning*** Watch for cunning deceivers, who appear innocent.
- Admonition*** But there is a way to find the truth. There is a divine standard by which you can separate the heavenly from the earthly.
- The Standard*** That standard is “the fruits.” By tasting or testing “the fruits” of those who make a claim you will know who is divine, who is deceptive.

Unfortunately, most Christians ***obey only the warning, but ignore the admonition, and the standard.*** It seems the negative (appealing to people's fears) always commands more control on human life than the positive. We know how effective has “negative campaign” been in American politics. Sometimes competent and honest candidates have lost because of one repeatedly displayed negative ad. “Beware of false prophets” has been used the same way and achieved the same purpose. I have heard the first point many times, but do not recall hearing the other two even once.

Examples and analogies always enlighten the dialogue. Jesus used parables for this very purpose. Suppose you have invited several honored guests to a princely banquet. You ask a chef to prepare the most magnificent dinner fit for royalty. Then you add, “Make sure you won't burn it. Be watchful! Be alert!”

How would the chef take your instructions? Suppose he or she thinks, “These are the most eminent and honored guests I will ever serve. My whole reputation is at stake. What if I burn the dinner? That would be awful! I will be blamed for the rest of my life, and may even lose my job. The odor alone will spoil the party. How can I live with myself if I make such a mistake? What then is a good solution? I better not cook anything. That way I won't ***burn*** anything!”

This scenario seems unreal. You may say, “How could anyone think or act this way?” But isn't this exactly the way many Christians respond, when they are invited to investigate the awesome news of the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God? Like the chef, they act

only on the warning, but ignore the instructions. They listen to “beware,” but fail to taste “the fruits.”

The chef’s negative thoughts became so powerful, they paralyzed his reasoning powers and his connection with reality. A similar attitude of “seeking safety in avoidance” is dominating the conscience of countless Christians, who think, “If I don’t look into another religion, I won’t be deceived.” “If I don’t step out of my church, I won’t get lost.” In their hearts and minds, somehow they diffuse or deactivate Jesus’ repeated and emphatic commandments that they should always watch, seek, and search for Him. They forget that loyalty to Jesus Christ requires obedience to *all* His instructions, including the ones that are harder to follow, such as those that require courage and even a sense of adventure, as the parable of the talents teaches (Matt. 25:14-30). True faith requires that they should observe *all* His words of wisdom:

- The command to seek and search
- The warning to be cautious and critical, and
- The admonition to use “the fruits” as the standard of judgment

Only Jesus knew the Perfect Path for finding the heavenly thief who would come in the dark of the night. A little deviation, a little negligence or fear would lead the detectives in the wrong direction.

God gave us freedom of choice. That means every human being can come up with excuses to do anything his or her heart may desire. Suppose we convince some fearful believers that seeking and searching is essential. What do they do next? They start looking for another reason to convince themselves that avoidance is still the best choice. For instance, they may say, “Yes, we must search, but how can we tell the difference between true and false? We are not qualified.” If that idea crosses your mind, then ask yourself these critical questions: “Would God command me to do something beyond my powers? If He did, would that be just? Is God unreasonable in His expectations? Would He expect an infant to understand the Bible, and punish him if he failed? Would He ask me to use ‘the fruits’ as the standard of judgment if I were incapable of judging? Would I be accountable to God for a task beyond my powers? Did Jesus say ‘You *may* know them by their fruits’ or ‘You *will* know them?’” And finally ask yourself, “If I am not qualified to judge, *who* is? Would I let someone else determine my eternal destiny?”

As you can see, the prevailing and paralyzing fear and its natural consequence—avoidance—have no roots in reason or reality. They are illusions created by fearful hearts that do not really trust their Lord; hearts that show no confidence in the most critical command, the most enlightening admonition, and the most significant standard Jesus Christ gave to help His true disciples recognize Him, and not treat Him the way fearful and negligent people did the first time.

Human nature never changes. People today are at least as fearful as the people of past ages:

***Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.***

Christ (Luke 12:32)

*This is the most great, the most joyful tidings...Wherefore fear ye, O My well-beloved ones?*<sup>77</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

*...the Hour hath struck, and the Resurrection came to pass, and fear and trembling seized all that are in heaven and all that are on earth...*<sup>78</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

*“Have the verses been sent down?” Say: “Yea, by Him Who is the Lord of the heavens!” “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....mankind is sore vexed and fearful.”*<sup>79</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

## ***Why should everyone know Bahá'u'lláh?***

Most people assume that they should simply follow the religion of their ancestors. ***Is this a sound assumption?*** If those who lived at the time of Moses had practiced this assumption, would there be any Jews? If those who lived at the time of Jesus had practiced this assumption, would there be any Christians?

According to noted Christian psychologist, Dr. James Dobson, at the root of virtually every problem lies ***untested assumptions***. ***People simply assume something to be true and act as if it were.***

If you were born to a Jewish family, you would most likely assume that Jesus is not the true Messiah—the One promised by Hebrew prophets. Why? If you were born to a Muslim family, you would simply assume that your parents had the best beliefs. You too would follow them. Why? What percentage of people take time to investigate, with an open and fair mind, the beliefs of religions other than their own? Suppose you wanted to buy a house. Would you not seek and search? Would you not try to make the best choice? Would you simply assume that the first house you happen to see is the one you should buy? Yet this is the way people adopt their beliefs. This is how they choose the heavenly home in which they intend to live for all eternity!

***Untested assumptions determine much of what we believe;*** they dictate our way of life in more ways than we realize.

It is always easier to stay in one's comfort zone, to follow tradition. ***To guard against this universal weakness, it is absolutely essential to be always watchful and curious, to practice this most critical command of God:***

***Seek***, and ye shall find; ***knock***, and it shall be opened unto you... Christ (Matt. 7:7)

***...test the spirits*** to see whether they are from God... I John 4:1

***Keep your eyes open, keep on the alert***...It is as if a man [Jesus] who is traveling abroad had left his house [church] and handed it over to be managed by his servants [religious leaders]. He has given each one his work to do and has ordered the doorkeeper to be on the lookout for [the news of] his return. ***Just so must you keep a lookout***...What I am saying to you I am saying to all; ***keep on the alert!***

Christ (Mark 13:33-37)

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

Heb. 9:28

Life is a choice. We have absolute freedom to choose our everlasting destiny. We can aspire after a “lofty station,” select “depths of degradation,” or settle for a state of mediocrity.

***How lofty is the station which man, if he but choose to fulfill his high destiny, can attain! To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached!***<sup>80</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

To choose wisely, we must seek and search for truth all the days of our lives. To separate silver from soil, we must look with an open and critical mind:

...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

...the kingdom of heaven is like **treasure hidden in a field**.

Matthew 13:44

We stay only for a short time on this planet. We are like “a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes” (James 4:15). Yet the choices we make during our brief stay are infinitely critical. They determine our everlasting destiny.

***Teach us to count how few days we have and so gain wisdom of heart.***

Psalms 90:12

This should be our daily prayer:

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. **Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.**

Psalms 139:23-24

## ***What is the difference, if any, between Christ and Bahá'u'lláh?***

Consider Christ and Bahá'u'lláh as two most precious and splendid pieces of diamond. Each diamond catches the rays of the sun and reflects its beauty and brilliance to anyone who dares to look, to anyone who loves the light. Each of the two divine gems has its own identity, yet each is so much like the other, you can't tell them apart.

I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was **someone “like a son of man”**...

Revelation 1:12-13

That “someone” is Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. Just as a father and a son are alike, so are Christ and Bahá'u'lláh. Jesus Christ came in the glory of the Son; Bahá'u'lláh came in the glory of the Father:

### ***The Promise:***

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

Christ (Matt. 16:27)

### ***The fulfillment:***

Say, Lo! **The Father is come**, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!<sup>81</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

Substitute “God” for “Father” and you get “Glory of God:”

### ***Glory of the Father = Glory of God***

God created both Christ, the Anointed One, and Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, and bestowed His light equally on them. ***A single Spirit—the Spirit of God—shines in both of these supreme and celestial Figures.***

If we believe in the oneness of God—Divine Unity—we must also believe in the oneness of those who disclose His glory—”the Manifestations of His Cause:”

Beware, O believers in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth.<sup>82</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

The more we look at Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, the more clearly we see not only their divine splendor, but also the single source of the light and glory that shines in them. ***Without seeking, watching, looking, and investigating with a pure heart, we can see nothing.***

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

Christ (Matt. 5:8)

***...without holiness no one will see the Lord.***

Hebrews 12:14

### ***Do Bahá'is revere Jesus Christ and the Bible?***

God's Word, whether it comes from Moses, Jesus, or Bahá'u'lláh is sacred. This is how Bahá'u'lláh glorified Jesus:

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. ***The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.***<sup>83</sup>

From a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the United States in 1912:

You must follow the example and footprints of Jesus Christ. Read the Gospels. Jesus Christ was mercy itself, was love itself. He even prayed in behalf of His executioners—for those who crucified Him—saying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” If they knew what they were doing, they would not have done it. Consider how kind Jesus Christ was, that even upon the cross He prayed for His oppressors.<sup>84</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh refers to Jesus Christ by the most supreme titles, such as ***the Spirit of God, the Lord of all being, the Lord of the visible and invisible, the Word of God, the Essence of the Spirit, and that Peerless Beauty.***

## ***What is meant by “the Antichrist”?***

God gives us warnings to be watchful, like blinking lights along the road. Their purpose is not to stop us in our track with fear, but rather to send us this message: “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 souls. 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 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.***

John 10:4-5,14

***It is absolutely critical to listen to “the voice” of Bahá’u’lláh: to read His words.***

The term “the antichrist” 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

As we noted, Bahá’u’lláh showered infinite love on Jesus Christ. He said that when He was crucified, the entire universe “wept with great weeping.” 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 Corinthians 12:3

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 Matthew 24:26-28. Such a figure did indeed appear along with an instigator and supporter. Together they repeatedly planned and plotted 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 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 or protection. 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 two long chapters 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 kill our soul: prevent us from pursuing our divine destiny.

### ***Did Bahá’u’lláh perform any miracles?***

By far the most supreme miracle is the Redeemer Himself. He is the grandest and most magnificent creation of God. If we truly know Christ and Bahá’u’lláh, we need no other miracle.

God bestows on all His great Messengers and Redeemers special powers far beyond our imagination. They can accomplish anything they wish. Yet they always decline to use their supernatural powers to impress the people. True miracles are spiritual, not physical. Sometimes for specific reasons they allow us to get a glimpse of their supreme and celestial glory, but they ask us not to use such expressions of supremacy as an evidence of their greatness.

Those who are interested can find examples of such wonders in the memoirs of some of those who attained the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. Many have had visions and dreams of Bahá’u’lláh, including this author. Their purpose is to support, inspire, encourage, and guide.

Everything Bahá’u’lláh did was a miracle—far beyond what any human being can ever accomplish. Yet He asked His followers not “to allow references to what they have regarded as miracles and prodigies to debase Our [Bahá’u’lláh’s] rank and station, or to mar the purity and sanctity of Our name.”<sup>85</sup>

Declining to use supernormal powers as an evidence of divine distinction is in itself an evidence of divine distinction! We feel proud of doing something extraordinary, and often go out of our way to let everyone know. God does the exact opposite. Jesus asked His followers repeatedly not to tell anyone about His miracles, “See that no one knows about this” (Matt. 9:30). But people did just the opposite (Matt. 9:31). In fact, they raised the edifice of Christianity mostly on miracles.

Miracles diminish and denigrate the rank of God’s Teachers and Redeemers by lowering them to the level of cult leaders, magicians, and psychics.

God does not show His miracles and marvels by breaking the laws of nature but by changing the lives of nations, not by turning dirt into diamond but by transforming evil into good and ordinary into extraordinary, not by altering the relationship between

electrons and protons but by edifying and elevating the attitudes of warring people. This is far more difficult. For protons and electrons have no will to resist. Only humans have that power and privilege. Changing lives is a super miracle all great Saviors perform on a scale that passes understanding. That is a wonder you can find in the lives of countless followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

### ***Do Bahá'is have their own scriptures?***

Yes, Bahá'u'lláh wrote about 15,000 Epistles, the equivalent of one hundred volumes. He wrote each of those Epistles without pause of pen. Some of His works have been translated into English. The most distinctive features of the works of God's great Redeemers are an abundant use of metaphors and an outpouring of supreme authority and power. Read the following passage several times. As you read, pause and ponder about each sentence. Note His use of metaphors as well as the supreme power and authority with which He speaks:

***He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained...He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs. Beware lest any name debar thee from God, the Creator of earth and heaven.***<sup>86</sup>

Have you known anyone speak in this language and with such supreme power and authority?

Producing exquisite works without pause, creating masterpieces in Arabic, a language He did not learn, is a supreme miracle that can come only from God. This is a wonder with which nothing can compare. Which has more value? To see a Redeemer remove mountains of dirt at His command, or mountains of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice by His pen? Which would you prefer? To see valleys be filled with jewels and gravel at His command, or the spiritual vacuum in the hearts be filled with joy and gratitude? Which is most difficult? Paving the highways, or paving the road to peace?

***Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord [Bahá'u'lláh] shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.***

Isaiah 4:3-5

Only the Word of God has the power to transform the human heart, to accomplish such wonders. History of great religions testifies to the marvels of this power.

## ***How have the churches responded to Bahá'u'lláh?***

Recently, in a neighboring community, a pastor invited a former nun, who had become a Bahá'í, to speak in his church about her experiences as a nun on a reservation. At the outset, the audience listened to her story with interest. But when, incidentally, she said, "***I follow the new Christ!***" their attitude suddenly changed. A few walked out. The following Sunday as a result of pressure from his superiors, the pastor reluctantly apologized to his congregation for his lack of discretion, for inviting an unsuitable speaker! Such a response is common, for ***many fear the loss of their jeweled ring***. In our community, the Christian bookstore would not accept even a single Bahá'í book.

Several years ago, the son of a pastor became a Bahá'í in our community. He didn't dare break the news to his father. To test his attitude, he asked him, "What do Bahá'ís believe?" His father responded in this one sentence: "They don't believe in anything!"

As I am writing these lines, I am reminded of a former priest—Dr. Lou Meyer—from Indiana, who was a guest speaker in our community. His talk dealt with the reasons he accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Jesus 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?

Several Bahá'í communities have offered free literature about the advent of Bahá'u'lláh to pastors and priests in their communities. Not even one in a hundred has responded to the offer. I have given a copy of *I Shall Come Again* to three friends: a priest and two pastors who are quite liberal. So far they have not taken the time to read it. Only one of them has read a few pages! It seems, at this point in history, the general response from most church leaders is: "If we ignore it, it won't exist. If we say nothing about it, it will disappear!" A critical question every seeker of truth, every Christian should ask is this: "Should I leave my everlasting destiny in the hands of leaders who practice avoidance instead of initiative, who show no interest in the greatest News the world may ever know? Is this wisdom?"

Did Jesus make church leaders accountable to His followers for teaching them about His return? Yes, He gave them full responsibility for this task. In His Olivet Discourse, He uttered a special parable—that of the faithful and unfaithful servant—for this very purpose. In that parable, He offered not only His most glorious blessings to church leaders who prepare Christians for His return, but expressed His wrath against those who fail to accomplish this most significant task. He used powerful metaphors to warn the negligent leaders of their awesome accountability before God. Let us first see Jesus' commands and counsels, and then reexamine them in the light of the metaphors He used:

Who then is the faithful, thoughtful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed—happy, fortunate and to be envied—is that servant whom when his master comes he will find so doing. I solemnly declare to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant is wicked and says to himself, my master is delayed and is going to be gone a long time, and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour of which he is not aware, and will punish him—cut him up (by scourging)—and put him with the pretenders (hypocrites); there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

Christ (Matt. 24:45-51)

**THE METAPHORS**

**THEIR MEANINGS**

<b><i>Servant</i></b>	Religious leaders who make a commitment to serve Jesus
<b><i>The Master</i></b>	Jesus Christ
<b><i>Household</i></b>	The church
<b><i>Food and supplies</i></b>	Spiritual nourishment. A sincere love for truth, a passionate desire for recognizing the Master on His return. A high dosage of wisdom, humility, and spiritual purity to become worthy of knowing Him. For <b><i>only</i></b> the pure in heart and the faithful can see the glory of God in a humble human being.
<b><i>At the proper time</i></b>	The end of the age: our time, when people need to know.
<b><i>My Master is delayed and is going to be gone a long time</i></b>	The time of the advent arrives, the Master comes, but the leaders continue to wait and tell church members, “Keep waiting! Eventually He will come!” In reference to these leaders, Bahá’u’lláh states, “Wait ye even as those before you are waiting!” <sup>87</sup> We know the Jews are still waiting. Rabbi Avrohom Feuer wrote, “The Talmud lists numerous signs which herald the imminent arrival of Messiah...all these signs have appeared, <b><i>yet Messiah tarries.</i></b> ” <sup>88</sup> How perfectly history is repeating itself!
	Church leaders know instinctively that the Master is late. Out of desperation, some of them set dates, such as, “It will be during this generation.” When that generation passes, they start with another generation.
	The Bahá’í Faith began in 1844, the exact date predicted 16 times in the Bible. Notice how <i>Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions</i> describes Adventists, whose original founders discovered 1844 as the time of the second advent. “Those Christians whose most important belief is in the imminent and literal Second Coming of Christ. Found in most periods of history and in most denominations, a separate movement began in the USA with William Miller (1781-1849), who predicted Christ’s return (and the end of the world) in 1843-4, and whose followers eventually formed a denomination called Seventh Day

Adventists. *They believe that the Second Coming of Christ is delayed only by a failure to keep the Sabbath.*”<sup>89</sup>

***Beat his fellow servants***

Divisiveness among religious leaders. As we noted, a serious war of words is going on among interpreters of the end-time prophecies. Aside from this, religious leaders have divided the one church of God. Instead of working together, they often compete. (See the statement from theologian Dr. Lightner, quoted earlier.)

***Eat and drink***

Paying attention mainly to their worldly needs and comforts, but failing to offer spiritual nourishment. Jesus used the same metaphor about the way people lived at the time of Noah.

***Drink with the drunken***

Living in a state of unawareness like a drunk person, and associating with people—leaders and laity—who are also spiritually “drunk” and unaware of the coming of the Lord.

***On a day when he does not expect him and an hour of which he is not aware. (On a day he is not looking for Him NKJ.)***

When Bahá’u’lláh came, religious leaders did not expect Him and were not looking for Him. They were preoccupied with “eating and drinking.” Still they are not looking. Although the Master commanded His servants to be watchful and to look for Him, most of them have continued to disobey Him. In an Epistle, Bahá’u’lláh invited the Pope, bishops, priests, and pastors to investigate and acknowledge His divine station, but they ignored His Call.

***Cut him up***

This metaphor shows the extreme anguish and anger of the Master against those leaders who have disobeyed His instructions to look for Him, and to pay immediate attention to the news of His return. The phrase points to the spiritual death of servants—church leaders—who ignore the command of their Master. They will be cut off from the presence of the Lord. This prophecy uses the same metaphor: “For evil men will be **cut off**, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land” (Psalms 37:9).

***Put him with the pretenders (hypocrites)***

Jesus’ warnings against the Pharisees indicate that no sin is greater than hypocrisy: to say something and not really believe it. Today many people profess love for Jesus Christ, but pay no attention to His instructions for finding Him.

***Weeping and grinding of teeth***

A clear reference to hell or banishment from the presence of God as a punishment for leaders who fail to give people their “food” in “due season,” who make no effort to investigate the evidence the Master presents for His return.

Now once again read Jesus’ instructions in another translation to see more clearly His intention in giving such severe warnings to church leaders:

What sort of servant, then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to place him over his household to give them their food at the proper time? Happy that servant if his

master's arrival finds him at this employment, I tell you solemnly, he will place him over everything he owns. But as for the dishonest servant who says to himself, "My master is taking his time," and sets about beating his fellow servants and eating and drinking with drunkards, his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Christ (Matt. 24:45-51)

If Jesus were to come down from the sky, would it matter if He came "on a day" when His servants—the religious leaders—were not "looking for Him"? If every eye would see Him, would any eye need to look for Him? The message of this verse fits perfectly the metaphor of "thief in the night" and many other prophecies that command us to be awake and watchful, and to look for the Master, such as the following. Could the need for searching be stated more clearly than this?

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

The severe punishment—banishment to hell—assigned to violators also points to the willful denial of the Lord by Christians after He comes in the form of a humble human being who can be denied. It fits the rejection of the Master by leaders who enjoy full freedom to obey Him, yet refuse to do so, people who have a chance to accept His invitation to His banquet, but fail to enter by their own choosing, believers who refuse to open their hearts to Him (Rev. 3:20).

After the parable of wise and unwise leaders, Jesus used two other parables to confirm that same message: the need for searching for the Master. They are: the parables of wise and unwise maidens (Matt. 25:1-13), and the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30). Both of them indicate that **every sincere Christian who loves the Lord must take responsibility for searching for Him. Every faithful and wise Christian must invest his or her talents for finding the Bridegroom, and be well aware of the possibility of missing Him.** For, as the parable teaches, He comes "at midnight," at the darkest hour, when sleepers and dreamers are least likely to see Him.

As we noted, Jesus expressed His anger against negligent leaders and warned them of the harshest punishment possible: banishment from His presence. Most people do not like to think about God's justice and punishment. But what benefit can we gain from ignoring them? The only benefit is to feel safe and secure, to continue to do what we have been doing, and to prolong the sufferings. If we did not need such warnings, would God give them to us? What happened to those who ignored Noah's call, who paid no attention to the dire consequences of their denial and kept doing to the end what **they** liked, rather than what **God** asked them to do?

In spite of all these disappointments, some priests and pastors have recognized Bahá'u'lláh, among them is the eminent author George Townshend, who before acknowledging Bahá'u'lláh served as the cannon of St. Patrick's Cathedral. He made this prediction:

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.<sup>90</sup>

## ***Why does the Bible say, “Every eye shall see Him”?***

Our Creator has given us two sets of eyes: physical and spiritual. The purpose of the physical eye is to see the outer world, the purpose of the spiritual eye is to see the inner world. A true believer can see not only Christ and Bahá'u'lláh with his or her inner eye but also God:

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

A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you [the pure-hearted believers] will *see* Me. Christ (John 14:19)

To understand the Word of God, we need to look with an all-embracing vision to see *all* His instructions. In the Book of Revelation in which Jesus says “every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7), He also offers a divine “remedy” to all Christians who have a sincere desire to see Him:

*I counsel you to buy from me...salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*  
Christ (Rev. 3:18)

Have you ever known anyone who tried to “buy” salve (ointment) for his eyes from Jesus? Have you ever known anyone who even admitted needing ointment for his eyes? If people believe they have perfect vision, why would they want to waste their money on a remedy they don't need?

Do the people of this age have healthy eyes, or have they been losing their eyesight? We may try to conceal our defects to deceive our hearts, to pretend that we are almost perfect, but our Creator and true Lover has some disturbing news for us. The One who predicts that every eye shall see Him, makes also this prediction:

The great day of the Lord is near...they will walk *like blind men*... Zephaniah 1:14,17

Bahá'u'lláh confirms repeatedly the disturbing truth of an epidemic loss of eyesight and the spread of blindness among the peoples of this age. Note the authority with which He speaks:

So potent and universal is this revelation, that it hath encompassed all things visible and invisible...*Blind is the eye which doth not perceive Thee.*<sup>91</sup>

*Blinded are your eyes! Perceived ye not the greatness of the power of God and of His sovereignty?* Beheld ye not His majesty and glory?...tarry not though it be for less than a moment. Thus biddeth you He Who is the Beauty of the All-Merciful...<sup>92</sup>

Say: “The True One is come evident as the shining sun; O pity that He should have come into the city of the blind!”<sup>93</sup>

At the time of the advent of great Redeemers, there is also an epidemic loss of sense of hearing. This passage holds as true today as it did at the time of Jesus:

Why is my language not clear to you? Because *you are unable to hear* what I say.  
Christ (John 8:43)

In the Book of Revelation, which is mostly a book of prophecy about our time, Jesus asks each of His “churches”—church leaders and members—for a listening ear. To each of them He says, “***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches***” (Rev. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22). Why would Jesus repeat this warning so often?

It is always the spirit that sees and hears. When one sense is missing, so is the other. The Word of God can be discerned only spiritually. Consider this passage once again:

Jesus said, “It is for judgment that I have come into this world—to ***give sight to the sightless, and to make blind those who see.***” John 9:39

Anyone who wants to enter the Banquet of God with a big ego and a closed mind, anyone who thinks he already *sees* the truth, he instantly falls from grace and enters the gloomy and desolate realms of remoteness from God. Only ***humility*** can save a soul from blindness:

***He will save the humble person.*** Job 22:29

***Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.***<sup>94</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

***...seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.*** Zephaniah 2:3

The expression, “The kingdom of God” is linked with “the Second Advent.” How can we see that Kingdom? Note the following verse. It indicates that we can see it with the eye in our soul. That Kingdom cannot be “observed” with physical eyes. It does not occupy a place. It is neither “here” nor “there.” ***It is an inner rather than outer experience, and we all have the potential to embrace it with our heart.***

***The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.*** Christ (Luke 17:20-21)

Who can see the light?

Unto ***the upright*** there arises light in the darkness. Psalms 112:4

There is no difference between seeing God, the supreme Creator, seeing Christ, the Anointed One, or seeing Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. Some people completely deny the Creator, others “see” Him in every flower or leaf, in every sunrise or sunset. The same kind of eye is needed to see those who manifest God: His great Messengers and Redeemers.

God is the most glorious and the most magnificent Gem in all universe. He wants to be discovered only by those who deserve to see Him: the pure in heart. That is the reason He hides Himself in the clouds of glory. The same rule applies also to His presence in His great Redeemers—the Ones who manifest His supreme splendor. Should a person who chooses to sleep see the beauty of the dawn? Should a believer who closes his or her heart see the light of truth? Justice means getting what we work for and deserve:

***...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*** Galatians 6:7

When we close our hearts to God or His great Redeemers, ***we deprive only our own souls and suffer the consequences.*** The sun does not need us; we need it.

In His prophecies, Jesus combined two metaphors, “eye” and “clouds.” If we take the “eye” literally, we run into all kinds of problems and contradictions, such as:

- If every eye sees Him, why would Jesus warn us so often to “**Watch!**”? We need to watch *only when we can miss an event*.
- Why would Jesus promise to come like a thief? A thief always avoids the watchful eye of the householder. This clearly contradicts being seen by every person on our planet.
- Why did Jesus ask us to stay “awake”? Is “awake” literal or symbolic? If all eyes see Him, why should they stay awake? The eyes would be able to sleep and still see Him! Should people stay awake through the dark of the night or through the dark of unbelief, fear, apathy, cynicism, worldliness, and doubt?
- Why did Jesus ask us to hear His voice and to open the “door” for Him? Do not the metaphors indicate that we have the freedom to accept or reject Him?

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. Revelation 3:20

- Why did Jesus warn us about false prophets? If it was His intention to prove His divine distinction by coming from heaven with angels around Him, why would we need to be warned of false prophets?

Numerous prophecies indicate that the Redeemer of our age, who is called the Spirit of Truth, will be rejected and ignored. Most of those prophecies are presented in *King of Kings*. Let us consider one of them. First Bahá’u’lláh’s claim that He is the Spirit of Truth:

Verily, He Who is *the Spirit of Truth* is come to guide you unto all truth.<sup>95</sup>

Note how clearly Jesus predicted that the peoples of the world *will not see that Spirit*:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—*the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.* Christ (John 14:16-17)

How can we *see* the Lord? By obeying Him, by doing exactly what He asks us. What should we do to *see* Him? We must pay attention to or “*Watch,*” not with our eyeballs, but with our hearts and souls, the astonishing evidence Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, presents in support of His claim. If we fail to rely on God’s standards for knowing His Redeemer, if we fail to look through His eyes, we will be unable to see His supreme glory and splendor in a humble human being called *Bahá’u’lláh*. Without obeying His commands, *He will not show Himself to us*:

*He who loves me...I too will love him and show myself to him.* Christ (John 14:21)

What is the evidence of our love for Jesus?

Whoever has my commands and *obeys* them, *he is the one who loves me.* Christ (John 14:21)

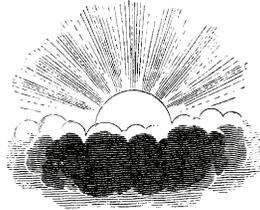
When we disobey God, He hides His face from us:

...your sins have *hidden* His face from you...

Isaiah 59:2

## ***Why did Jesus say He will come on the clouds?***

If Jesus intended to be seen by every eye, why would He choose a cloudy day? Is the word “cloud” used intentionally to convey a spiritual message? Is it used as a metaphor? What purpose do clouds serve? Look at this drawing:



The sun is shining with full brightness, yet its glory rests on the clouds. How can the eyes see that glory? Only by ascending and passing beyond the clouds. Consider the following warning from Jesus about His return as translated in *Modern English*:

Be on guard—***see to it*** that your minds are never ***clouded***... Christ (Luke 21:36)

Note the metaphoric use of both “***see***” and “***clouded***.” What happens to a mind “clouded” by preconceived notions about the meaning of prophecies, and in this case the meaning of “cloud” and “eye”? Can the clouded mind “see” the truth? Can the clouded “eye” of the spirit see the Glory of God? Which eye deserves to see God’s glory? Who is “worthy to stand before the Son of man”? Every polluted spirit with eyeballs, or every pure spirit who may not even ***have*** eyeballs? The key requirement for recognizing and seeing the Spirit of Truth—Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God—who has come in the station of the Lord, lies in these brief verses:

...without ***holiness*** no one will ***see the Lord***. Hebrews 12:14

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

Jesus was the glory and splendor of God hidden in a human body. Unless we look beyond His earthly form, we cannot see His heavenly radiance.

***May the world be for you no obstacle hiding the truth from your sight, as the human body of Christ hid His Divinity from the people of His day.***<sup>96</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Jesus was “the light of the world” (John 8:12), the most brilliant source of knowledge and wisdom. Who “saw” His “light”? Only a few humble and pure-hearted disciples who rose above “the clouds” and saw in His soul the radiance and splendor of God.

The meaning of “cloud” can also be decoded from the synonyms used with it in several prophecies, such as this one:

That day is a day of ***wrath***, a day of ***trouble*** and ***distress***, a day of ***wasteness*** and ***desolation***, a day of ***darkness*** and ***gloominess***, a day of ***clouds*** and thick ***darkness***... Zephaniah 1:15

As we noted, Jesus declared that He *came* from heaven. He also told His contemporaries that they will begin to see Him “coming on *the clouds* of heaven.”

*From now on*, you will *see* the Son of Man...coming on *the clouds* of heaven.

Christ (Matt. 26:64)

Note that Jesus promises to His disciples that from “now on” they will begin to see Him on the clouds of heaven. Is there any record or even a claim that anyone saw Jesus “coming on the clouds of heaven”? What the previous verse and countless others show is this: God speaks in metaphors, parables, and symbols. This is His unique and distinct way of communicating with us. His Word must be “*spiritually discerned*” (I Cor. 2:14). Christian scholars acknowledge the metaphoric use of “seeing,” “clouds,” and “heaven” in the preceding verse. For instance, F.F. Bruce states, “He [Jesus] says this in *symbolic* language, but the source of this symbolic language is biblical.”<sup>97</sup> He explains that “clouds” symbolize “the vehicle of divine glory.”<sup>98</sup> ***Why then do the theologians change the standards of interpretation about the prophecies of the Second Advent?***

He [God] wraps Himself in light as with a garment; He stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of His upper chambers on their waters. ***He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.***

Psalms 104:2-3

Consider these verses from Hebrew Scriptures about the same topic: ***the coming of the Lord on the clouds of heaven***. David was at war and prayed for help. This is how God responded:

***He [God] parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet.***

II Samuel 22:10

What else happened?

***Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it...He sent out arrows and scattered them; Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them [the enemies].*** II Samuel 22:8-9, 15 NKJ

Did these events happen literally or spiritually? Did God come down from heaven with clouds under His feet? Did smoke pour out of His nose? and fire from His mouth? Were they hot enough to kindle coals? And did He send arrows to defeat David’s enemies?

Should we not use the past as the standard for the future? Can we not learn from these verses, and hundreds of others, the unique language our Creator speaks? Is this a hard lesson to learn?

Some Christian authors and scholars do acknowledge ***the symbolic meaning of prophecies that point to miraculous events***, and yet they fail to investigate the Second Advent of Jesus Christ in His new name ***Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God***. Consider the following statement from a Christian publication. It offers spiritual meaning for supernatural events:

What is indicated by “*clouds*”? ***Invisibility***...In what sense will “every eye see him”? They will discern from events on earth that he is invisibly present...Who are “those who pierced him”? Literally, Roman soldiers did this at the time of Jesus’ execution.

But they have long been dead. So this must refer to people who similarly mistreat, or “pierce” Christ’s true followers during “the last days” (Matt. 25:40, 45).<sup>99</sup>

A gloomiest and most dangerous “cloud” that is surrounding the peoples of the world and obscuring the light of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, is widespread *apathy, indifference, and inattentiveness*. Consider the following statement from Christian scholar Dr. David Reagan:

...the first-century Church had an ardent desire for the soon return of Jesus... The twentieth-century Church seems to have lost that desire. The average Christian today... does not yearn for the return of the Lord. Instead of yearning, he is yawning. Christendom at large is caught up in apathy regarding the return of Jesus. And that is sad, for the Word says that the return of the Lord is our “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13)... I have found four reasons for the apathy and indifference that characterize the Christian community concerning the return of Jesus: 1) unbelief; 2) ignorance; 3) fear; and 4) carnality.<sup>100</sup>

God always remains concealed in the clouds of glory. The physical form of His great Redeemers is one of many layers of the clouds:

...they are waiting for Him to come down from there again, riding upon a cloud, and they imagine that there are clouds in that infinite space and that He will ride thereon and by that means He will descend. Whereas the truth is that a cloud is but vapour that riseth out of the earth, and it doth not come down from heaven. Rather, the cloud referred to in the Gospel is the human body, so called because the body is as a veil to man, which, even as a cloud, preventeth him from beholding the Sun of Truth that shineth from the horizon of Christ.<sup>101</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

### ***Why does God speak in symbolic language?***

The purpose of using symbolic language, Bahá’u’lláh teaches, is *to test the people’s sincerity, to reveal their inner motives*. Let us go back to the time of Jesus. Prophecies declared that the Messiah would be a king. Not once did those prophecies indicate that He would be a *spiritual* king. Why? Take two Jews who lived at the time of Jesus. Annas was perhaps the most powerful and respected Jewish theologian of that time. He condemned Jesus to death. Why? He did not listen to Him with an open and humble heart. *He simply assumed* he knew the true meaning of *king*. He was tested by that one word, but he failed miserably. *His education, his profound knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, did not help him at all.*

Now consider another Jew, Mary Magdalene, a peasant, with little if any education. She listened with an open and humble heart to Jesus. *She did not assume she was right*. She recognized that human beings can make mistakes. *She knew tradition does not equal the truth. The fact that thousands of rabbis had believed something for centuries was no proof that they were right.* The same holds true today. Should we not learn the lessons of history? *Should we not remember once again that tradition does not equal the truth?*

If you are open-minded like Mary Magdalene and Peter, you will **not** start with assumptions such as: “I am right. I know, and I know that I know. Christ must come from the sky.” If you are sincere, if you truly love Jesus Christ, you will respond to His Second Coming in the name of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, with humility, wisdom, and love for truth. Your spiritual attributes will provide you with the in-sight to “see” the truth as did “the oil” of wisdom empower the five wise maidens to enter the banquet of the Bridegroom (Matt. 25:1-13). If you pursue your search as did Jesus’ humble apostles, such as Peter, Mary Magdalene, and John, you will pass your test. How did they search? With absolute devotion, humility, spiritual freedom, and love for truth.

Suppose someone invites you to a most magnificent garden, hidden behind a curtain. Can you enter that garden or see it without lifting the curtain? ***That curtain is the symbolic language***, which is used abundantly in sacred scriptures. ***To see the inner truths, you must remove it. If you are unwilling to lift the curtain, you won’t see God’s magnificent garden of beauty and splendor. You have then failed your test.***

In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus prayed for the coming of God’s Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Then He added:

***And bring us not to the test...***

Christ (Matt. 6:13)

This fact is confirmed by other prophecies:

***...the hour of trial*** which shall come upon the whole world, ***to test those who dwell on the earth.***

Revelation 3:10

***Many shall be...tried***; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand...

Daniel 12:10 NIV

What is the test or trial that comes upon all the people of the world? It is their response to the most glorious News the world has ever known: the news of the coming of the King of Kings, Bahá’u’lláh. Now that you have heard ***the news*** of the advent of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, as the return of Christ, you are being put to the most challenging test of your life. Your whole destiny is now on trial. You cannot pass this test without God’s help, without persistent praying. Since God is graceful, He does not abandon or ignore those who seek His help:

...whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. Christ (Matt. 21:22 NKJ)\*

Symbols or metaphors are a few stumbling blocks God puts in your path, and that of every other believer and seeker of truth, to see who has the trust, the courage, the wisdom, and the desire to pick up the blocks and turn them into stepping stones.

***In dealing with men it is God’s purpose to test them and to see what they truly are.***

Ecclesiastes 3:18

***What is man, that, You [God] should...test him every moment?***

Job 7:17-18

Consider the following two quotations, a biblical verse cited earlier, and Bahá’u’lláh’s words addressed to a ***new*** believer:

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\* See the prayers provided for this purpose at the end of this book.

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

Render thanks unto the Almighty, and magnify His name, inasmuch as He hath aided thee to recognize a Cause that hath made the hearts of the inhabitants of the heavens and of the earth to tremble...and ***through which the hidden secrets of men's breasts have been searched out and tested.***<sup>102</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The verse from Corinthians indicates that as the promised Redeemer brings to light what lies hidden in darkness, ***so will he bring to light what lies hidden in the hearts.*** When He lifts the curtain of mysteries, when He interprets the Word of God, when He invites people to His new Garden, people will respond according to their inner motives. Some will run away from His Garden, others will enter it, explore it, and test its fragrant flowers and fruits. They will practice this divine directive without fear: ***“By their fruits ye shall know them.”***

At the gate of the garden some stand and look within, but do not care to enter. Others step inside, behold its beauty, but do not penetrate far. Still others encircle this garden inhaling the fragrance of the flowers, having enjoyed its full beauty, pass out again by the same gate. But there are always some who enter and, becoming intoxicated with the splendor of what they behold, remain for life to tend the garden.<sup>103</sup>

Before taking a test, all students appear equal. The test reveals the inner knowledge of each of them. It separates the honor ones from the failing ones. Likewise ***the way people respond to the news of Christ's Second Coming reveals their inner motives. It presents them with the most critical and consequential challenge they will ever face.*** Hearing the news will become the source of the most glorious adventure, joy, and victory to those who investigate it. What if they ignore the invitation or run away from the news? It will then serve an opposite purpose. It will become a source of greatest loss, failure, grief, and ever-enduring remorse.<sup>104</sup>

Consider also the following example. Suppose you have ten samples of soil. They all look alike. How can you discover the quality or richness of each sample? The best way is to plant seeds in each of them and see what happens. That is exactly the way God treats the soil of our hearts. He wants to discover what lies dormant in each of us:

Know verily that ***the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil.*** From time immemorial ***such hath been the way of God*** amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books.<sup>105</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus also confirms the need for testing:

The seed is the word of God...The seed sown on rock stands for those who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but have no root; ***they are believers for a while, but in the time of testing they desert.***...But the seed in good soil represents those who bring a good and honest heart to the hearing of the word, hold it fast, and by their perseverance yield a harvest. Christ (Luke 8:11,13,15)

Consider this prophecy, widely quoted by Christian scholars to show its relevance to and fulfillment by Jesus:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey... ***He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.*** Zechariah 9:9-10

The prophecy is in plain language. A literal-minded Pharisee could say, "Jesus fulfilled only the first part of the prophecy. Why didn't He fulfill the second, the important part? Anyone can sit on a donkey and call himself a king!" How can that Pharisee get out of this trap? His only way out is to shift from "the letter" to "the spirit," from a desire to defend himself to a determination to find the truth.

Zechariah's prophecy is given in two consecutive verses. There is no explanation about when or how peace and power will come. Common sense tells us that one fulfillment follows the other. But "common sense" and "divine sense" are usually in conflict. God could have made Jesus "mistake proof" by giving so many specific details about Him, no one could dare deny Him. But why didn't He? I have never seen or heard any theologian even raise this question, let alone answer it.

But Bahá'u'lláh's answer makes perfect sense. The metaphors separated the pure-hearted Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene from the obstinate, closed-minded, self-satisfied, and self-righteous theologians of the time like Annas and Caiaphas. God's strategy worked perfectly. People were tested by a few metaphors and separated! A few symbols accomplished what all the judges who have ever lived could not accomplish. This is phenomenal, a super miracle. It is like emptying an ocean with a spoon! ***Ponder a few hours, days, or even years, and see if you can find any other way by which you can separate and grade people.***

***O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*** Romans 11:33

The use of symbolic language to describe unusual or supernatural events is as common in sacred scriptures as is the use of literal language to describe ordinary events. It is difficult to open the Bible and not see an example on each page. Yet somehow many believers fail to recognize this most simple and glaring truth.

It is all like dreaming. In the dream world, everything looks real, even the most unearthly and incredible events. Only when we wake up do we realize the symbolic nature of our dreams. In the intense light of knowledge shed by the Glory of God upon all mysteries, we suddenly wake up and descend from the drifting and hazy clouds of dreaming to the solid earth of reality. After we have seen the light, we feel astonished that we could not have discerned the symbolic nature of the supernatural signs before.

The general principle by which God tests us is to do things contrary to our expectations, and to see how we react. This encounter brings out our true character, it reveals the hidden essence of our soul. Suppose you have wealth, and your children expect a share. To test them, you say, "I will give you nothing! Everything goes to charity!" and then wait for their reaction. One child may say, "You are not a savings account, but a soul. I will continue to love you as much, and even more!" Another child may feel cold and

aloof, another may seethe with anger, and still another be overcome with hatred, and even revenge. This simple test reveals the true nature of each child. Our Creator separates the sincere from the insincere by the same principle:

Behold how contrary are the ways of the Manifestations of God, as ordained by the King of creation, to the ways and desires of men! As thou comest to comprehend the essence of these divine mysteries, thou wilt grasp the purpose of God, the divine Charmer, the Best-Beloved. Thou wilt regard the words and the deeds of that almighty Sovereign as one and the same; in such wise that whatsoever thou dost behold in His deeds, the same wilt thou find in His sayings, and whatsoever thou dost read in His sayings, that wilt thou recognize in His deeds. Thus it is that outwardly such deeds and words are the fire of vengeance unto the wicked, and inwardly the waters of mercy unto the righteous.<sup>106</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

Could God have selected a person less qualified, by human standards, than Jesus to be the king of the Jews? Could He have sent them a Messiah who stood farther from their expectations, from their cherished hopes and desires? Imagine a homeless young man born to a unwed mother in a stable! Imagine such a person saying to the people around him, "I am the king you have been waiting for!" Why did God select such a Savior? To put the people to the test, to separate the spirit-lovers from the power-lovers, to distinguish the spiritual from the worldly.

God gave us many gifts, among them imagination and desire. Through them, we can build a mansion of faith and everlasting glory, or a trap of denial and everlasting shame. There is no limit to our spiritual liberty. With the potentials God gave us, we can turn our souls into saints or serial killers.

Note how a modern Jewish author completely ignores Jesus' supreme accomplishments over the course of history, how with his imagination and desire, he builds a trap of denial for his soul:

Jesus has hardly fulfilled any of the prophecies... He did not fulfill the prophecy which said that after the Messiah comes, the entire world will worship only the one God (Isaiah 11, Zechariah 14). He did not fulfill the prophecy that peace would reign throughout the world, and that swords would be beaten into plowshares (Isaiah 2). The prophecy that all of the world will call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and the nations of the world will no longer walk after the imagination of their evil hearts (Jeremiah 3) has still not been fulfilled. The gathering of all of the Jews into their own land, and the grant of a new heart and spirit into the Jews, and the absence of famine and the great increase in the fruit of the land (Ezekiel 36)—none of these have been fulfilled.

Since the main prophecies about the Messiah were not fulfilled by Jesus, and only such prophecies such as riding on a donkey, or getting beaten up were ostensibly fulfilled by him, why should one believe that Jesus was the Messiah?<sup>107</sup>

What strategy did the Jewish author use to discredit Jesus?

- He cited a few Hebrew prophecies.
- He interpreted them by his own narrow standards of right and wrong.

- He then passed judgment on Jesus by declaring that He did not fulfill those prophecies by those standards.

Isn't this exactly the same strategy some Christian theologians are using today in relation to the prophecies of the Second Advent and their fulfillment by Bahá'u'lláh? If Jesus can be discredited in spite of His incredible accomplishments over the course of twenty centuries, how much easier it is to discredit Bahá'u'lláh after only a short span of time—less than two centuries?

The lesson we can learn is this: “It is quite easy to fail in one’s spiritual test. It is quite easy to make, with one’s imagination and desire, a trap of denial. Why did Jesus warn us again and again that we should “Be on the alert” (Luke 21:30)? He knew it would be easy to fall into the trap of negligence and denial. Suppose a child must cross a street corner where cars suddenly appear. You say to the child again and again, “Look carefully! Be watchful!” Why would you repeat these warnings? Because you know it is so easy to fail to see the cars. That is exactly the reason Jesus repeated that warning. When it comes to our spiritual destiny, we too like children are inattentive. We are surrounded by an ever-changing panorama of new “toys” that attract all our attention! As soon as we buy one, a newer model is on display!

Consider this statement from Christian author M.J. Agee about “Watch:”

Scripture records that he [Jesus] said, “Watch,” 23 times. Watching was essential. Why? because it was the key that would unlock God’s secrets. It was so supremely important that Jesus warned the church, saying, “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:3). What an astonishing statement. Do you realize what it implies? Reread it and think about it. A secret is hidden there.

If we do not watch, we will not know when Christ will come upon us. But, what will we know if we do watch? Startling, isn't it? Inherent in Jesus' declaration is the reverse, that if we do watch, we will know when he will come upon us. Doesn't that give you a thrill?

This is so plain, it is incredible that we missed it for so long. It is like a trick question on an exam. You have to examine it closely or you will not fully understand everything it says. If you scan it fast, you could miss its hidden message time after time after time.<sup>108</sup>

Jesus' prophecy was perfectly fulfilled. The believers were not watching. They did not know “the hour” when Bahá'u'lláh came. The Spirit of God came upon them as a thief and left! Only a few who stayed awake at the dawn—the Dawnbreakers—found Him and followed Him.

This is a prime principle: God does not break His covenant of freedom. He does not close the door to those who wish to deny His glory. ***He leaves all doors open in all directions at all times.***

***Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it.*** Christ (Rev. 3:8)

Those who look for loopholes to reject or run away from the truth, they can find many. Their imagination can supply them with as many as their hearts desire. With the aid of

only one word, it can fill their hearts with fear. That word could be a name such as “Jesus,” “Moses,” or “Muhammad,” or a verse in which the word “beware,” or “false” appears.

I have known Christians who upon hearing about Bahá’u’lláh begin immediately to seek and knock and ask critical questions. They listen without fear and without any desire to look for loopholes. They show a sincere longing to know, to seek knowledge. I have also known Christians, who upon hearing the word Bahá’u’lláh, freeze in fear and immediately take a defensive position to prove me wrong. They ask no questions and do not listen with receptive hearts. They pass judgment in one instant.

We should never reject such believers. We should rather appreciate, respect, and love them with all our hearts and souls. They are doing what God allowed them to do. When we encounter hostility or closed minds, we should not get angry or upset, but rather smile and glorify God for His marvelous design of creation. Without diversity, life would be dull. Our ability to find reasons to justify and follow our desires, even to deny the One who made us, is the highest expression of God’s Will for our spiritual freedom. Understanding this principle helps us respect all people, no matter what spiritual choices they make. Respecting them is respecting God’s design of creation and looking down on them is looking down on God’s Wisdom.

It is so tempting to be judgmental. The recognition that they too are part of the plan protects us from this temptation. Without understanding the principle of freedom, we can never understand God. The infinite diversity among human beings is the evidence of this gift. Without it, we would all turn into slaves.

God has no desire to take His gift of freedom away from us. Note Bahá’u’lláh’s admonition to His followers:

Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God’s sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness.<sup>109</sup>

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.<sup>110</sup>

All human beings in love with God can find something contrary to their desires. Why? ***That is part of the design. It is intentional.*** In our search for truth, we should always recall the following statement from Bahá’u’lláh. It has the power to protect our faith and preserve our love for God:

***Behold how contrary are the ways of the Manifestations of God, as ordained by the King of creation, to the ways and desires of men!***<sup>111</sup>

Suppose you tell someone “I love you!” How can that love show itself? When the one you love does something you don’t like. The same is true with God.

As God put mountains, hills, and valleys on earth, so did He on the path of the spiritual journey. Someone is scared to leave his house, another conquers Himalayas, and then asks, “Where can I find a higher mountain to conquer?” The same holds true with our

relation with God. Our Creator wants to grade us, to separate the courageous from the coward, to distinguish His true lovers from mediocre lovers and liars. He wants to know who seeks security and safety in “the letter” and who seeks and finds the truth in “the spirit.”

***“God verily will test them and sift them.” This is the divine standard, this is the Touchstone of God, wherewith He proveth His servants. None apprehendeth the meaning of these utterances except them whose hearts are assured, whose souls have found favor with God, and whose minds are detached from all else but Him. In such utterances, the literal meaning, as generally understood by the people, is not what hath been intended. Thus it is recorded: “Every knowledge hath seventy meanings, of which one only is known amongst the people.”***<sup>112</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed.<sup>113</sup>

Bahá’u’lláh

Every supernatural sign, every prophecy with miraculous messages speaks clearly and loudly. It declares:

O seeker of truth! Do not judge me by my garment. I cherish inner meanings in my soul. ***I am clothed with symbols to test the depths of your dedication and love for truth.*** I am concealed to detect your faithfulness and obedience to this message: ***spiritual truths*** can be discerned only through ***a spiritual mind*** (I Cor. 2:13-14). My “letters” are deadly and sharp as arrows dipped in poison. They can end the life of your soul. Have you not heard that “The letter kills, but spirit gives life” (II Cor. 3:6)? Have you forgotten the history, the lesson of the Pharisees?

I am the beautiful Bride of heaven, wearing the veil of metaphor to try your courage, to test your wisdom and detachment, to see if you can break through the mere shells of words and letters to behold the glorious pearls of splendor and charm deep in my soul. I am hidden, even like a thief, behind similes and symbols to measure your devotion and desire to search for me. All you need to do is ***unwrap the cover, open the shell.*** Your reward is peace, joy, faith, freedom, knowledge, and everlasting life with your Lord. Sanctify your soul, then remove my veil to behold a Bride of beauty and wonder you have never witnessed.

The Glory of God, by His grace, has removed the veil of mysteries. Now you have the honor of seeing the face of this beautiful and “wondrous Bride” as clearly as the light of heaven:

***The mystic and wondrous Bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favor, been made manifest even as the resplendent light shed by the beauty of the Beloved.***<sup>114</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

***Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*** John 16:24

As you read, think about this question: *If someday God asked you, “Why did you not make an effort to look beyond the cover of words and over the clouds of symbols to see the most magnificent panorama of beauty and wonder?” what would be your answer?* Take a few moments, and think of a response before you read the next topic.

### ***What will happen to those who fail to “unwrap the cover”?***

Jesus used the parable of the Kingdom to answer this very question (Matt. 25:1-13). The Bridegroom, symbolic of Jesus, had a wedding to which people were invited. Ten young ladies decided to attend. Five of them carried enough oil to last through the night. They are called wise. What does the oil stand for? It is a symbol for spiritual wisdom. It is the source of celestial energy. The other five did not carry enough oil of wisdom. Their light went out prematurely. While they were away in search of oil, the Bridegroom arrived at midnight, the darkest hour, and entered His banquet. The five young ladies who had carried enough oil of wisdom followed Him into the banquet. And then the doors were shut. The five young ladies who had gone to get more oil arrived late for the banquet. They pleaded to enter, but their pleas were rejected. ***By neglecting their spiritual destiny, by failing to listen to the voice of wisdom, they lost the opportunity to be with their beloved Bridegroom in the banquet.***

God promises to treat us the way we treat Him. If we keep Him out of our hearts, He will keep us out of His banquet. Note the perfect harmony between the words of Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God, and Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God:

*...with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* Christ (Matt. 7:2)

*...he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.* Christ (Luke 12:9)

***God will verily do unto them that which they themselves are doing, and will forget them even as they have ignored His Presence in His day. Such is His decree unto those that have denied Him, and such will it be unto them that have rejected His signs.***<sup>115</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

***Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.***<sup>116</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

No individual has the right to judge another, to say that he or she will be unable to enter the heavenly banquet. We should leave all judgment to God. The purpose of referring to Jesus' parable is not to pass judgment on anyone, but to show that ***we can make choices, and that our choices have enduring consequences.***

The *Voice of Wisdom* often speaks to our conscience, but we ignore it. What it says is reasonable and fair; it makes perfect sense. What does it say? Let us listen to that Voice:

- ***Be humble, for humility opens the heart.*** God always loves and helps the humble.
- ***Don't assume that might makes right.*** Numbers don't prove anything. Remember that at the time of Jesus there were only a few Christians.

- ***Don't assume that your birth to a given parent with a given religion should prevent you from investigating another religion.*** "Seek and ye shall find" does not pertain only to the study of your own religion or denomination.
- ***Recognize that you were put on earth for a divine purpose which will endure for all eternity.*** Accomplishing that purpose should take priority over everything else in your life:  

But seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Christ (Matt. 6:33)
- ***If you fail to accomplish that purpose, if you fail to seek the Kingdom of God, you will face this enduring consequence: remoteness from God.***
- ***Knowledge cannot harm you.*** It can only enlighten and expand your vision. Continue to examine the vast spectrum of evidence Bahá'u'lláh presents to prove His divine mission.
- ***It is unwise to risk your eternal spiritual destiny by a little inattention.***
- This is the greatest time in human history. The Bridegroom is offering an urgent call to all sincere seekers and lovers of truth. ***He says now is the time to enter His banquet. Is it wise to ignore His call? Is it wise not to investigate?***

***Thinking constantly about the previous points is the essence of wisdom.*** That virtue is so critical, it separated the two groups of five maidens. That virtue is so precious, it determined who entered the Banquet of the Kingdom, who failed to enter. ***Wisdom does not risk the loss of the most glorious gift by taking a nap!***

***Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more.***<sup>117</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

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

***Our lives are over in a breath...Teach us to count how few days we have and so gain wisdom of heart.*** Psalms 90:9,12

As 'Abdu'l-Bahá notes we have a tendency to exaggerate our future accomplishments. This is unwise. All we have is now. We do not know even how this day will end:

***Do not boast about tomorrow, since you do not know what today will bring forth.*** Proverbs 27:1

Only those who put all their fears and illusions aside, who search for ***the Heavenly Thief*** with absolute humility, and judge independently of the opinions of others, will pass the most critical test of their lives. Only ***they*** will receive the crown of life:

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because ***when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life*** that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

## ***Does God's standards of speaking and fulfilling prophecy change?***

Prophecy has always been clothed or mingled with metaphors, parables, symbols, and similes. This is a well established fact. The fulfillment of prophecies of the first advent clearly proves this point. It is among the best established facts that in His First Advent Jesus did not fulfill **all** the Hebrew prophecies **literally**. Who then decided that in His **Second** Advent He must do so? Take time to investigate this critical point; check the entire Bible for yourself or ask someone you trust—your pastor or priest, a theology professor, a close friend—where did this idea come from? ***Try to find a single shred of evidence in the entire Bible that supports this belief, that shows God's way of offering prophecies has suddenly changed, that He used one standard of speaking when He spoke the prophecies of the First Advent, and another way when He spoke the prophecies of the Second.***

Who then started this idea of “double standards”? And why was it accepted by theologians and then taught to the masses of believers without questioning? Have you thought about this most significant point before? Why is it significant? ***Because it is the standard by which people accept or reject their Redeemers. Everything depends on standards. It is by standards that we separate gold from brass or a gem from a stone.***

Why do so many accept and repeat what they hear without asking for evidence? Why do they build their eternal destiny on other people's unverified assumptions and suppositions?

## ***How can I be sure Bahá'u'lláh is the One He claims to be?***

Jesus Himself answered this question:

***Watch ye therefore, and pray always...***

Christ (Luke 21:36)

We need to watch only for an event that can be missed. Until now, you may have missed the news of this most magnificent Event in human history. Now you know. The news is brought to your attention:

***Yes, Christ has come again!***

How can anyone speak with such confidence? The confidence can come only from obeying the Word of God, from practicing this most critical command, which is the heart and the soul of all prophecies:

***Watch ye therefore, and pray always...***

Christ (Luke 21:36)

I have been blessed with the honor of obeying Jesus' instruction with all my heart and soul. I have both **prayed**, and **watched**—paid attention to, searched, and investigated—the accuracy of the news of the return of our Lord and Master for over forty years. To facilitate the journey of the search for others I have written the result of my studies in six volumes. The evidence presented in those volumes prove, beyond any doubt, that the One

who has come in the name of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, fulfills the promise of Return uttered by Jesus of Nazareth some 2,000 years ago. ***As a result of this long period of searching and praying, I do not have the slightest doubt that Bahá'u'lláh is the Word of God, the Logos, the Spirit that appeared long ago in Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God.*** I invite you to read the evidence and judge for yourself. No one can do the searching for you. You have both the honor and the obligation to carry out your own independent investigation of truth.

***'Come!'*** say the Spirit and the bride. ***'Come!'*** let each hearer reply. ***Come forward,*** you who are thirsty; ***accept the water of life,*** a free gift to all those who desire it...He who gives this testimony speaks: ***'Yes, I am coming soon!'*** Christ (Rev. 22:17, 2)

***The waters of everlasting life*** have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men. Every single cup hath been borne round by the hand of the Well-Beloved. ***Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.***<sup>118</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

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

***Arise*** in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and ***seize thou the Cup of Life*** with the hands of confidence, and first drink thou therefrom, and proffer it then to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all faiths.<sup>119</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Yes, Jesus Christ has come again. He has come with the same glory and majesty of His First Advent. ***The next step for you is to investigate the good news,*** to live by this self-evident rule and divine directive:

***Ask,*** and it shall be given you; ***seek,*** and ye shall find; ***knock,*** and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Christ (Mark 7:7-8)

Be ready for action, with belts fastened and lamps alight...ready to let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. Christ (Luke 12:35-36)

Note how clearly Jesus indicates that at His coming we have a choice. We can either remain apathetic and complacent or take action. What action? Search for the Master, and open the door to Him. Note how clearly He points to our freedom to accept Him or reject Him. He says, ***"let Him in the moment He arrives and knocks."*** There should be no pause, no waiting for tomorrow. We should let Him into our hearts ***the very moment*** He arrives. Knocking is required only when there is a door that can block entry. What is the purpose of knocking? Announcing the arrival of an expected guest and receiving permission to enter. The passage clearly shows that Jesus does not come simply to rescue or lift "the good Christians" to heaven. ***He comes knocking on every door, on every heart to see who opens.*** He invites us to His Kingdom, should we keep our hearts and houses closed to Him?

***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.***<sup>120</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus repeats the same message in the Book of Revelation. Once again He shows that we have a choice. *We can refuse to hear His voice*, and *we can refuse to open our hearts*:

Behold, *I stand at the door and knock*. If anyone *hears My voice* and *opens the door*, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20

Jesus used a special parable for the people of our time: the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30). His purpose was to encourage openness and a spirit of adventure. In that parable, Jesus likens Himself to a Master who leaves for a long journey. Before leaving, the Master calls His servants and entrusts them with His possessions. To each of them He gives according to his capacity or talents. Two of the servants *double* their possessions by investing them. The third one *buries* his.

“A long time afterwards their master returns to settle accounts with them.” The two servants who had invested their possessions heard these glowing words from their Master: “You have proved trustworthy in a small way; I will now put you in charge of something big. *Come and share your master’s delight*.” What of the fearful servant who did not invest his possessions? He presented excuses, which showed lack of trust in his Master. He said, “*I was afraid and went out and hid my talent in the ground*.” His Master called him “*wicked and lazy*”; wicked because he pretended to trust Him in words but not in deeds, lazy because he would not take time to use his God-given talents for the very purpose for which they were given him. Then *the Master punished the fearful servant by taking his possessions away from him and shutting him out of His heavenly Kingdom*.

It is clear “investing” means using one’s talents and time in the light of divine guidance to find and follow the Truth—in this case the Master Himself. The severe punishment imposed on the fearful servant points to the severity of his infraction: denying the very Master who granted him the cherished possessions.

The fearful servant had Jesus Christ in his heart, His Name at least, but did not obey His command or trust His counsels. At last he lost even the very Name he had zealously guarded. The adventurous, enterprising servants also had Jesus Christ in their hearts. But because they trusted in His Command “*Watch!*”—which means nothing short of “Investigate!”—they persisted in praying and doubled their spiritual possessions. They kept the Christ of the Gospel, and to that added the Christ of this Age.

Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. Christ (Mark 4:25)

*If you are sincere in your desire to know the truth, make a commitment to invest every day a few minutes to the study of the Bahá’í Faith, until you come to a definite conclusion, to a verdict of either “true” or “false.”* Choose three different books to study. Read several pages from each of them every day:

- Take *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, 346 pages. It is essential to know what Bahá’u’lláh teaches and how He speaks. Do not try to read this book through. It is filled with gems of knowledge, truths Jesus did not teach because people of past ages could not bear them. As you read, ponder, meditate, and pray for insight and guidance.

- Take *Release the Sun*, 250 pages, a book about the history of the Bahá'í Faith.
- Take a book on prophecies, such as *Thief in the Night*, 304 pages, by William Sears. This book is written in an easy style. If you are ambitious and would like a more detailed presentation of prophecies, start with *I Shall Come Again*, 520 pages, written by the present author. It is the first of six volumes about the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

In addition to reading, *devote a few minutes every day to praying*. Ask God with all your strength to show you the truth, to give you a sign, to open your heart and soul. If praying were not needed, would Jesus recommend it? Praying is so critical, He says, "Pray *always*." To be blessed with the supreme honor of attaining His presence, *pray constantly*. Pray when you are walking. Pray when you are driving. Pray when you are bathing. Pray when you are working. Pray *before* you go to bed. Pray *after* you go to bed. Never stop praying until you have moved God to intervene and lift the curtain that prevents you from seeing His beautiful garden of glory.

Remembering God purifies and prepares our hearts, makes us worthy of His grace and glory:

Say: Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. *Remembrance of Me cleanseth all things from defilement*, could ye but perceive it.<sup>121</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The consequences of failing to choose what God has planned for us are ever-enduring:

*What advantage is there in the earthly things which men possess?* That which shall profit them, they have utterly neglected. *Erelong, they will awake from their slumber, and find themselves unable to obtain that which hath escaped them in the days of their Lord*, the Almighty, the All-Praised. Did they but know it, they would renounce their all, that their names may be mentioned before His throne.<sup>122</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

O peoples of the earth! God, the Eternal Truth, is My witness that streams of fresh and soft-flowing waters have gushed from the rocks through the sweetness of the words uttered by your Lord...*and still ye slumber*. Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation...<sup>123</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

*God, examine me...and guide me in the way that is everlasting.* Psalms 139:23-24

### ***What do Bahá'ís believe about "the rapture"?***

Many Protestants believe that Jesus comes and lifts or "raptures" all "the good" Christians to heaven. Everyone else stays behind to suffer, be destroyed, or be sent to everlasting fire. The idea causes much excitement and is especially popular among evangelical Christians.

Jesus used several parables to teach us how on His return He will "lift" the sincere Christians, how He will choose guests for His Banquet. Unfortunately, theologians completely ignore the relevance of these parables to the topic of the rapture. Failure to

understand the significance and relevance of these parables to the advent of Jesus has created this most dangerous illusion: “Do nothing; simply go to your church; pay your dues; and wait to be raptured!” Biblical teachings clearly convey these facts:

- The rapture is spiritual.
- It demands dedicated seeking and searching.
- It calls for absolute humility. Only those who lower themselves will be lifted to glory. Only “the last shall be first” (Matt. 19:30).
- It requires constant praying and pleading.

God has always lifted the spiritually ripe souls to the heaven of His presence. Note the spiritual language in the following verse. See how clearly the idea of being spiritually raptured is a common language of the Scriptures:

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms...*  
Ephesians 2:6

The verse refers to Christians who lived mostly in the Holy Land. It points to believers who had not yet died, yet their souls had *already* been “raptured” to glory. While on earth, they were *already* soaring in the heavenly realms.

Regard the soul as a fruit hanging on the tree of life. Our choice is to draw as much nourishment from the ground, attain as much purity through the rain, and gain as much radiance from the sun, until we become as ripe, ravishing, fragrant, and pure as possible.

But is there any value in hanging on a tree, ripening, and then falling to the ground? No, there is a higher purpose for the fruit. That purpose is to be picked by the gardener. God is that gardener. As soon as our soul ripens to His satisfaction, He picks us by His grace and lifts us to His Heaven. Consider these verses:

*...no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him.* Christ (John 6:65)

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

*A man can receive nothing at all, unless it is given him from Heaven.*  
John the Baptist (John 3:27)

*You did not choose Me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*  
Christ (John 15:16)

*We cause whomsoever We desire to be admitted into the gardens of our most holy, most sublime Paradise.*<sup>124</sup>  
The Báb

Note the phrase “by permission of its Lord” in this statement:

...the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart. “In a rich soil, its plants spring forth abundantly *by permission of its Lord*, and in that soil which is bad, they spring forth but scantily.”<sup>125</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

We can never pick ourselves from the “tree.” We can never lift our souls to heaven. Only God has that power. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains this point quite clearly. He uses the word “*attraction*” in place of “*lifting*” or “*drawing*.”

The flame of the fire of love, in this world of earth and water, comes through **the power of attraction** and not by effort and striving. Nevertheless, by effort and perseverance, knowledge, science and other perfections can be acquired; but only the light of the Divine Beauty can transport and move the spirits through the force of attraction. Therefore, it is said: “Many are called, but few are chosen.”<sup>126</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As soon as a soul ripens, the celestial Gardener picks it and lifts it to the heaven of His presence. Once again notice the words of Jesus:

***For many are invited, but few are chosen.***

Christ (Matt. 22:14)

As soon as you hear about the advent of Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God, you become one of “the invited.” How can you become one of “the chosen,” one of “the picked”? Only by turning to God, only by praying to Him and pleading with Him to pick you. Only by standing before Him with absolute selflessness and humility, only by unburdening your soul from all preconceived expectations and personal desires can you be lifted to the heaven of glory and honor:

***Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***

James 4:10

***Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power...***<sup>127</sup>

Bahá’u’lláh

***O SON OF MAN!***

***Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee.***<sup>128</sup>

Bahá’u’lláh

This prayer must be on everyone’s lips:

***O Lord...Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of [spiritual] death...*** Psalms 9:13

Can you “pick” or “choose” yourself by force, simply by saying, “I want to be a Bahá’í”? Only verbally, never spiritually. If you are unripe for the heavenly Banquet, you will be unable to stay. The Banquet will find you unpleasant to its taste; you will find the Banquet unpleasant to **your** taste. Does a drunkard enjoy a party of the sober, or a sober a party of the drunkard? God has made the souls in such a way that they will be unable to enjoy His Banquet, unless they are prepared.

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? ***He who has clean hands [good deeds] and a pure heart...***

Psalms 24:3-4

The point is this: to be “raptured” you must do your share by ripening your soul, by striving to become worthy of the Son of Man (Luke 21:34-36), and then waiting for Him with all your heart and soul, and pleading with Him with all your strength, to come and pick you. That is the purpose of praying. Be absolutely certain of this fact: ***You cannot choose God all by yourself. You cannot recognize the Glory of God all on your own. The choice is always mutual.*** The purpose of praying is to plead with God with all your heart and soul to make you worthy of His grace, to get you ready for His Banquet. You cannot change your heart by yourself. God is always involved even in the slightest alteration. All you can do is to pray and investigate, to seek and watch with all your heart and soul, and to plead with God with all your strength to help you become worthy of knowing and loving the One He has sent to offer you the water of everlasting life and to save you from “the Fire” of remoteness from the glories of Heaven.

To purify and prepare our hearts, we need God’s permission and blessings, we need His help. Consider the following statement from Bahá’u’lláh addressed to a seeker of truth:

It is incumbent upon thee, *by the permission of God*, to cleanse *the eye of thine heart* from the things of the world, that thou mayest realize the infinitude of divine knowledge, and mayest *behold Truth* so clearly that thou wilt need no proof to demonstrate His reality, nor any evidence to bear witness unto His testimony.<sup>129</sup>

This prophecy points to our time; it confirms Jesus’ instructions about the necessity of praying:

***Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.***

Joel 2:32

To receive God’s grace, to reach out for heavenly blessings in your spiritual journey, make a commitment to read the following prayer from Bahá’u’lláh every day. First, it points to the glorious station God has destined for His true seekers and believers. Then it glorifies God as the chooser, as the One who “*stirrest up*” and “*drawest*” to Himself anyone He pleases. And finally it presents an urgent plea to God to open the eyes of the people to recognize His Redeemer for this age.

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou hast, in Thine all highest Paradise, assigned unto Thy servants such stations that if any one of them were to be unveiled to men’s eyes all who are in heaven and all who are on earth would be dumbfounded. By Thy might! Were kings to witness so great a glory they would, assuredly, rid themselves of their dominions and cleave to such of their subjects as have entered beneath the shadow of Thine immeasurable mercy and sought the shelter of Thine all-glorious name.

I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the Beloved of the worlds and the Desire of all that have recognized Thee, by Thy name, through which ***Thou stirrest up whom Thou willest and drawest toward Thee whom Thou pleasest, to open the eyes of all that are dear to Thee, that haply they may not be veiled from Thee*** as the peoples of the earth are, but may outwardly perceive the signs and tokens of Thy power, and inwardly apprehend the things Thou didst ordain for them in the realms of Thy glory.

Potent art Thou to do Thy pleasure. Thou art the one alone Beloved in both this world and in the next. No God is there but Thee, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious.<sup>130</sup>

Now read the following parable of Jesus, which has a prophetic message, and see how God chooses guests for His Banquet. A parable demonstrates *spiritual* principles through a *literal* story:

Then Jesus began to talk to them again in parables. “The kingdom of Heaven,” he said, “is like a king who arranged a wedding for his son. He sent his servants to summon those who had been invited to the festivities, but they refused to come. Then he tried again; he sent some more servants, saying to them: ‘Tell those who have been invited, “Here is my wedding...and everything is prepared. Come along to the festivities.’” But they took no notice of this and went off, one to his farm, and another to his business. As for the rest, they got hold of the servants [new believers], treated them disgracefully, and finally killed them...

Then he said to his servants: ‘The wedding feast is quite ready, but those who were invited were not good enough for it. So go off now to all the street corners and invite everyone you find there to the feast.’ So the servants went out onto the streets and collected together all those whom they found, bad and good alike. And the hall became filled with guests. But when the king came in to inspect the guests, he noticed among them a man not dressed for a wedding. ‘How did you come in here, my friend,’ he said to him, ‘without being properly dressed for the wedding?’ And the man had nothing to say. Then the king said to the ushers, ‘Tie him up and throw him into the darkness outside [realms of remoteness from God]. ***There he can weep and regret his folly!***’ For many are invited but few are chosen.” Christ (Matt. 20:1-14)

As Jesus declares, the souls who fail to conform to God’s will, who refuse to prepare themselves and enter His beautiful spiritual Banquet during their earthly lives will at the end “***weep and regret***” their failure. Bahá’u’lláh makes a similar statement. He declares that, after death, “***they shall bemoan their plight.***”

...when breathing their last [their souls shall] be made aware of the good things that have escaped them, and ***shall bemoan their plight, and shall humble themselves before God.*** They shall continue doing so after the separation of their souls from their bodies.<sup>131</sup>

The promise of keeping the unprepared souls out of God’s grand Banquet should not be taken lightly:

The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to Me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from Me... whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure. My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence. Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the Lord.

Psalms 101:3-8

See also Psalms 95:10-11

Can a greater harm be imagined than destroying a person’s initiative and sense of responsibility? Literal-mindedness has done exactly that. It has completely neutralized the believers’ initiative and sense of responsibility to take any step, to have any desire for searching for their Lord. It has made them think that investigation has no value. It has led them to violate Jesus’ most urgent and critical commands: that we should look for Him, and that we should pray to become worthy of His presence. Most people neither respond to an invitation to investigate Bahá’u’lláh’s claim, nor pray to become worthy of the supreme honor of knowing Him.

Belief in the miraculous coming of Jesus Christ from the sky to rescue “the true” Christians is perhaps the biggest, the most dangerous, and the most destructive myth that has ever been created and perpetuated by literal-minded theologians. The consequences of following this seemingly innocent illusion, this widely-accepted myth, are enormous, far beyond anyone’s imagination. More than anything else it has brought to pass the fulfillment of this prophecy:

For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and **wander away to MYTHS**. II Timothy 4:3-4

My purpose, first and foremost, in writing this book has been to expose the obvious fallacy of this most destructive myth, so that all sincere Christians, all true followers and lovers of Jesus Christ will recognize their responsibility for looking for the Heavenly Thief, to take action before all their spiritual possessions are lost as a result of a seemingly simple negligence: Being literal-minded, instead of spiritual-minded. If this obstacle is removed, the light of Bahá'u'lláh will shine as brightly as the sun.

Happiness is not **waiting** to be lifted to heaven, it is **turning** the earth into heaven; it is not **wondering and worrying** about war, it is **working** for peace; it is not **resting** on a couch, it is **making** a couch.

O ye beloved of God! Repose not yourselves on your couches, nay bestir yourselves as soon as ye recognize your Lord, the Creator... **and hasten to His assistance**. Unloose your tongues, and proclaim unceasingly His Cause. **This shall be better for you than all the treasures of the past and of the future**, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth.<sup>132</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

This should be our daily prayer:

**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.** Psalms 25:4-5

### ***How does God motivate human beings to recognize and acknowledge His Messengers and Redeemers?***

Understanding this question is absolutely essential to understanding God, and our role and responsibilities towards Him. Literal-mindedness has its roots in this question. It can be traced to misunderstanding **the everlasting and never-changing laws that bind us to our Creator**.

The traditional interpretation of prophecies is based on a sudden change of these laws. Many theologians assume that all of a sudden God emerges out of hiding by putting on the most spectacular display of power and glory in the sky. What does this imply? That we can no longer deny Him, and no longer enjoy free will.

When we study sacred scriptures, we discover a Creator who has never forced anyone to believe in Him. Why would He suddenly change His ways and take away His gift of freedom? He certainly had a purpose in creating the earth and the sun, and in making us physical beings. Why would He suddenly change His purpose? Why would He want to deprive us of a most precious gift: our freedom of choice?

Sacred scriptures indicate that as an evidence of His respect for our freedom, God has always used various methods of motivation to move us from apathy to action, just as we do when we try to encourage a child to do his or her homework. The critical link of

freedom, which connects us to our Creator, will never be broken. Understanding this principle is absolutely essential. It stands at the heart of interpreting prophecies.

*Choosing Your Destiny* presents 15 different motivators or appeals God has used to inspire us and guide us in His ways. The great majority of them are positive. They invite, encourage, and admonish. But among them there is one motivator with some negative connotations. That motivator—fear of God—has been misunderstood and abused on a wide scale. It needs to be clarified. Passages such as the following are found abundantly in all sacred scriptures:

Blessed is the man that *feareth the Lord*. Psalms 112:1

**Say:** O people! The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come. **Fear ye God**, and withhold not yourselves from recognizing the One Who is the Object of your creation. Hasten ye unto Him. Better is this for you than the world and all that is therein. Would that ye could perceive it!<sup>133</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

**Fear ye God**, then observe equity in your judgment...If ye reject Him, by what evidence can ye prove your allegiance to the former Messengers of God...? What benefit do your possessions bestow upon you? What protection can your treasures afford you?<sup>134</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Misconception of “fear” has lowered the rank of religion and damaged the dignity of the divine? It has distorted God’s image from a loving and compassionate Creator to One who takes pleasure in punishing, even torturing, His helpless creatures. A true understanding of “fear” will help us recognize not only our relationships with God, but also the meaning of many end-time prophecies.

Fear of God, as intended in sacred Scriptures, refers to a rational—not an emotional—state of mind. It is a warning to prevent and protect. **It is a reminder to be aware, not a command to be afraid.** Its purpose is to awaken the voice of conscience to this warning: “Don’t be negligent; seek knowledge; find the facts; discover the truth. Every action has consequences. Do not live in the clouds of illusions and assumptions. God is just. You can harvest hereafter only what you plant here.” Its goal is to activate the cycle of seeking and knowing:

The fear of the Lord is *the beginning of knowledge*. Proverbs 1:7

It is a warning that moves the mind to discern the Mystery of God and acknowledge His supremacy. It is a call that awakens in the sleeping soul a sense of reverence and awe for divine authority and justice.

We must “fear” God, but never *live in fear* of God. It seems our language has failed to generate a special word for this purpose. Let us examine this point by examples. Should we fear breaking the laws of the land? Yes, because our awareness of the consequences of breaking them prevents us from breaking them. Imagine if such an awareness vanished from the conscience of humankind for even one day! We should fear breaking the laws of the land, but should we also *live in fear* of breaking them? Never!

Consider also this example. Should parents and children “fear” each other? What about married couples bound by love? All human beings must recognize and be keenly *aware* that they have duties and responsibilities toward each other, and that if they ignore them,

there will be consequences. In this sense, “fear” is not only healthy, but essential. It generates trust by enhancing predictability. Like love, it binds people together. In fact, *this kind of fear* is inseparable from love.

Consider still another example: Should we fear fire? Yes, but never *live in fear* of fire. The first is wisdom, the second folly. In fact, fear of God, Bahá’u’lláh teaches, is the essence of wisdom. This wisdom, motivated by awareness of consequences, moves us to discern perfect and ultimate justice in the universe. It leads us to be conscious of the ever-watchful and ever-recording eye of Heaven.

***Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.***  
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

According to the Book of Psalms, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (14:1). Why? Because such a person lives in a state of spiritual ignorance—unaware of the everlasting consequences of denial.

Fear of God is the divine discipline. Its absence breeds chaos. This is how our Creator designed us, and that is why He devotes so much of His scriptures to this topic. There is an intimate link between “fear of God” and wisdom. They are virtually synonymous:

The *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of *wisdom*.  
Psalms 111:10

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

The essence of *wisdom* is the *fear* of God...<sup>135</sup>  
Bahá’u’lláh

Wisdom helps us glow with the glory of God and bask in His light:

***A man’s wisdom maketh his face to shine.***  
Ecclesiastes 8:1

Every time we see the word “fear,” we should play a record with this message in our minds, “Be wise; do not live just for today. Do not look for safety in numbers. Find all the facts before making a choice. For every choice has consequences if not here, hereafter for sure. You have only one chance. Don’t waste it. Take advantage of every moment to gain the greatest gifts that God may bestow on humans. If you fail, you will experience regret and shame.”

How should we communicate with each other? God is our perfect Teacher and Model: “***Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect***” (Matt. 5:48). In this book I have used God’s Word as a Model. I have stated the facts candidly and openly, with excitement and enthusiasm. I have tried to make you aware of the everlasting consequences of recognizing or rejecting Bahá’u’lláh. I have tried to give reasons for the faith in my heart with a sense of love and respect for all seekers and lovers of truth. I have followed this counsel:

***Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...***  
I Peter 3:15

But in no way have I tried to instill the slightest fear in your heart. My purpose is to awaken your conscience, and that of every citizen of our planet, to the dawning of the greatest Day in human history. I have tried to rekindle your awareness of your responsibility to search for truth, of your freedom to make choices, and the consequences

of those choices. This awareness of consequences is not fear; it is the essence of wisdom. Let me illustrate the point by an example. Suppose you read the following message:

Investigating the Bahá'í Faith is the most critical test of your life. If you knew all the consequences of this test, you would instantly obey, with absolute determination, Jesus' command that upon hearing the news of His return, you must instantly begin to search, and to pray constantly to become worthy of His grace. If you could see the consequences of either failing or passing your test, you would not put it off, you would instantly begin to study and prepare your soul for this most critical choice of your life. You would act like a patient in need of emergency care. You would not say, "Perhaps tomorrow." ***You would know that spiritual life matters even more than the physical, for the body ends, but the spirit never ends.***

What kind of impact did the preceding appeal have on your soul? Did it make you live ***in fear***, or did it make you ***keenly aware*** of your choices and responsibilities? Did it make you fearful, or did it move you to say, "Yes, this message really matters to me! I should look into it!"? I have not known anyone who started having bad dreams or anxiety attacks, after hearing such motivating messages. How do people, as a rule, respond to them? Those who are receptive, begin to investigate; those who are not, brush them aside instantly, and go about their business, as if they never heard them. Such motivators do not violate in any way our cherished freedom. This is how God likes it, and the way He has spoken to us throughout the ages.

I do not think our Creator wants any human being—even the worst criminals—***to live in fear*** of Him. He simply wants us to know that we cannot get away with anything, that absolute and ultimate justice rules the universe, that every action has consequences, that we can escape the police force but never the power of Providence, that we can deceive our government but never the All-Knowing and All-Seeing God, that we can elude the Internal Revenue Service but never the External Reviewer of all souls.

Instead of teaching us fear, our Creator asks us to be adventurous, to live with courage. The parable of the talents clearly proves this point. Jesus' fearful follower is condemned with the words "lazy and wicked" (Matt. 25:26). It is hard to justify the relevance of the word "wicked" in that context, to any fearful person except the one who out of fear of being deceived refuses to obey the Master's command to "seek" and to trust His reassurance that "ye shall find." Note how Jesus pleaded with the fearful Jews who had hearts as little as that of a chicken:

***Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.***  
Christ (Luke 12:32)

It all seems incredible. God extends His hand with the crown of everlasting glory and honor. All we need to do is to reach out with our hearts and souls and receive it, and yet we run away as if we have seen a lion, a bear, or a snake:

Woe to those who yearn for the day of the Lord! What will this day of the Lord mean for you? Darkness and not light! As if a man were to flee from ***a lion***, and ***a bear*** should meet him; or as if on entering his house he were to rest his hand against the wall, and ***a snake*** should bite him.  
Amos 5:18-19

*Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened* [receive everlasting life]?<sup>136</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Our Creator has condemned spiritual fear in the harshest words: It lies at the root of many evils. It is the first line of defense people have used to deny God's great Redeemers. As the Scriptures teach, the spiritually coward experience two deaths, one death in this life by being deprived of the joys of true faith and obedience to God's laws, and again another in the next kingdom as a result of remoteness from God:

I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty; it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious; and I will be his God and he a son to me.  
*But the legacy for cowards...is the second death...* Revelation 21:6-8

The power of fear is always astonishing. I have known some wonderful people who came to Bahá'í meetings and found everything reasonable. But as soon as they told their friends or relatives about their new spiritual adventure, their journey came to an abrupt end. A few words such as, "You are being deceived," or "Many deceivers will come in my name" (Matt. 24:5) caused them to freeze instantly in fear. Those few words exert more influence on many souls than mountains of evidence, reassurance, and commandments from God that they should search and seek. Jesus' prophecies clearly show that He was well aware of the devastating power of fear working in the lives of many Christians of today.

There are two kinds of fear: positive and negative. Positive fear is inviting; negative fear is discouraging. Positive fear depends on awareness of consequences; negative fear depends on sheer avoidance and ignorance. Here are the kind of messages the two categories of motivators send:

#### ***Positive Fear***

Ignorance is dangerous; what you don't know can harm you  
Be aware of the consequences of your choices  
Seek knowledge; study new ideas  
Trust God. He will protect you  
You can separate truth from falsehood  
You can protect your faith by being open-minded and by listening to other points of view  
You must listen to God's commandment that the faithful believers must always search for truth with *a critical mind*  
You must be self-directed

#### ***Negative Fear***

Fear those outside your faith  
You will burn forever if you change course  
Stay with "tried and true"  
Trust your pastor, priest, and fellow-believers around you  
You cannot tell the difference between true and false  
You can protect your faith by avoiding non-believers  
Remember the warning that there will be many deceivers  
The safest way is to wait for the majority to make a move and then follow them

God loves all human beings dearly. He wants all of them close to Him. He wants all of them in His heavenly Kingdom, and He uses every approach, every persuasion, every appeal to get them there, except forcing them, except actually picking them up and putting them there. His appeal to "fear" is a reminder to us that He cares. It also reminds

us that He is just, that every act has consequences. ***His use of strong warnings to heed His call is the highest expression of His love for inattentive human beings.***

***...the Lord disciplines those he loves.***

Proverbs 3:12

***Whoever is wise will observe these things, and understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.***

Psalms 107:43

A good teacher encourages his students to learn and love knowledge just for the sake of knowing. He knows some of them rejoice in learning and growing.

***I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches...I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.***

Psalms 119:14,16

But a good teacher also knows that there are always some students who will not be motivated by love for truth and knowledge. To them he says: “Remember the letter grade: F. Do you want that letter on your transcript?” No doubt this warning—awareness of consequences—moves some students to take their responsibility more seriously. To be warned and learn is better than not be warned and not learn. To be warned and come close to God is better than not be warned and not come close.

To motivate us, to move mountains of apathy, God uses several powerful metaphors, such as, “eternal life,” “death,” and “the fire.” One of these metaphors—the fire—has caused special problems. It has been misunderstood and misused for centuries.

The meaning of “the fire” is one of those “hidden things” that Bahá’u’lláh “has brought to light.” ***“The fire” is not a scorching flame, but a burning fervor to attain the presence of our supreme Beloved and Creator.*** We can experience that very “fire” here on earth. All we need to do is to turn away from God.

The joy of knowing and loving God and acknowledging His latest Teacher and Redeemer is “the water of life.” The absence of this knowledge and this joy creates a fire in the soul, that can be quenched only by “the living waters” of faith. God’s purpose in using such a strong metaphor is not to frighten, but to awaken and move the sleepers, the dreamers, and the inattentive.

Another metaphor used abundantly in sacred Scriptures is “***eternal life***” for devoted believers and “***death***” for deniers. Again the purpose of such a strong metaphor is to move people from apathy to action. Like the leaven, these powerful metaphors stir the solid and lifeless hearts of humans to rise and reach out for celestial blessings.

***But he who takes warning will save his life.***

Ezekiel 33:5

Our Creator loves us dearly and wants all of us to come spiritually alive:

***“For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies [spiritually],” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”***

Ezekiel 18:32

***Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the Lord God of hosts will be with you...***

Amos 5:14

***I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life...the Lord is your life.***

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

In this age, as in all ages, our Creator teaches us, with perfect clarity and emphasis, that once again we have a chance either to receive the gift of a new spiritual life by recognizing Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, or refuse that gift by ignoring that Glory—by stepping aside. Like all great Messengers and Redeemers of the past, Bahá'u'lláh offers the grave warning of “death” to deniers, and the celestial gift of “eternal life” to all devoted seekers and receivers:

***Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been re-born in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live.***<sup>137</sup>

Consider also Bahá'u'lláh's loving and gentle words of encouragement:

***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 [happiness] 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.***<sup>138</sup>

Those who turn away from God and His Redeemers will not be destroyed. They are called “dead” because they are deprived of *spiritual* life. Again the purpose of the metaphor is to show the glory and honor of turning to God and His great Redeemers, and the eternal consequence of turning away. Failure to understand the meaning of “*the fire*” and “*death*” is one more example of ***an epidemic spiritual disease called: literal-mindedness.***

Failure on the part of theologians to be open-minded and spiritual-minded has damaged and disfigured the glorious gift of faith in many ways:

- It has distorted God's image from a caring Creator to a harsh dictator.
- It has caused rifts between religion and science.
- It has minimized people's confidence to search and find the truth for themselves. It has created the false impression that people should simply wait for some supernatural Hand, which will suddenly come from above and lift them to heaven.
- It has undermined the significance of many positive motivators God has used to move us to action, to encourage us to seek and search for His supreme Saviors and Redeemers.

### ***What is the value and relevance of miracles as an evidence of divine distinction?***

If Jesus would not come down from the sky with great power and glory to rescue the world, why would He not at least perform some miracles—such as raising a dead person to life before TV cameras—to prove His divine distinction? Would not such a display of power over the laws of nature impress the viewers, help them recognize His hidden glory? The following statement from Jesus responds to that question; it discounts and

discredits the value of any miracle; it shows that the display of supernatural powers has no relevance to God's plan of creation:

***If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*** Christ (Luke 16:31)

What did "Moses and the Prophets" say that could convince the Jews to accept Jesus? What were they told, and why did they not listen? Moses said that God would send them a Prophet like Himself (Deut. 18:18). If the Jews had searched with a pure spirit, they would have discovered the same spiritual distinction in Jesus as they had discerned in Moses. The discovery of this similarity—a hidden and most exquisite miracle—requires spiritual gifts, such as wisdom, sincerity, purity, faith, dedication, insight, and love for truth. A visual miracle—such as seeing a book or a bird turned into a human being—requires only a healthy eye. It is all a matter of looking.

But why not give people a little help through their eye balls? To respond to this question, we need to understand God's design of creation. According to that design, our sense of appreciation comes from striving. The gift of faith is a precious pearl, not cheap gravel thrown at worldly, selfish, closed-minded, and apathetic people. It is the most exquisite treasure saved only for the sincere seekers and lovers of truth.

***The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.*** Christ (Matt. 13:44)

Who is worthy of finding a treasure? The one who *waits* for a miracle, or the one who *makes* a miracle by using his or her potential to discover the Heavenly Thief, hidden in the dark of a confusing world, concealed in the drifting clouds of illusions and false expectations generated by the minds of fallible beings.

But why would miracles, as Jesus indicates, *not* convince people? Why would even raising a dead body *not* move the masses from disbelief to belief? Because our relationship with God is purely spiritual, not material. As God is a spirit, so are we. Material means cannot and should not be used to create spiritual bonds. Each has its own sphere, purpose, and function:

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

Touching the heart of a human being by miracles makes as much sense as riding a bicycle or jumping a battery by sheer mental power. Loving a new Redeemer requires *spiritual* awareness, not *physical*; it needs *wisdom*, not *visual* acuity. It requires the genuine desire of the heart, not gymnastics in heaven. It has to do with insight, not eyesight. It is all a matter of heart and soul.

Compare our love for God with love in marriage. What kind of spouses would *a rich* man or woman attract? All kinds of people. Because wealth has unique magnetic powers. Any rich eligible person in search of a lasting relationship must deal with this dilemma, so that the attraction comes for genuine love, and not for jewelry.

The powerful metaphor used in the following verse alone shows God's infinite aversion for breaking the very laws He has created. Loving God through the glamour of the magical and the miraculous is an insult to His glory. It is a sign of being unfaithful—in our heavenly and everlasting reunion with Him:

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

The strength and the tone of the preceding verse alone show that even the thought of hoping, or waiting, or wishing for a miracle is sinful. For asking is always preceded by thinking. Seeking a miracle is a serious insult to God. It is like saying to someone, “I will marry you only after seeing your savings account!” Take a few moments and ponder: How would you feel if the person you hope to marry set that condition for you? Would it not take the joy out of the relationship? Would it not hit at the very roots of love? Would it not twist the relationship from the spiritual to the material, from marital bliss to monetary business?

Adultery is breaking the vow of loyalty to a spouse. Spiritual adultery is doing the same to God. It is breaking our covenant with Him. That covenant is this: The Creator sends Redeemers. We are responsible to look for them, acknowledge them, and obey them. Those who abandon their responsibility for finding the truth by virtue of their own independent efforts, those who expect God to save them through some miraculous drama, according to Jesus’ own testimony, are committing spiritual adultery, are showing lack of loyalty to God. Adultery, whether physical or spiritual, is always tempting, but only for people who are in an unhealthy relationship. It points clearly to lack of genuine love.

The metaphor of being married to God is not far-fetched. We find it in Hebrew scriptures. Bahá’u’lláh uses the same metaphor. He refers repeatedly to Himself as “*the Beloved*” and to us as “*the lovers*:”

The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like *lovers of His light!* Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame. O ye that thirst after Him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and *hasten to embrace your Beloved.*<sup>139</sup>

*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?<sup>140</sup>

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, *it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is inviting them to attain His presence.* Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favor; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace...Lift up the veil that obscureth your vision, and dispel the darkness with which it is enveloped, that *ye may gaze on the naked beauty of the Beloved’s face,* may behold that which no eye hath beheld, and hear that which no ear hath heard.<sup>141</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá uses a similar metaphor:

O ye beloved of God! O ye children of His Kingdom! Verily, verily, the new heaven and the new earth are come. The holy City, new Jerusalem, hath come down from on high in the form of a maid of heaven...*prepared for reunion with her lovers on earth*...Rejoice, then, *O ye beloved of the Lord* and His chosen ones.<sup>142</sup>

This new city radiates with Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God. The time of waiting has passed. The beautiful Bride of heaven has made herself ready:

***Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.*** Revelation 19:7

One of the seven angels...said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride" [the new Revelation]...And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ***It shone with the glory of God [Bahá'u'lláh]...The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light.*** Revelation 21:9-11,23

God is our most loyal Beloved, who never abandons us. What an honor to have such a Beloved! What a glory to be His intimate lover! Imagine the magnitude of loss, the enormity of dishonor, and the unbearable shame of rejecting such a Beloved! Imagine also the evasive actions, the excuses so many people use to run away from their most faithful Lover and Friend!

O CHILDREN OF NEGLIGENCE AND PASSION!

***Ye have suffered My enemy to enter My house and have cast out My friend, for ye have enshrined the love of another than Me in your hearts. Give ear to the sayings of the Friend and turn towards His paradise. Worldly friends, seeking their own good, appear to love one the other, whereas the true Friend hath loved and doth love you for your own sakes; indeed He hath suffered for your guidance countless afflictions. Be not disloyal to such a Friend, nay rather hasten unto Him. Such is the day-star of the word of truth and faithfulness, that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of the Lord of all names. Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the word of God, the Help in peril, the Self-existent.***<sup>143</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Our Creator has no interest in attracting insincere, worldly, disloyal, and pretentious guests and lovers to His banquet. He wants only souls who are spiritually pure, ripe, and fragrant. As the following parable shows, He does not keep any dead or diseased "fish" that may enter into His basket:

...the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. ***Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age.*** Christ (Matt. 13:47-49)

By showing miracles, by displaying His earthly powers, the heavenly Host invites all kinds of earthly people, all kinds of insincere and pretentious believers to His presence. Miracles fascinate, amuse, entertain, astonish, and even force beliefs, but they do not ripen the souls from within.

Just like a tree that can grow both by sending its roots deep into the soil to draw nourishment, and by turning its leaves to the sun, so can we ripen our souls both by seeking and searching for truth, and by turning our lives to God, both by striving and by praying for His blessings every moment of our lives. This design of creation allows the gift of faith to reach only the **true** seekers and lovers of God, only those worthy of the supreme glory and honor of receiving it. God does not want to attract an insincere lover who comes to Him, not for the relationship, but for the dowry!

God's concealment in the clouds of glory allows every human being to reveal what lies hidden in his or her soul.

*The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.*

Christ (Matt. 12:35)

***Christian leaders and scholars use the Bible as the only basis for their beliefs. How can they fail to recognize the meaning of hundreds of prophecies fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh?***

Consider the following quotation from a Christian publication. It offers a classic example of the way each of the Christian denominations believe they are the true Christians and offer the true interpretation of the Bible:

Repeatedly the Scriptures refer to the body of true Christian teachings as “the truth,” and Christianity is spoken of as “the way of the truth.” (I Tim. 3:15; 2 John 1; 2 Peter 2:2) Because [our leaders and members of our denomination] ***base all of their beliefs***, their standards for conduct, and organizational procedures ***on the Bible***, their faith in the Bible itself as God’s Word gives them the conviction ***that what they have is indeed the truth...***

In pointing out the meaning of symbolic language in the Bible, ***they let the Bible provide its own explanation***, instead of giving their theories as to its significance. (I Cor. 2:13). ***Indications as to the meaning of symbolic terms are usually found in other parts of the Bible.*** (As an example, see Rev. 21:1; then, regarding the meaning of “sea,” read Isaiah 57:20.) [Emphasis added.]<sup>144</sup>

I have read and reviewed books and articles written by numerous authors from many denominations. Not once have I seen any one of them quote the passages that disqualify theologians in making an exclusive claim on knowing the true meaning of prophecies. The lines of reasoning among virtually all Christian denominations and all theologians are identical. Virtually all of them base their views on four assumptions, one that is defensible, and three others that are not:

- The Bible is the truth.
- The Bible, or the context of every prophecy, explains itself.
- If the literal makes “good” sense, then it is literal.
- Our denomination follows the Bible’s explanation of itself. We are loyal only to what the Bible itself teaches.

How can theologians claim that the Bible explains itself? ***They always pick two or three easy examples as evidence***, as demonstrated in the previous passage about the meaning of “sea.” In the preceding quotation, the Christian author stated that Isaiah 57:20 offers the key to the meaning of the word “sea” in Revelation 21:1. Let us examine those verses. Here is the puzzling verse:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any *sea*. Revelation 21:1

And here is the key:

But *the wicked are like the tossing sea*, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. Isaiah 57:20

As you can see, the author selected a rather *easy example*, although a literal-minded theologian would disagree with this symbolic interpretation. He would simply say that in God's new world, there will be no dirt and therefore no need for water or any sea.

Let me cite one more example. *The Christian Broadcasting Radio* has a live program in which people call questions. Sometime ago a listener asked a famous pastor, "How can we tell if a prophecy is literal or symbolic?" The pastor's immediate and unqualified response: "We can tell from the context of each verse." He then offered this example: "***Out of His [promised Redeemer's] mouth came a sharp double-edged sword***" (Rev. 1:16). His conclusion: "It is obvious this prophecy cannot be literal." I doubt anyone would disagree with him.

The pastor made the most critical issue in the Scriptures—the standard of separating the literal from symbolic—sound as simple as counting one's fingers. He offered no acknowledgment of humility such as, "Sometimes it is difficult to know." He made no reference to, "We all sin (err) and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). He made no mention of the seven seals that are placed on the Word of God (Rev. 5:1-5). He made no acknowledgment that no one—except the supreme Redeemer of our time—is worthy even to look at the sealed scrolls, let alone break the seals that protect them. He made no reference to the terrible wars waged by theologians about the meaning of prophecies, as testified by Dr. Lightner. He made no mention of Jewish rabbis who continue to this day to disagree with Christians about the meaning of a word as simple as "king," or what can or cannot be done legally on the Sabbath.

He spoke with such ease, confidence, and self-assurance, his listeners were sure he knew perfectly what he was talking about. They basked in his self-confidence and knowledge, and seemed fully satisfied. They heard what their "itching ears" wanted to hear (II Tim. 4:3-4). No one challenged the popular and extremely skillful pastor—the one who has mastered the art of pleasing people to perfection.

Josh McDowell, a Christian scholar who has published several books about the evidence for Jesus, presents this widely-accepted standard for knowing which prophecies are literal, which prophecies symbolic: "***If the literal makes good sense, seek no other sense lest you come up with nonsense.***"<sup>145</sup> Dr. David Reagan confirms the same rule, "***If the plain sense makes sense, I would look for no other sense, lest I end up with nonsense.***"<sup>146</sup> This is the exact standard the Jews used at the time of Jesus. They had suffered so long. Could anything make a better sense to them than receiving a Messiah who would deliver them from their misery? Christian scholars believe that this widely-quoted prophecy from Isaiah refers to Jesus:

- For unto us a child is born...***the government will be on his shoulder***...(9:6).
- Of the increase of ***his government and peace*** there will be no end (9:7).

- ***He will reign on David's throne*** and his kingdom...***forever*** (9:7).

None of these events is supernatural (like descending from heaven), yet Jesus did not fulfill any one of them literally either in His lifetime or even later. Consider the numerous wars waged in Europe between Christian governments. The literal interpretation of the prophecy makes good sense. How can a literal-minded Jew, who believes that this prophecy points to the Messiah, reconcile its fulfillment with Jesus? Only by shifting from human preference to divine purpose; only by getting out of the trap of literal-mindedness, only by escaping from the confining cage of “the letter” into the glorious garden of “the spirit.”

Consider also this prophecy:

***...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction...***

II Thess. 1:7-9

Does it make “good” sense to believe that Jesus will come from the sky with thousands of angels to wage war against the majority of humankind? Imagine Jesus standing on one side, like a military commander, and issuing orders to His angels to attack, kill, or burn millions of people! This is unimaginable, yet to many theologians it makes perfect sense. Does it make any sense to believe that Jesus Christ—the absolute essence of all love and compassion—comes with fire to “take vengeance” and destroy those who were not born to Christian families or did not learn about God—such as millions of Chinese, Japanese, Russians, French, German, Indians, Arabs, Americans, Eskimos, and Africans? Does it make sense to believe that Jesus—the absolute essence of gentleness, the One who asked us to forgive “seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22)—will come to take the lives of all those who do not obey His Gospel, which would include not only all the followers of all other great religions of the world but also the majority of Christians? If we follow the literal rule, it is hard to imagine anyone can escape Jesus’ scorching fire. Consider just the number of Christians who break the law of divorce and the law of chastity. How can the rule of “good sense” or “plain sense” explain the preceding prophecy?

If the Bible or the context of each prophecy explains itself, if “making good sense” can be our guide, why do we hear statements such as the following from some famous Christian theologians?

The prophets had clearly declared that the Messiah, when He came, would be rejected... Yet neither the rabbis, who studied the Scriptures daily, nor the disciples, to whom Christ had tried to explain these things, comprehended what the prophets had foretold... ***Today a similar confusion surrounds the Scriptures that pertain to Christ's return to planet earth. Even among evangelicals there is not only disagreement on the subject but blindness to many of the pertinent prophecies.***<sup>147</sup>

Does it make good sense to take the Genesis’ story of creation literally? Does it make sense to believe that the universe came into being only six to ten thousand years ago, when we can look into the sky and see light that has been traveling billions of years?

In my library I have a book called: *Four Views on Hell*.<sup>148</sup> It is 198 pages of debate by distinguished Christian scholars about the meaning of ***hell-fire***. The debaters use the

same source, the Bible, and yet reach opposite conclusions. To some literal thinkers, it makes perfect sense to torture people for ever. Here is how one of those thinkers portrays the pain:

The body will be full of torment as full as it can hold, and every part of it shall be full of torment. They shall be in extreme pain, every joint of 'em, every nerve shall be full of inexpressible torment. They shall be tormented even to their fingers' ends. The whole body shall be full of the wrath of God. Their hearts and their bowels and their heads, their eyes and their tongues, their hands and their feet will be filled with the fierceness of God's wrath. This is taught us in many Scriptures...<sup>149</sup>

If a concept such as "hell-fire" confuses theologians, would not the meaning of prophecies confuse them even more, for they are as a rule concealed in symbols? It is hard to imagine a truth more evident than this. Why then is it not acknowledged by religious leaders? Why do so many come to Bahá'u'lláh with iron-cast, preconceived notions of how He should have fulfilled the prophecies!

Consider another example: Millions of Christians believe in "the rapture"; millions of others vehemently deny it. Both groups read *the same* Bible, but come to *opposite* conclusions. What makes *good* sense to one group, often makes *no* sense to another. Here is a statement from a theologian who rejects the rapture, who believes that instead of waiting to be lifted to heaven, we must learn to bring heaven to earth:

***You can study books about going to heaven in a so-called "rapture" if that turns you on. We want to study the Bible to learn to live and to love and to bring heaven to earth.***<sup>150</sup>

Note how another theologian, who does believe in the rapture, responds:

***Just imagine: We are going to bring heaven to earth! What blind pride! Some of the statements by these men are so contrary to Scripture that one finds it difficult to believe that those who make them have even read the Bible.***<sup>151</sup>

Hundreds of examples can be given from Genesis to Revelation to show that often human "sense" and divine "sense" do not conform. These verses describe the people of all ages:

***...how can My way accord with thine?***<sup>152</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

...we speak of *God's secret wisdom*, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ***None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*** I Cor. 2:7-8

If God had not intervened, even Paul, who made the preceding statement, could not have understood "*God's secret wisdom*." He would have continued to persecute Christians. What was he like as a Jew? The following passage, written by a Christian author, offers a glimpse of the state of his heart before the Spirit of God transformed him from the literal-minded and closed-minded *Saul* to the spiritual-minded and open-minded *Paul*:

A young Pharisee scholar named Saul lived in a world of black and white. He looked out at life through the Torah, the law. Everything related to rule or ritual in some way. Saul's mind was quick to grasp the complexities of Israel's laws. He had become an expert in interpreting and observing the many traditions of his religion. His life was carefully confined by actions that would maintain his ceremonial purity.

So Saul was not at all happy when a new Jewish sect arose that challenged his cherished traditions. The followers of the rabbi Jesus seemed nothing but troublemakers. Saul couldn't fit the dynamic movement of the Spirit into his narrow world of black and white.

Saul the scholar turned into Saul the persecutor. He heard about an active group of Christians in Damascus and decided to lead a party there to imprison them. Heretics were simply too dangerous to tolerate.<sup>153</sup>

***The example of St. Paul teaches us, even requires from us, to descend to a state of absolute humility.*** If the brilliant Paul could, as a Pharisee, miss his Lord, could not Christian theologians of our time do the same? If Paul were alive today, He would definitely see the same Spirit in Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, as He has seen in Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God. What about Saul? He would have turned against Bahá'u'lláh as dogmatically as he turned against Jesus.

Who can judge what makes “good” sense or “no” sense? Look around and see if most of what people do makes ***any*** sense. Further, if the wisdom of the wise has vanished (Isaiah 29:14), then where are the good judges who can separate “good sense” from “no sense”?

The belief that the Bible explains itself is quite popular. Let us consider one more example. Consider this statement from George Vandeman, noted Christian author and orator:

We only confuse ourselves when we bring our own baggage into the study of the Word. How much better to accept what God offers and follow where He leads... ***Just how do we mine the treasure of God's Word? By comparing scripture with scripture. One text unlocks the meaning of another.***<sup>154</sup>

To prove his point, Mr. Vandeman offers two simple examples. By comparing similar verses, he shows that the word “beast” represents “a kingdom,” and the word “waters,” “the masses of people.” No one can deny that the Bible does ***sometimes*** explain itself, but not always.

Let us now see how theologians ignore their own rules, when those rules contradict their own theories. Let us now apply this same rule—that the Bible explains itself—to perhaps the most significant and puzzling prophecy of the Second Advent: the coming of Christ from the sky:

***They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven [sky]...***

Christ (Matt. 24:30)

Can the Scripture in this case explain itself? Do we have a verse that can decode the word “heaven” in the preceding prophecy? Yes, we have several. Consider this one:

***I have come down from heaven [sky]...***

Christ (John 6:38)

See also John 3:31-32; 3:13

We know Jesus was born to Mary. Why then did He say that He had come down from the sky? Every author has a unique way of writing. If we are puzzled by a word or a sentence, we study his works to decipher the mystery. Here we have a perfect example from the same heavenly “Author” Jesus Christ, who used the same word—sky—symbolically about His First Advent. We have thousands of other symbolic uses of

ordinary words throughout the Bible. Is it then unreasonable to believe that “sky” is one of them, especially when we have an identical example that is not puzzling at all? Thus if we use theologians’ own guideline that “*we should let the Scripture explain itself*,” we arrive at a clear meaning of “heaven” or “sky,” a meaning in harmony with Bahá’í interpretation.

We all underestimate the awesome powers of our thoughts. We can conquer all the stars of heaven by one false assumption. We can build, own, or destroy all the castles of the earth by one illusion: “I am the sovereign ruler of the world!” That is how powerful our thoughts are. That is what happened to Jewish theologians, and is still happening. Only one illusion, one erroneous idea caused them to pass judgment on Jesus: ***That the prophecies about “great power and glory” are all literal. That is the exact assumption most Christians are making today about the Second Advent of Jesus. How perfectly history is repeating itself!***

Jesus’ disciples were the most enlightened and open-minded people of their time. Yet they needed help from their Master:

***And He [Jesus] opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.***

Luke 24:45

***Are we not also in the same position today as were Jesus’ disciples? Do we not need our heavenly Redeemer to open our mind, to clarify what has divided us? Are today’s theologians more enlightened than Jesus’ disciples? Are they more open-minded? To whom then does prophecies such as the following refer?***

For the time will come when ***people will not stand sound teaching, but each will follow his own whim and gather a crowd of teachers to tickle his fancy.*** II Timothy 4:3

Bahá’u’lláh declares to be the Lord of Hosts:

***Say: O concourse of the rulers and of the learned and the wise! The Promised Day is come and the Lord of Hosts hath appeared. Rejoice ye with great joy by reason of this supreme felicity.***<sup>155</sup>

The following prophecy from Isaiah perfectly describes the spiritual “drunkenness” and “drowsiness” of the people of our time, their inability to decode the prophecies, and God’s judgment against them:

Then suddenly, in an instant, you shall be visited by the ***Lord of hosts***...Be ***drunk***, but not from wine, stagger, but not from strong drink! For the Lord has poured out on you ***a spirit of deep sleep***. He has shut your eyes [the prophets] and covered your heads [the seers]. For you the revelation of all this has become like the words of ***a sealed scroll***. When it is handed to one who can read, with the request, “Read this,” he replies, “I cannot: it is sealed.” When it is handed to one who cannot read with the request, “Read this,” he replies, “I cannot read.” The Lord said: Since ***this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone***, though their hearts are far from me, ***and their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men***, therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: ***The wisdom of its wise men shall perish*** and the understanding of its prudent men be hid.

Isaiah 29:5,9-14

As we noted, in the parable of faithful and unfaithful servants, Jesus used the same metaphor—*drunkness*—to describe many church leaders of our time. In His parable of five wise and unwise maidens, He also spoke of coming *at midnight*, the darkest hour, when people are sound asleep. What should we do if those we have been following become drunk? What if “a spirit of deep sleep” overwhelms their hearts and souls?

### ***What did Jesus mean by saying that He shall “come like a thief”?***

This is one of several prophecies that, if taken literally, make good sense, but do not fit the traditional theories. Consider the following prophecy. It is expressed as literally and as plainly as possible:

Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time... Hebrews 9:28

What is the literal, plain meaning of “looking for” someone? Suppose you are walking in a crowded street. Suddenly you notice that your little girl is missing. What do you do? You start instantly looking for her. You describe her to the police and other shoppers to see if they have noticed her. Let us now see how a theologian changes the plain and simple meaning of “looking for” into the complicated, how he transforms the “good” sense into “no” sense:

“Unto them that look for him shall he appear.” Does that mean that if one doesn’t happen to be looking into the sky, or at least thinking of Christ’s return when He comes to catch away His bride, he’ll be left behind? Surely not. Our going to heaven at the Rapture does not depend upon whether we even believe in that blessed hope much less are looking for Christ at that particular moment. Our ticket to heaven is the finished redemptive work of Christ on the cross...

If all Christians are included, then why does it say, “Unto them that look for him”? Simply because it is expected of all Christians to be looking for Christ... So “unto them that look for him shall he appear” is just another way of saying, “unto all Christians shall he appear.” Isn’t that redundant? No. He’s speaking of the Rapture, and at that time Christ appears only to His bride as He catches her up to heaven.<sup>156</sup>

Now try to paraphrase the preceding interpretation in ***your own words*** to see if you make any sense out of it!

Let us now see how theologians have distorted the plain and literal meaning of “like a thief” so that it will not undermine their “heavenly” theories. They say “coming like a thief” does not mean “coming in the form of a humble and seemingly ordinary human being” as did Jesus, the Báb, and Bahá’u’lláh. It rather means coming ***suddenly***. Again what is the plain and literal meaning of “coming like a thief”? Can a thief remain a thief, if people see him, whatever he comes suddenly or unsuddenly? Yes, remaining undetected is the first and foremost concern of a thief. In this case, the plain makes sense. Why then look for the unplain?

The analogy of “a thief” is perfect. Jesus was the light of the world” (John 8:12). He walked among the Jews with that light hidden in His physical form. He was King of kings, but He controlled and concealed His heavenly power. People stood face to face

with Him, yet they could see nothing except the son of a carpenter, a homeless man. The same holds true with the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. People hear about them, but they don't really see them, unless of course they begin to pray with a pure heart and "watch" or pay close attention. If you saw a king in plain clothes, would you know him?

One Sunday a plainly dressed, scholarly-looking man went into a church in the Netherlands and took a seat near the pulpit. A few minutes later, a woman approached the pew. Seeing the stranger in it, she curtly advised him that this was "her seat" and asked him to leave. The man graciously apologized and moved to one of the pews reserved for the poor. There, he devoutly joined in the service and left afterward without further incident.

When the service was over, one of the woman's friends asked her if she knew who it was whom she had ordered out of her pew. "No," the woman replied casually, "only some stranger, I suppose."

To the woman's great dismay, her friend informed her "It was King Oscar of Sweden. He is here visiting the Queen."<sup>157</sup>

A simple change of clothes concealed the identity of the king. The same holds true with heavenly Kings. Their physical frame is the veil that clouds their glory.

We can also recognize the meaning of "coming like a thief" from the remedy Jesus offered. What is that remedy? Remaining watchful and awake. How do theologians interpret that word? Once again they change the simple into the complicated. They *limit* its meaning to these specific points:

- Attaining a state of *inner* awareness, such as: Jesus may come any moment.
- Attaining a state of *outer* awareness, such as: we should look out and watch for *the signs* of His coming.

What can people gain from a state of *inner* awareness? Nothing, if it is only mental. Unfortunately, for most people it is only mental. But if the awareness leads to spiritual purity, then it is extremely worthwhile. That takes a lot of effort, and few admit needing purification.

What benefit can people gain from a state of outer awareness: being aware of *the signs* of Jesus' return? They can benefit immensely if their awareness ***is not limited to tradition and preconceived notions; if it is not confined by what theologians tell them.*** Unfortunately, for most people, this too is limited to a state of awareness about what Bible teachers, especially the ones in their own denomination tell them.

Thus Jesus' commandment that believers should "watch" or take notice and investigate is used to *limit* where they look, ***which is the exact opposite of the purpose for which it was intended.*** As we can see, once again the meaning of a simple literal word is distorted to serve a special purpose contrary to what God intended.

Religious leaders send the following message constantly to the masses of believers: "We are your true watchmen. If anything happens, we are the first to know. Depend on us. We know what we are doing." They send this message, and then go about disagreeing among themselves and arguing about what the prophecies mean! How do people react to this message of dependency? They become even less watchful. It is like telling someone, "I

have good eyes, lean on me. You don't have to look. You can even go to sleep. When the hour comes, I will wake you." Again this is a total distortion of the meaning of the word "Watch." Jesus did not limit the state of watchfulness to what religious leaders may know or say. He set no conditions.

Let me cite an analogy to clarify the meaning of "watch" as intended by Jesus. Recently we were remodeling our house. We had gone to many houses, but seldom paid *close attention* to the way they looked. With a keen interest in remodeling, we went to several houses simply to look. It is incredible how much more we could see! As a result of this new awareness, our perception of seeing the inside of a house has improved immensely, perhaps as much as a hundred times! If you don't believe this, take a few minutes and try to describe the details of the inner design of a house you have seen before. Take the kitchen. Can you describe the sink and the faucet? What color and design did the cabinets have. Did they have knobs? What kind? What color and design did the countertop have? What was it made of? Tiles, Formica, or marble? What about the walls? How much wallpaper was used? Can you remember its color? Was a border used? How many sources of light were there? Were there any chandeliers? What kinds? Did the various colors used in the kitchen match?

The preceding analogy demonstrates perfectly why Jesus asked us repeatedly to "watch." Many people say, "I have never heard about the Bahá'í Faith." But once they become aware, they hear it and see it coming toward them from all directions!

As Christian author, Dr. David Reagan notes:

Jesus can be found on almost every page of the Old Testament, if you know how to look for Him. He is there symbolically in types.<sup>158</sup>

Dr. Reagan's statement holds true more with the second advent than the first. For according to Christian scholars the Bible contains as many as six times more prophecies about the second advent.

A main purpose of this book is to provide insight into theological and psychological influences that allow people to deny their Redeemers. Many believers do not take time to meditate, to think, and to ponder. Further, they hear only one side of the story. This book presents the other side, the one you would not hear in your church, your synagogue, or through the public media. How can a person make an informed decision without hearing the various views?

The examples given concerning the distortion of the meaning of Jesus' most critical warnings should give you the needed insight to make an informed decision, by far the most significant decision of your life.

As we noted, many Bible teachers express a sense of pride and even superiority in being literal and "true" to the word of God, but if the literal contradicts their imagined theories, they set out to distort its meaning to support their preconceived positions. They make high sounding and splendid claims and present lofty principles such as "If the plain and the literal makes sense, choose no other sense," and then set out to violate them immediately. As long as people hear what their "itching ears" like to hear (II Tim. 4:3), theologians can get away with anything they wish.

***How strange! These people with one hand cling to those verses...which they have found to accord with their inclinations and interests, and with the other reject those which are contrary to their selfish desires.***<sup>159</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The people at the time of Jesus engaged in the same mental gymnastics. They interpreted the Word of God to fit their own tradition. Note how clearly history is repeating itself:

***You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions.*** Christ (Mark 7:9)

To give His faithful believers further help, Jesus also communicated the manner of His return through dreams and visions. This is a further evidence of His love and grace for the true seekers of His Kingdom. Christian author, Dr. Scott Sparrow, has compiled a book called *I Am With You Always*.<sup>160</sup> It contains dreams in which Christians have seen Jesus. The book presents two dreams that relate to the Second Advent. One of them points to the way Jesus returns. That dream confirms both the Bible's and Bahá'u'lláh's statement that God sends His Redeemers to test us, to separate the unfaithful and fearful from the faithful:

I had a dream in 1972 in which Christ appeared to me. Before the dream began, I had a thought-transference experience. I didn't hear an actual speaking voice, but it "spoke" and said, "This dream is a symbolic message not to be taken literally."...

I felt like I was in the wrong place, but something reassured me I was in the right place. I knew that I just needed to look for him. I started wandering around this circus—that's why I didn't think I was in the right place... Again this voice came in the dream and reminded me this was all symbolic and not to be taken literally. I went on inside the tent. The tent was empty but there was a stage up front and there was a stagehand there. I explained to him I was supposed to meet with Jesus and that he had invited me. As soon as I said that, the stagehand's face brightened up and he said, "Oh, yes! He's expecting you. But the show is about to start so you'll have to wait until afterward." People were coming in, and just then Jesus came around a curtain and saw me just as I saw him. Although I knew it was he, I was surprised at his appearance... his face didn't look like the traditional Jesus face... I knew unquestioningly, however, that it was Jesus. He greeted me and apologized for having to rush right into the performance.

After a few moments an announcer walked out onstage and said, "The show is about to begin. And now here he is—the one and only—Jesus the Christ."... He began to speak. His words to me were like gold, but I don't remember the specifics of what he said. I just remember I was hanging on every word. After a few moments one fellow in the back of the tent said, "Oh, what is this?! I came to see a show not to hear a lot of talk." And Jesus very tactfully replied that he was free to leave at any time. Jesus continued. Several others got up and left, grumbling and muttering. There was obvious skepticism, but some were really impressed. Others showed no doubt. One large fat lady was just beaming as he spoke. Over half had left since he started. Then there was a question-and-answer session, and other people left. Details are vague, but I know that I accompanied him for what seemed like two weeks.

He didn't always say the same thing. He seemed to tailor what he was saying to the needs of the particular people. Over the course of the two-week period, I noticed that the fat lady was frequently there in the front row. I also began to notice another man—it was hard not to notice him—he had bright red hair and wore a loud plaid jacket and orange pants. He seemed to appear quite frequently. I was concerned that he might be some evil or satanic influence. Finally I said to Jesus, “Master, who is that man?” He replied, “You know—but not at this time,” and just smiled. Finally I asked him why he

looked so different. He said, “Of course, everyone would come to see me if I descended from the clouds in a white robe with angels attending; but that is not my purpose. I'm here to separate the wheat from the chaff. Those who truly know me will recognize me in Spirit—the rest will not know me. In this way I am gathering my true followers.” Again I was told by the voice in the dream that the setting of the dream was symbolic—not to be taken literally.<sup>161</sup>

Then the author, Dr. Sparrow, offers this comment about the dream:

It is interesting to note that the two figures other than the dreamer who remain committed to Jesus have physically undesirable qualities—obesity and tasteless dress—upon which a shallower individual might have rejected them. They, too, contrast with the “ideal” follower even as the Jesus in the dream contrasts with the “ideal” Jesus-like figure. The whole thrust of the experience seems designed both to *test* the dreamer's ability to look beyond superficial appearances, as well as to *give him further reason* to suspend judgment on the basis of appearances. Thus, we can see that initiation goes beyond the mere assessment of the recipient. *It facilitates, as well, a strengthening of the very capacity it is designed to measure.*<sup>162</sup>

The second dream quoted in that book about the Second Advent also confirms Biblical and Bahá'í Scriptures. It points to the dire conditions of our time:

The room is full of people—one can hardly move, it is so filled. A big party is going on with drugs, booze, and everybody getting crazy.

I turn to the north wall and see some steps starting to appear. I watch until they are in my full view. Then Elijah and Daniel come down the stairs with Christ following behind them. Elijah and Daniel stop at the bottom of the steps, and Christ stops a few steps behind them.

Christ pleads to the people in the room to follow him, to throw away their worldliness and to follow him.

No one cares; some even laugh and jeer. He keeps pleading but it is no use.

Elijah and Daniel then turn and start back up the steps, ahead of Christ. He takes a few steps, but then he falls to the steps, weeping very deeply. Elijah and Daniel then turn to aid and comfort him. He is weeping because he knows the people are lost.

They do not listen and my heart feels very heavy as I begin weeping, too.<sup>163</sup>

The best-known vision about the manner in which Christ returns was reported by Miss Margaret MacDonald, a 15-year-old from Scotland. She had that vision in the spring of

1833, eleven years before the advent of the Báb. Since her vision is cited in *I Shall Come Again*, only an excerpt will be quoted here:

It was first the awful state of the land that was pressed upon me. I saw the blindness and infatuation of the people to be very great...O it is not known what the sign of the Son of man is; the people of God think they are waiting, but they know not what it is. I felt this needed to be revealed, and that there was great darkness and error about it...I saw the error to be, that men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people...Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his appearance...I often said, Oh the glorious inbreaking of God which is now about to burst on this earth...It was a glorious light above the brightness of the sun, that shone round about me. I felt that those who were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and feel walking in the midst of them, while those who had not the Spirit could see nothing...<sup>164</sup>

Miss MacDonald's vision was so influential, it convinced many Christians writers and scholars to believe in two consecutive comings of Jesus: one from sky with great power and glory, the other from earth, like "a thief in the night." Those writers were so attached to the heavenly coming of Jesus, they could not give it up. They simply added one more coming to that one!

...a thief never knocks, never rings the doorbell, never announces his presence. He enters silently, takes what he wants, then disappears again. The Lord says that is what His coming again will be like—not His visible coming when He appears to establish His kingdom, when every eye will see Him, as described in Revelation 1:7.<sup>165</sup>

The theory of "double comings" of Jesus shows how difficult it is to detach one's self from established and ingrained beliefs.

It is astonishing how history repeats itself. The people of Israel faced the same confusion and formed the same theory to resolve it. The same puzzling prophecies led to the same conclusion at the first advent of Jesus:

Other [Jewish] commentators invented a theory that perhaps two Messiahs were meant to come. The conquering King would be the Son of David, and the suffering, lowly one would be in the tradition of Joseph, the Jewish lad who had suffered so badly at the hands of his brothers by being sold into slavery in Egypt and then had risen to prominence there. This Messiah began to be referred to as Messiah ben Joseph. What all these learned men failed to see was that all the predictions of Messiah, both concepts of him, were to be fulfilled in one man, but not at one time.<sup>166</sup>

***I don't know enough about  
the Bible. How can I tell if  
Bahá'u'lláh is from God?***

Many Christians excuse themselves from the responsibility of investigating Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, for this very reason: I don't know enough about the Bible. They base their everlasting destiny on an illusion, on a totally unfounded assumption. History, reason, and the testimony of the Bible all contradict this popular assumption.

First, the story of great religions of the past indicate that the first to recognize their Redeemer were ordinary people. None of Jesus' disciples was a scholar. In fact, the best-known scholars of the time condemned Him to death.

Second, reason also contradicts this unfounded assumption. Would it make any sense to allow only the Bible scholars to find the truth? Would God discriminate against people who don't go to high school or college?

God is absolute love. What connection does book learning have with love? Book learning may create clouds of illusions. It may itself become a veil to genuine love and true understanding and knowledge by generating pride and prejudice. That same veil prevents some eminent scientists from acknowledging God. Only love of God can destroy this veil:

*We have consumed this densest of all veils, with the fire of the love of the Beloved...*<sup>167</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Third, the assumption of not being able to judge the truth for lack of Bible study is also contradicted by countless verses from the Scriptures. Our Creator never points to scholarly achievement in itself as a means of knowing the truth. Every reference in the Scriptures about salvation, knowing God, and acknowledging the truth relates to spiritual virtues and gifts, such as *sincere faith, courage, good deeds, good hearts, and wisdom*. The Bible makes no mention of knowledge of ancient languages, scholarly positions, publications, leadership, or degrees and diplomas of any kind. Consider these verses:

Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light *because their deeds were evil*. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever *lives by the truth comes into the light*, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. John 3:19-21

...if you *accept my words* and store up my commands...then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:1,5

Blessed are *the undefiled* in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who *keep His testimonies*, who seek Him with the whole heart! Psalms 119:1-2

For *the upright* he shines like a lamp in the dark... Psalms 112:4

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who *follow his precepts have good understanding*. Psalms 111:10

The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me...whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure. My eyes will be on *the faithful* in the land, that they may dwell with me. Psalms 101:4,6

Today, if you hear his voice, *do not harden your hearts*. Psalms 95:7-8

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus blessed all those who manifest virtues—purity, humility, etc.—nine times (Matt. 5:3-12). Not once did He refer to scholars, rabbis, priests, or pastors. Spirituality and scholarship are entirely separate and distinct dimensions, the first rests in the heart, the second in the mind. Some people reach the top

of the ladder of biblical studies, then they see themselves as *the authority* for the word of God. Someday they will learn that their ladder was against the wrong wall.

***The understanding of His words...are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit.***<sup>168</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

Consider also these verses from Daniel. They point to two dimensions: wisdom and wickedness:

...the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. ***None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.*** Daniel 12:9-10

Here Bahá'u'lláh refers to the same two dimensions of “wisdom-foolishness,” and righteousness-perversity:

Gracious God! So great is the ***folly and perversity*** of the people, that they have turned their face toward their own thoughts and desires, and have turned their back upon the knowledge and will of God—hallowed and glorified be His name!<sup>169</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

What is wisdom? The same as book learning? No, wisdom is a virtue of the soul. To be spiritually wise, one must be open-minded, watchful, curious, just, judicious, critical, courageous, pure-hearted, and keenly aware of the long-term consequences of every choice.

A suitable title for those who fail to understand the purpose of prophecies is “dull” or “slow of mind.” Why, then, are they called “wicked”? Because lack of understanding God’s purpose does not pertain to the mind. It is always a matter of heart and soul. When a person rejects or ignores a new Redeemer, he or she has a heart problem, not scholarly deficiencies. The heart may be fearful, selfish, lazy, careless, deceitful, inattentive, worldly, or unjust. He may have a brilliant mind, but a dull spirit. His mind may move like a lizard; his soul may crawl like a worm.

***They that have hearts to understand...who have not for one moment gratified their selfish desires, will behold, resplendent as the sun in its noon-tide glory, those tokens, testimonies, and evidences that attest the truth of this wondrous Revelation, this transcendent and divine Faith.***<sup>170</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

It does not matter how *we* see ourselves. From God’s perspective, anyone who ignores His Redeemers suffers from serious spiritual disease. In fact, God does not consider him or her even alive! Such people are always referred to as dead (John 5:24).

The parable of the talent also confirms Daniel’s verdict. Jesus calls His “one-talent” servant—who fails to invest his “talent” to find the Master—“**wicked**” (Matt. 25:26). Any person who bases his or her relationship with God on miracles is also called **wicked** (Matt. 12:39). Why? Because he or she has a heart problem, not Bible-study problem.

Amazing as it may seem, if you are not a Bible scholar, you are in a better position to know the truth.

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

I Corinthians 8:1

If all the lines written by theologians about the meaning of prophecies were turned into a thread, they would create a mountain so vast, few would dare to climb! Getting involved with this tangled thread causes much confusion, even dizziness. This prophecy was not spoken in vain:

***The day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion.***

Micah 7:4

By stepping out of this tangled thread, we have a better chance of seeing the beauty of our Beloved. The accumulated dust of tangled threads—floating through the hearts and minds of the believers—diminishes the clarity of His Face. Here Bahá'u'lláh asks all sincere seekers and lovers of truth to purify their hearts from this “obscuring dust.”

***When a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse and purify his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge...***<sup>171</sup>

If you find it hard to believe that book learning is often a disadvantage, remember, as an example, Mary Magdalene, a simple peasant, who loved the Lord, and Annas, a sophisticated Jewish scholar of the time, who hated Him.

God wants only a pure heart on which to build His Kingdom. He wants nothing on it. Any old structure must be demolished.

A businessman was once very concerned about his ability to sell a warehouse property he owned. Since he had last surveyed the building, vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash throughout it...As the man showed a prospective buyer the building, he took great pains to assure him that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, mend the roof, and clean out the garbage. He felt as if he was apologizing at every turn for the condition of the building...To his surprise, the buyer finally said to him, “Listen, forget about the repairs. I’m going to build something completely different on this land. I don’t want the building I want the site.”<sup>172</sup>

It is hard to find anything in a crowded basement. Almost every theologian has added something to the collection of thoughts, theories, and illusions; he has contributed something to the masses of truths, half truths, and falsehoods. We can unearth mountains of them in books written, kept, and then quoted and quoted again by countless theologians over the course of 2,000 years! What is the solution? Bahá'u'lláh asks all seekers and lovers of truth to cast away everything they have collected in their hearts and minds. Without this required house cleaning there is no room for the Kingdom of Heaven:

***O peoples of the world! Cast away, in My name that transcendeth all other names, the things ye possess, and immerse yourselves in this Ocean in whose depths lay hidden the pearls of wisdom and of utterance, an ocean that surgeth in My name, the All-Merciful.***<sup>173</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

***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.***<sup>174</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

***Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation, the movement of Whose Pen hath revolutionized the soul of mankind.***<sup>175</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

It is impossible to see the Glory of God through tainted glasses.

Steven Covey, the author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, states that to succeed at any task you must start with the correct map. Suppose you are looking for a home in Chicago with the map of New York City. Will you find the home by trying harder? No amount of driving and running will help you get to your destination. You need another map.

The problem with Christian scholars is that they start with ***the wrong map*** just as Jewish scholars did. Their map is designed by human desires. It sends this direction: “Just keep waiting until Jesus will suddenly come out of the blue and take you to heaven.” What message does ***the right map*** send, the one drawn by Jesus? This one: “You could wait a million years and you will still be waiting. Don’t waste your precious life. Go to the store and buy all the detective instruments you can find. Drink some coffee to stay awake (Rev. 16:15), trim your lamps (Matt. 25:7), have extra oil (Matt. 25:4), put some ointment on your eyes (Rev. 3:18), and start looking for the Heavenly Thief.”

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

You can find and read countless books in which scholars debate about the majestic appearance of Jesus on the clouds, the number of angels around him, the place of their landing, the destiny of good Christians, the mediocre ones, and the bad ones, the wars Jesus will wage, the number of armies on each side of the battle, and the number of the dead! ***This reading will get you nowhere. It is the wrong map.*** Perhaps 99 percent of what today’s theologians teach—whether they are Jews, Christians, or Muslims—follows the wrong map. The Jews rejected Jesus and are still rejecting Him for the same reason: for using the wrong map.

If all the priests, pastors, and scholars of all religions get together and consult for the next thousand years, they will be unable to help you advance even one step in your journey of the search for truth. They will fail because their map is designed with imagination and drawn in the dark of human desire for the glamorous, the miraculous, and the supernatural. Their map has no basis in reality, it has no connection with:

***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.*** Christ (Rev. 3:20)

If Bible study had any value, all the Jewish rabbis and scholars would be among the first to acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer. Does their knowledge of Hebrew language help them? Does their scholarly endeavors bring them any closer to Jesus Christ? If you are ambitious, take the best scholarly books of proof about Jesus to several rabbis and ask them to read! Then wait for the miracle. Be prepared to wait a long time!

Bahá'u'lláh bestows supreme honors and blessings on the divines (theologians) and the learned. But He sets specific conditions:

***Respect ye the divines and learned amongst you, they whose conduct accords with their professions, who transgress not the bounds which God hath fixed, whose***

***judgments are in conformity with His behests as revealed in His Book. Know ye that they are the lamps of guidance unto them that are in the heavens and on the earth. They who disregard and neglect the divines and learned that live amongst them—these have truly changed the favor with which God hath favored them.***<sup>176</sup>

How can theologians, religious leaders, and scholars become deserving of heavenly honors and blessings?

- They must practice what they preach.
- They must not transgress their limits, such as claiming to know the meaning of prophecies.
- They must judge according to God’s commandments, such as “seek and ye shall find,” and “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Only by meeting the preceding requirements can they transform their learning and scholarly achievements from “dead letters” into “living spirits,” only in this light can their hearts and minds glow with the glory of God, only **then** do they become lamps of guidance for their followers.

There is a book called *Jesus in Two Perspectives*. Two distinguished scholars, one a Jew (Dr. P. Lapide), and one a Christian (Dr. U. Luz) present their views about Jesus and the way He was treated. Dr. Lapide is introduced as “a Jewish scholar of the New Testament.” I have never heard of a Jew who would get a degree in Christianity! Apparently, some rabbis, in their training, are taught about the Messiah they reject. Those in charge know they cannot ignore another Jew, Jesus, who changed the world.

I wish Christian seminaries would do the same. I wish they too would include the writings of Bahá’u’lláh as a part of their curriculum. If they did, it is quite likely that many of the pastors and priests would recognize Bahá’u’lláh! At this point in history, Christian scholars know virtually nothing about the Bahá’í Faith. And the information that they do get is often unreliable.

Dr. Lapide is extremely sympathetic and loving toward Jesus and Christians, yet without any hesitation he denies Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Jews. First, he defines the word Messiah:

Dictionaries describe “the Messiah” primarily as “the promised deliverer of the Jews,” who in time also becomes known as “the Redeemer of humankind,” or more specifically as “the liberator of all oppressed peoples.” As the anointed king and representative of God he embodies truth and righteousness and on assuming power, will restore divine order to a world that has gone awry.<sup>177</sup>

Then he describes the role of the Messiah:

The role of the messianic kings of the Bible was political; all of the messianic prophecies concerning the last days were politically colored; the plight of Israel out of which the Messiah was to save God’s people was primarily political. A nonpolitical Messiah would have been a self-contradiction during the rule of Rome.<sup>178</sup>

He then states that seeing the role of the Messiah simply as spiritual, as One who saves the soul—a Savior—is “antibiblical escapism.” It is “a denial of historical-political

responsibility for this God-created world.”<sup>179</sup> He refers to several expectations the people of Israel had from their promised Messiah, such as delivering them from the hand of their enemies, and then concludes:

Jesus of Nazareth did not fulfill any of these expectations—nor did he ever promise to fulfill them.<sup>180</sup>

From his writings it is clear, Dr. Lapidé knows the New Testament far better than an average Christian and even better than some pastors and priests, yet he fails to see the Spirit of God in Jesus. Why does he fail? He focuses so intensely on “the letter,” on the **definition** of the word Messiah, He misses **the Spirit** of the Messiah. That is exactly what many Christians do when they are invited to investigate the advent of Bahá’u’lláh.

Do you believe if Dr. Lapidé takes more courses in New Testament under distinguished Christian scholars he will begin to see the light?

To excuse one’s self from making the most critical choice of life, for lack of Bible studies, is infinitely unwise. A believer with any degree of wisdom would never take this chance. Bahá’u’lláh teaches that everyone is capable of appreciating the Beauty of God in His great Saviors and Messengers, and before the court of His justice no one can excuse himself for ignoring the invitation to enter His heavenly Banquet while on earth.

Say: O people, praise ye God, for its Manifestation, for verily it is the most great favor upon you and the most perfect blessing upon you; and through Him every moldering bone is quickened. Whosoever turns to Him hath surely turned unto God, and whosoever turneth away from Him hath turned away from My beauty, denied My proof and is of those who transgress.<sup>181</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

God is so gracious, He promises to protect from deception all those who truly trust Him. Even those with a “simple heart” are protected:

***The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me.*** Psalms 116:5-6

### ***What did Jesus mean by saying, “At that time many will turn away from the faith”?***

The best way to understand this prediction is to look to the past and find its meaning in the lessons of history. Jesus was the Spirit and Splendor of God. Yet with the exception of a few pure-hearted and humble truth seekers, the masses of people and their leaders remained unmoved and skeptical about everything He said. They did not trust Him at all. Are the people of our age more trusting? Because of decline of values, the spread of cults, and the influence of mass media, people are today more skeptical than ever before. They see fraud, deviation, and deception on their TV screen day after day. Their general sense of skepticism affects everything they do. It closes their hearts to the Glory of God in Bahá’u’lláh as it closed the hearts of previous generations to that same Glory in Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God.

Today many Christian leaders have turned their hearts away from sincere faith in the words of Jesus, and turned their minds toward serious biblical studies. Never before has such an abundance of books on the Scriptures been published. Never before have so many scholars devoted so much time and resources to biblical studies. Have these studies and publications enhanced their wisdom and their faith? Today there are more confusions about religion, and more denominations and divisions than ever before. Merely studying the Scriptures and taking more courses in Hebrew and Greek and receiving seminary degrees and honors offer no advantage.

***They have even failed to realize, all this time, that, in every age, the reading of the scriptures and holy books is for no other purpose except to enable the reader to apprehend their meaning and unravel their innermost mysteries. Otherwise reading, without understanding, is of no abiding profit unto man.***<sup>182</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Many believers hide behind scholars and biblical studies. By doing this, they think they can absolve themselves of the responsibility of looking for their Master. They don't realize that diligent and scholarly study of the Scriptures is a safety net the Jews used also at the time of the First Advent:

***You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*** Christ (John 5:39-40)

God does not reveal Himself only to scholars. He reveals Himself to every pure-hearted person. We are not told, "Blessed are the smart and the scholarly," but "blessed are the meek and the pure in heart" (Matt. 5:5-8).

***...the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith...***<sup>183</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

What is the evidence of a pure heart? Pure faith. What is the evidence of pure faith? Pure love for the Lord. What is the evidence of pure love? Whole-hearted obedience to His commands. Disobedience implies ***putting one's selfish desires, interests, or wishes above God's Will***. Can selfishness and purity of heart coexist? Note how clearly Jesus promises to show Himself to those who obey Him; to others He makes no promises:

***I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you....Whoever has my commands and obeys them...I...will...show myself to him.*** John 14:18,21

Jesus also indicates that obedience is an evidence of wisdom.

***Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock...But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.*** Christ (Matt. 7:24,26)

The ultimate test of knowing God and His Redeemers is obedience:

***Here is the test by which we can make sure that we know him: do we keep his commands? The man who says, "I know him," while he disobeys his commands, is a liar and a stranger to the truth;*** but in the man who is obedient to his word, the divine love has indeed come to its perfection. I John 2:3-5

Today most Christians do not obey the repeated commands of Jesus that they should look for Him. They present all kinds of excuses to avoid His urgent command. They prefer the security of their surroundings to the adventure of stepping out. What does this indicate? Lack of faith in the words of Jesus. It points to the fulfillment of these prophecies:

***At that time many will turn away from the faith.*** Christ (Matt. 24:10)

***They will hold to the outward form of religion, but reject its real power.*** II Timothy 3:5

The same spiritual disease—lack of faith—afflicted the people in the First Advent:

***If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?*** John 5:46-47

Some people carry their Bible wherever they go as a security blanket. But if they are asked to obey the commands of the Bible and investigate Bahá'u'lláh's message, immediately they take a defensive position by saying, "Everything I need is in the Bible! I trust only Jesus!" They trust Him in words, but violate that trust in action. No wonder Jesus asked this question:

***...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*** Christ (Luke 18:8)

These believers feel comfortable and secure in their churches. God of course does not even invite such tradition bound, fearful, and rested servants:

***Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***  
Christ (Matt. 11:28)

He prefers those who mourn:

***Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*** Christ (Matt. 5:4)

The complacent believers keep the words "My Lord Jesus Christ" always on their lips, yet they refuse to heed His numerous warnings that they should be watchful and awake. It seems this verse was revealed especially about them:

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Christ (Matt. 7:21)

Rejecting the First Advent of the Lord in the name of Jesus Christ the Anointed One of God, was at least hundred times easier and more excusable than it is to reject that same Spirit in the name of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. Is this an exaggeration? Not at all. Suppose you lived twice. What advantage would you have the second time? All the lessons of your first life. Experience is by far the best teacher. Because you experienced them, those lessons would prove invaluable. In relation to the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus, and the coming of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, we have the repetition of thousands of events and facts. The parallels are astonishing—beyond belief. In *Lord of Lords*, you can find a list of 86 similarities between Jesus and the Báb.

All that is required of you is to apply the lessons of the First Advent to the Second. Is this too difficult? The people of Israel did not have this advantage. If you are a Christian, you do. The Jews have been blamed for 2,000 years for rejecting Jesus. Imagine the intensity of blame cast in the future on those who, in spite of a clear advantage, are ignoring an invitation to investigate the News of the coming of their Lord.

*All these things happened to them as examples—as object lessons to us—to warn us against doing the same things.* I Cor. 10:11

Why then so many fail to benefit from the lessons of history? Why then so many fail to recognize the Spirit of Christ in a new human temple with a new name, Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God? For this very reason:

*At that time many will turn away from the faith.* Christ (Matt. 24:10)

*...they will gather around them a great number of teachers [scholars, priests, and pastors] to say what their itching ears want to hear.* II Timothy 4:3

### ***Why did Jesus say that His coming will repeat the days of Noah?***

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

What characterized Noah's advent?

- Invitation and warning from Noah, who lived among the people for many years
- People's freedom to reject or accept His invitation
- A response of worldliness, apathy, and denial from people
- An interval given them to repent and turn to God
- Disaster as a consequence of their denial.

God shows great compassion, but He also warns those who ignore His call:

And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers...because ***He had compassion on His people*** and on His dwelling place. ***But they mocked the messengers of God***, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people... II Chronicles 36:15-16

Note these warnings from Bahá'u'lláh, note also the authority with which He speaks:

***O YE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!***  
***Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight. By My beauty! All your doings hath My pen graven with open characters upon tablets of chrysolite.***<sup>184</sup>



***Say: O ye that are bereft of understanding! A severe trial pursueth you, and will suddenly overtake you. Bestir yourselves, that haply it may pass and inflict no harm upon you. Acknowledge the exalted character of the name of the Lord, your God, Who hath come unto you in the greatness of His glory. He, verily, is the All-Knowing, the All-Possessing, the Supreme Protector.***<sup>185</sup>



***We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will...cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!***<sup>186</sup>

To those who denied and persecuted Him, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

***I swear by God! But for the divine Decree, and the inscrutable dispensations of Providence, the earth itself would have utterly destroyed all this people! "He will, however, respite them until the appointed time of a known day."***<sup>187</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh also quotes this verse from the Qur'án:

***If God should chastise men for their perverse doings, He would not leave upon the earth a moving thing! But to an appointed time doth He respite them.***<sup>188</sup>

God has set in motion another Ark to save us from perishing. He calls it "The Crimson Ark." This Ark not only saves the world but also the souls, not only floats over the sea but also over the land:

***Seek thou the shore of the Most Great Ocean, and enter, then, the Crimson Ark which God hath ordained...for the people of Bahá. Verily, it passeth over land and sea. He that entereth therein is saved, and he that turneth aside perisheth.***<sup>189</sup>

Psalms 91 is a prophecy about the Redeemer of our time. It reassures divine protection for all those who seek refuge in the shadow of God's Revelation.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare..."Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him."  
Psalms 91:1-3,14-15

The punishment that comes to us is always self-imposed. We have a choice to bring peace, hope, and harmony to this divided world, or allow it to disintegrate. We have a choice to allow the suffering to continue, or to stop it. Should Jesus' stern warning that His return will repeat Noah's story not awaken us from apathy and excessive concern for worldly cares and daily demands?

For in the days before the flood, ***people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage***, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and ***they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*** Christ (Matthew 24:38-39)

Disobedience always leads to suffering and disaster:

On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, "Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?" And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.  
Deut. 31:17-18

***Have the religious leaders played  
mostly a positive or a negative role  
in the destiny of humankind?\****

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

Christ (Matt. 20:16 NKJ)

This verse predicts the role that the religious leaders will play at the time of the Second Advent. Let me quote a section concerning this issue from one of my books entitled: ***The Knowledge of God.***

<b><i>The Functions Religious Leaders Should Serve</i></b>	<b><i>Positive</i></b>	<b><i>Negative</i></b>
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		—
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>+ 1</b>	<b>— 12</b>

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

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\* Source: [www.KnowledgeOfGod.com](http://www.KnowledgeOfGod.com).

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?

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.<sup>190</sup> 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

## ***I love and worship God in my church. Why do I need the Bahá'í Faith?***

If this question—which is quite common—crosses your mind, reverse your position by hearing it from a Jewish person who says, “I love God and worship Him in my synagogue. Why do I need Christianity?” How would you answer?

God expects from every one of us to investigate and acknowledge His *latest* Redeemer to humankind. ***Following are four reasons why examining Bahá'u'lláh's claim that He is the Voice of God for this age is absolutely essential***, no matter what religion or church you may follow.

***First, it shows your love for God. It points to your sincere desire to respect and obey His commands.*** The Scriptures repeatedly ask us to seek, to look, and to test the spirits to see if they come from God. Some of Jesus' most touching and powerful parables pertain to this commandment: That as soon as you hear the News of His coming, we must arise and investigate it with all our heart and soul. His beautiful and powerful parables show that the faithful believers act with speed and a supreme sense of urgency, as if they are medical workers who have been called for a rescue mission. He teaches that we should not hesitate to pursue that sublime mission of finding Him even for one moment. ***“Be ready...to let Him in the moment He arrives and knocks”*** (Luke 12:35-36).

Our hesitation and patience may imperil not only our own spiritual life but that of our loved ones as well. If medical workers do not say to a desperate patient, “We are too busy today. Wait for tomorrow!” why should we declare that message to a world desperately sick and dying? Is spiritual life and happiness less valuable than the physical? If you are sincerely dedicated to Jesus Christ, why would you *not* want to obey His command? Ask yourself this question: ***“What purpose does my worship serve if I disobey God?”*** Remind yourself of such dire warnings and admonitions as:

***If you love me, you will obey what I command.*** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth....Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. ***He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.***

Christ (John 14:15-17, 21)

***I will call you to account for your doings...***

Ezekiel 7:3

***O SON OF BEING!***

***Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.***<sup>191</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

Someone asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “What shall I say to those who state that they are satisfied with Christianity and do not need this present Manifestation [Bahá'u'lláh]?” This is how He responded:

Let them alone. What would they do if a former king had reigned and a new king was now seated upon the throne? They must acknowledge the new king, or they are not true subjects of the Kingdom. Last year there was a springtime. Can a man say “I do

not need a new springtime this year—the old springtime is enough for me”? No! The new spring must come to fill the earth with beauty and brightness.<sup>192</sup>

Our Creator requires from us not only good deeds but also recognition of His great Redeemers, whom Bahá'u'lláh calls “the Dayspring” of God’s Revelation. Note the authority with which He speaks:

***The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation...Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.***<sup>193</sup>

***A second reason why you should investigate and recognize Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, is for your own good, for your own eternal future.*** The knowledge of the advent of the new Revelation will transform and edify your heart and soul. You become a new person, full of optimism with a new vision and a new hope and purpose. Before transformation, no one can imagine this possibility. A child in the womb cannot know what life is like after the birth. No matter how spiritual or saintly you may be, by recognizing Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, you will take a quantum leap toward God. You will experience a new birth into a world you cannot dream it may even exist. Surely you can love and worship God at your home and in your church. But by turning to Bahá'u'lláh—God’s latest Source of light—you intensify your sense of spirituality, inner joy, and devotion to God. You partake of “a peace that passes understanding.”

***Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.***

Psalms 96:11-13

***Know ye from what heights your Lord, the All Glorious, is calling?... Did ye but know it, ye would renounce the world, and would hasten with your whole hearts to the presence of the Well-Beloved... Thus have the showers of My bounty been poured down from the heaven of My loving-kindness, as a token of My grace, that ye may be of the thankful.***<sup>194</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

Compare each religion God sends to a house. You may continue to live in a house built a thousand years ago. But what would you gain from doing so? ***Why would you want to work against your own self-interests?***

By entering your ***new*** heavenly house, you will see brilliant lights you have never seen before. You will enjoy a new sense of security, purpose, comfort, and peace you cannot even imagine. ***Why refuse this incredible gift from God? Why reject your very birthright?***

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus makes the most magnificent promises to those who “***overcome***.” Overcome what? The trap of complacency and denial of Jesus Himself at His second coming. Here are two of those promises:

Behold, I am coming quickly!...He who *overcomes*, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And ***I will write on him the name of My God*** and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And ***I will write on him My new name***. Revelation 3:11-12

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. Revelation 3:21

The Book of Isaiah bestows similar honors on the receivers of the new name:

Then ***you shall be called by a new name***...you will be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand... Isaiah 62:2

Why would you want to deprive yourself of the honor of receiving a new name, the Name of God Himself, a name that means "enlightened and glorified"? That is the meaning of the word "Bahá'í." Why would you *not* want to receive the right to sit with Jesus on His throne? Why would you not want to "be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand?" Why would you want to be unjust to your own soul? ***Why would you want to put at risk your own everlasting destiny?***

***The third reason you should investigate and acknowledge Bahá'u'lláh has to do with transforming the world.*** Prophecies indicate that a time will come when God Himself will rule the earth. He will make "all things new" and establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The fruits of that Kingdom are peace, prosperity, justice, and joy for all humankind. That Kingdom is being built at this very moment. ***If you do not investigate and recognize Bahá'u'lláh the Glory of God, you simply deprive your soul of this most supreme gift and glorious honor.*** Why would you *not* want to participate? Why would you *not* want to create a world of justice, security, peace, prosperity and joy for all humankind? Why would you want to allow the sufferings to go on? Your lack of participation will only prolong the enormous pains and adversities the peoples of all nations are enduring.

"To be doing the works of God," we must believe in the One God has sent:

Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "***This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.***" John 6:28-29

***Address yourselves to the promotion of the well-being and tranquillity of the children of men. Bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth, that haply the dissensions that divide it may, through the power of the Most Great Name [the Glory of God], be blotted out from its face, and all mankind become the upholders of one Order, and the inhabitants of one City. Illumine and hallow your hearts; let them not be profaned by the thorns of hate or the thistles of malice. Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love.***<sup>195</sup> 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 [Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God] 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.*<sup>196</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

In the following statements, 'Abdu'l-Bahá invites, in the gentlest and most loving terms, all seekers and lovers of truth to arise to action with a supreme sense of urgency, for the time is short:

*O ye roses in the garden of God's love! O ye bright lamps in the assemblage of His knowledge! May the soft breathings of God pass over you, may the Glory of God illumine the horizon of your hearts. Ye are the waves of the deep sea of knowledge...*

*Why then are ye quenched, why silent, why leaden and dull? Ye must shine forth like the lightning, and raise up a clamoring like unto the great sea. Like a candle must ye shed your light, and even as the soft breezes of God must ye blow across the world. Even as sweet breaths from heavenly bowers, as musk-laden winds from the gardens of the Lord, must ye perfume the air for the people of knowledge, and even as the splendors shed by the true Sun, must ye illumine the hearts of humankind. For ye are the life-laden winds, ye are the jessamine-scents from the gardens of the saved. Bring then life to the dead, and awaken those who slumber. In the darkness of the world be ye radiant flames; in the sands of perdition, be ye well-springs of the water of life, be ye guidance from the Lord God. Now is the time to serve, now is the time to be on fire. Know ye the value of this chance, this favorable juncture that is limitless grace, ere it slip from your hands.*

*Soon will our handful of days, our vanishing life, be gone, and we shall pass, empty-handed, into the hollow that is dug for those who speak no more; wherefore must we bind our hearts to the manifest Beauty, and cling to the lifeline that faileth never. We must gird ourselves for service, kindle love's flame, and burn away in its heat. We must loose our tongues till we set the wide world's heart afire...*<sup>197</sup>

We find the same sense of urgency in Jesus' instructions to His faithful disciples. The emergency crew in a fire station or a hospital are always ready to rush the moment the call comes. Jesus' instructions manifest the same sense of urgency and readiness to respond to the news of His return:

*Be ready for whatever comes, with your clothes fastened tight at the waist and your lamps lit, like servants who are waiting for their master to come back from a wedding feast. When he comes and knocks, they will open the door for him at once. How happy are those servants whose master finds them awake and ready! I tell you, he will fasten his belt, have them sit down, and wait on them. How happy are they if he finds them ready, even if he should come as late as midnight or even later!*

Luke 12:35-38

Never in human history has there been so much at stake. And never has there been such possibilities for change, for creating a world of peace as there is today. The opportunities for service under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, are enormous. There are over six billion people desperately in need of this great Revelation from God. There is no time to wait and waste.

God has given you the freedom to postpone your spiritual journey. You have absolute freedom to act as you wish:

***Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it.*** Christ (Rev. 3:8)

But He also commanded you to choose eternal life:

***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

You can wait for the next year or next month, but each moment lost means more suffering for others, and less time for you to make a difference. Consider the example of the house once again. Suppose you are quite comfortable in your house and have no desire to move. But you know there are countless other houses in which millions are living a life of quiet desperation. They drink dirty water, and are hungry and sick. Can you feel comfortable in your house? Can you even worship God with a clear conscience in your synagogue or church, when you know you are ignoring His heavenly Plan by which you can rescue the suffering masses? Can you remember God, but forget His children? Our Creator has sent us a Plan by which we can rescue humankind from prejudice, war, poverty, crime, ignorance, injustice, the breakdown of family, and the decline of moral values.

We often underestimate our potentials. There are ordinary people who have made a difference far beyond their fondest dreams. We are like dominoes that lead in different directions. As long as we stand still, nothing happens. But as soon as we make a move, we set in motion countless other dominoes. The influence of any given domino is totally unpredictable. Sometimes one move from a lowly domino may lead to the most incredible and unexpected consequences. Do you remember what Rosa Parks—a humble lady from Alabama—accomplished? Do you recall what Gandhi did for his nation? Can you imagine what mother Theresa has done for the poor?

***There is a fourth reason why you should investigate Bahá'u'lláh's mission. Accepting Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God, but rejecting or ignoring Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, is a perfect contradiction.*** Christ and Bahá'u'lláh are one. ***Only their names differ. They manifest the same Spirit: the Spirit of God.*** Would you become another person by simply changing your name? ***Bahá'u'lláh is the return of Christ. You cannot rationally say, "I love Jesus Christ, but have no need for Bahá'u'lláh."*** It would be like saying, "I love my child, but I don't care for my child." Suppose you have an identical twin. What would you think if your parents told you that they love your twin brother or sister, but they don't care for you. If you said to them, "In every way I am identical with my sister! Why don't you care for me?" What could they say? It is because of this oneness of Spirit, manifested in both Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, that Bahá'u'lláh warns us that by denying Him, not only do we deny Jesus Christ and all great Messengers and Redeemers of the past, but also ***God Himself***:

Be thou assured in thyself that verily, ***he who turns away from this Beauty***  
[Bahá'u'lláh] hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and ***showeth***  
***pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.***<sup>198</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

If we deprive ourselves of the ***rays*** of the sun (Christ or Bahá'u'lláh), we also deprive ourselves from the ***sun*** (God). Jesus confirms the same principle:

***“He who receives Me receives Him who sent Me”*** (John 13:20) ***“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him”*** (John 5:23). ***“He who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me”*** (Luke 10:16).

We often value ourselves, and rightfully so. We are precious, made in God’s image. Yet our true worth comes not from what *we* think, but what *God* thinks. We are a heavenly gem on His hand. But the gem can shine only in the light of His love. Otherwise, it turns into a dull stone. What is the evidence of our love? Respect for the Jeweler. How can we show our respect? By turning towards Him.

God has sent a new Plan to us to build a new global civilization based on unity, justice, and peace. Pursuing any other plan is in vain.

***Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.*** Psalms 127:1

Bahá’u’lláh declares a thousand times and more that He speaks only the Word of God, and He presents convincing evidence of His claim. If we ignore Bahá’u’lláh’s Word, we have dishonored the One who devised the Plan. Lack of respect shows lack of love.

It does not matter what we *think*, but what we *do*. Love is not a mere feeling; first and foremost it is action. When we fail to turn to the Glory of God, we also turn away from the source of that Glory: God. It matters little how many times we pray, how much money we give, or how often we go to church. By rejecting or ignoring the Glory of God, we lose our light and our worth. We may even fall from His hand.

One of the most emphatic messages in sacred scriptures is this: God will treat us the way we treat His Redeemers:

***...he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*** Christ (Luke 12:9)

Bahá’u’lláh declares a similar Message. Those who ignore the invitation to investigate Bahá’u’lláh’s Message or deny the presence of God in Him will be of the forgotten:

***God will verily do unto them that which they themselves are doing, and will forget them even as they have ignored His Presence in His day. Such is His decree unto those that have denied Him,*** and such will it be unto them that have rejected His signs.<sup>199</sup>

A colleague recently said, “I do not deny Bahá’u’lláh. I just like where I am.” In response, I told him, “Suppose your closest friend in the elementary schools goes through much trouble to find you. He travels a long way, knocks on your door and says, “Do you remember me? I am your best friend. Let us sit down and talk.” You say, “I don’t remember you.” And he says, “I have ample evidence, many pictures, notes, and memories to prove our friendship.” And you end the conversation by saying, “I am really not interested. I am just too busy.” Would not your friend feel rejected? Would he not consider your response even an insult? Would he not see you as a disloyal friend?

You may take ignoring Bahá’u’lláh’s invitation quite lightly. You may think, you can continue to love God but ignore Bahá’u’lláh. But does what *you* think carry any significance compared to what *God* thinks? ***God takes the rejection of His Redeemers very seriously.*** His use of strong and vivid words and metaphors, such as “death,” “destruction,” “hell-fire,” “wicked,” and “eternal punishment” testifies to the critical

consequences of such rejection. Is it wise to risk one's eternal relationship with God by a *seemingly* little negligence?

Consider the Pharisees. By human standards they were wonderful people. They went to their synagogues, and obeyed the Ten Commandments meticulously. They considered themselves at least as saved and sinless as today's "good" Christians. Note how a Christian author describes them:

They prided themselves on their scrupulous observance of the law and on their lives being free from open sin... They thought that as there were no flagrant sins in their lives to be repented of, *they were God's favorite children*.<sup>200</sup>

Why then did they fail and fall? A chain is as strong as its weakest link. The Pharisees, like all human beings, suffered from several spiritual weaknesses. Those weaknesses determined their destiny. They had neither a humble heart, nor an open mind. Can anything, no matter how magnificent, enter a mind with no opening? A closed mind rejects even the heart of heaven. The Pharisees' strong attachment to traditions and ancestral beliefs prevented them from listening to Jesus with a receptive and attentive mind. They also had a self-righteous attitude. "As soon as we think we are ripe, we begin to rot." These seemingly small weaknesses prevented the Pharisees from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Today many Christians suffer from similar weaknesses. They think they are the true disciples of Jesus Christ and have no need for investigating the Message of a humble and suffering Savior like Bahá'u'lláh. They have their eyes on earthly power and splendor as did the Jews. These attitudes have become a veil or a "cloud" between them and the supreme splendor of God in Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, just as they did at the time of Jesus.

Note the grave consequences of seemingly little human weaknesses, such as a closed-mind, a self-righteous soul, or a heart attached to the past. This warning is not directed simply at sinful people; it is addressed to all people, even the best:

Whoever believes in the Son *has eternal life*, but whoever rejects the Son *will not see life*, for God's wrath remains on him. Christ (John 3:36)

Bahá'u'lláh confirms the same glorious and grave consequences for those who choose "*life*" for their soul, and those who reject that "*life*:"

O My servants! Whoso hath tasted of this Fountain hath attained unto *everlasting Life*, and whoso hath refused to drink therefrom is even *as the dead*.<sup>201</sup>

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.<sup>202</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

You have absolute freedom to ignore the invitation to examine the evidence Bahá'u'lláh presents, but *is this risk worth taking? To avoid this risk, all you need to do is to pray and read a few books! Is this too much to ask?* The realization of the grave consequences of ignoring Bahá'u'lláh's invitation to investigate His Call makes it an absolute urgency for every sincere Christian to give the task of looking for the One who claims to be the Lord and Redeemer of all humankind the highest priority imaginable. There should be no hesitation.

Briefly, why do you need to investigate Bahá'u'lláh's mission? At least for four reasons:

- *To obey God's command*
- *To experience a new and abundant spiritual life*
- *To lessen the enormous sufferings of humankind*
- *To protect your soul from the dishonor of denying not only Jesus Christ and Bahá'u'lláh but God Himself.*

*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.<sup>203</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

*How lofty is the station which man, if he but choose to fulfill his high destiny, can attain!* To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached! *Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day offereth you*, and deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of His grace. I beseech God that He may graciously enable every one of you to adorn himself, in this blessed Day, with the ornament of pure and holy deeds. He, verily, doeth whatsoever He willeth.<sup>204</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

*Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself...* that thy inner hearing may not be deprived of hearkening unto its call. This is My counsel unto thee and unto the beloved of God. *Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away.* God, verily, is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness.<sup>205</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

*But seek first the kingdom of God.*

Christ (Matt. 6:33)

*Remember how short my life is...*

Psalms 89:47

Look at all the things you own. Where do you think they be will 200 years from now? Do you believe anyone will know who you were and how you lived? In 200 years all the things you own will be either dust or rotting in the dust, including your body. What then is everlasting? Only the spiritual. Only the love we have for God and people, only our sense of integrity, honesty, and love for justice and truth. These will never rot. They will rest in our soul for all eternity.

Most people don't like to make decisions. If you are one of them, say this to yourself: I am not here forever, and I do not know how much time I have before the call comes.

*Postponing the most critical decision in my life is unwise. Tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year may not be mine. Let me take a few minutes, meditate, pray, talk to God, and then choose one of these two alternatives:*

### Choice 1

*My everlasting destiny is too significant to ignore. If Bahá'u'lláh is the One He claims to be, I would like to know. I make a commitment to read the recommended books a few minutes every day, until I come to a definite conclusion. I want to make sure I am not in the trap of denying my Lord and staying out of His Banquet. The risk is not worth taking.*

### Choice 2

*I am unwilling to take a few minutes every day and devote to the study of the Bahá'í Faith. I am sure I am not in the trap of denying my Lord, and I am not at the risk of staying out of His Banquet. I am too busy and do not have the time to devote to this topic.*

As we noted, in the parable of the talents, Jesus compares Himself with a Master who goes on a long journey (Matt. 25:14-30). Upon His return, He discovers that one of His servants, instead of investing his God-given “talents,” has hidden them in the ground. When he is asked to explain his reason for failing to invest his talents, he responds, “***I was afraid.***” The Master rejects his alibi, for it shows an absence of faith. The Master rebukes him and calls him “***wicked and lazy***” for allowing his eternal destiny to be controlled by unjustified fears.

The following true story supplements the message of Jesus’ parable of the talents. It shows the resistance many Christians display today to their Master, the Son come in the glory of His Father, the One who has now completed His long journey and returned once again to His heavenly Kingdom.

A young couple were separated during World War II. While the father was gone, the mother gave birth to a baby girl. The months passed and the mother kept a large picture of her husband on the desk so that the little girl would grow up knowing what her daddy looked like. She learned to say “Daddy” and associated the name with the picture on the desk.

Finally the day came when her father returned home from the war. The whole family gathered to watch the little girl when she saw her father for the first time. Imagine their disappointment when she would have nothing whatever to do with him. Instead, she ran to the photograph on the desk, saying, “That’s my daddy.” Day after day the family had to blink back the tears as they saw the young father on his knees trying his best to get acquainted with his little daughter, explaining as simply as he could that he was her daddy. But each time she would shake her head, then run to the picture on the desk and exclaim, “That’s my daddy.” This went on for some time, but one day something happened. The little girl, having gone repeatedly to the picture on the desk,

returned to her father and looked carefully into his face. Then she went back to the picture on the desk and studied it. The family held their breath. After several trips the little face lit up as the child exclaimed excitedly, “***They’re both the same daddy!***”<sup>206</sup>

How long will Christians continue to look at the drawings of Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God, upon the walls of their homes and houses of worship before turning their faces to their King and their Master who has now returned from His long journey with His new name, Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God? How long before they will open their hearts and their souls to the most glorious gift that awaits them? How long before they will **hear** His Voice?

***Behold, I stand at the door and knock.*** If anyone **hears My voice** and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Christ (Rev. 3:20-22)

***Open the doors of your hearts...We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom...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!***<sup>207</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves ***be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.*** Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. Christ (Luke 12:35-37)

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; ***the glory of the Lord*** [Bahá’u’lláh] shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, “Here I am.” Isaiah 58:8-9

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

The Lord is come in ***his great glory!***<sup>208</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and ***they shall come and see My glory*** [glory of God]. Isaiah 66:18

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of ***the glory of the Lord*** [Bahá’u’lláh], as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14

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

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

...let ***your*** [God’s] ***glory*** be over all the earth. Psalms 57:11

The world is illumined with the effulgent ***glory*** of His countenance.<sup>209</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

This is the Day in which ***the earth shineth with the effulgent light of thy Lord,*** but the people are lost in error and have been shut out as by a veil.<sup>210</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

I will set *My glory* [glory of God] among the nations...*I will not hide My face* from them anymore...  
Ezekiel 39:21,29 NKJV

*He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come!* His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; *His all-encompassing splendor is revealed.* Bəwargə ləst thou həsitatə or halt.<sup>211</sup>  
Bahá'u'lláh

### *A final invitation from the author to all seekers and lovers of truth*

It is human to err, and then to regret it. Remember a few of the many mistakes you made? How many times have you said, “I should have known better! If I had known then what I know now”? Making mistakes is as common and as ordinary as breathing. But there is one mistake you do not want to make. That mistake is about the reason you are here, and what you must do while you are here. That mistake is one hundred percent irreversible: You cannot return to undo it. You will not have a second chance. No one has ever returned from the grave. Isn't it wise then to pay more attention to this question—why you are here and what you must do while you are here?—than to anything else in your life?

Let us say everyday you spend eight hours making money or preparing to make money. You spend another eight hours sleeping. What do you do with the remaining hours? If you are an average person, you spend them also mostly on your physical needs.

What about your soul? Is it worthless? If you spend little or no time for your soul, it can only mean that you don't value it. Your soul *is* you. That is what you *really* are! By ignoring it, you ignore *yourself*! You ignore the very reason you were made and put on earth.

Suppose you go to a party. What is your purpose? To meet people and have a good time. Would it make any sense to go to a party simply to count the plates on the table and the tiles on the floor? You would say, “Doing that is crazy!” Isn't it equally crazy to come to this world but miss the very purpose for which you came? Isn't it equally crazy to come to this life simply to watch the world go by and do nothing? Notice the people around you. Instead of counting the plates and the tiles, they count how much they have saved, how much the stock market has soared, how many hours or minutes before they can leave work for home, how many days before Christmas, how many months before their vacation, how many years before their retirement—and then how many months, weeks, days, or hours before they must make their final trip: leave their hospital or their nursing home for a grave journey!

What then is our real purpose of being here? To discover and pursue what God has planned for us. Where can we discover that plan? In the sacred Scriptures of God's latest revelation of truth and knowledge, God's latest message to humankind.

May I invite you to take a little time away from serving your temporary “friend”—your body—and give it to yourself: your soul! You are solely your soul. In a little while, your aging friend to whom you pay so much attention will abandon you. That friend has come from the earth, and would love to go back to its origin, near its other friends. But you are

made of spirit. Your true home is heaven, and your true goal is God. So take a little time for your soul. That is the only time in your life that will really matter, that will make a lasting—indeed everlasting—difference in your happiness.

As it is human to err, it is also human to doubt. But what do you do when you doubt? You investigate, you look at facts, you examine them. Is there any other way to remove your doubts? Suppose I offer you a new kind of apple and say, “This is delicious, try it.” What would you do? If you are fearful and obstinate like some children, you may say, “No, I don’t want to!” If you are adventurous, you take a bite. That is all that God wants you to do. In your search for truth and happiness, you can find no principle more sound, no guideline more enlightening, no advice more critical, no rule more mistake proof, no commandment more urgent than these:

***Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.***

Christ (Matt. 7:7-8)

***You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.***

Christ (Matt. 7:16-20)

Now you know there is a tree that was planted in 1844—a tree that has endured and continued to grow ever since. It is called the Bahá’í Faith, the religion that is shedding light and splendor on our divided world, the Faith that is bestowing everlasting hope and joy on our hearts and souls. Every evidence points to this conclusion: This tree was not planted by human beings; the Gardener is God.

May I invite you to climb the tree, pick some fruits, taste them, and see for yourself how splendid they are. You have nothing to lose except accountability before God, who someday will ask you, “I planted a marvelous tree with the most tantalizing fruits. I invited you to taste them. Why didn’t you? Why did you ignore my invitation?” How would you respond? Would you say, “I ignored your invitation because your theology or interpretation of prophecies did not agree with mine”?

***I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.***

Christ (Rev. 3:20)

## Part II

# The Hour of His Judgment Has Come

Revelation 14:7

### *Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet 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, it shines 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.<sup>212</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh did not attend school, yet He wrote the equivalent of a hundred volumes, without hesitation or 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?"<sup>213</sup>

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!<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> 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 thou to mind the one who sentenced Jesus to death. He was the most learned of His age in His own country,<sup>3</sup> whilst he who was only a fisherman<sup>4</sup> 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.

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\* 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.

1. Perhaps a reference to this passage: "No one knows *the Son* [Jesus] except the Father..." (Matt. 11:27).
2. The Spirit of God, a title bestowed on Christ, in both the Islamic and the Bahá'í Scriptures.
3. 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).
4. Peter.

...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.<sup>5</sup> Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His 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,<sup>6</sup> 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.”<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> Say, verily, He hath testified of Me, and I do testify of Him.<sup>9</sup> 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, 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.

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5. 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).

6. “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father...” (Matthew 16:27).

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

8. “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).

9. “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).

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.<sup>10</sup>

Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son<sup>11</sup> 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...

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<sup>12</sup> 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<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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

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10. "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).

11. "...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*, pp. 85-86).

12. 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).

13. Revelation 2:15; 21:27.

14. "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).

that which the Son hath decreed.” And whatsoever hath proceeded out of His blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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. Blessed the insatiate soul who casteth away his selfish desires for love of Me and taketh his place at the banquet table<sup>17</sup> 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

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15. 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*.

16. 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

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 (Matthew 22:2-6, see also Matthew 25:1-13).

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

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

## Part III

### **Bahá'í Scriptures:**

**Books that can advance  
your knowledge of God  
and the Glory of God**

*Knowing the Glory of God*



*Books by the Same Author*

# **Knowing the Glory of God**

# **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.

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\* 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*

522 Pages  
Volume I

***That is the day when I come like a thief.***

***Happy the man who stays awake.***

***Christ (Rev. 16:15)***

***Do not let Him find you sleeping.***

***What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"***

***Christ (Mark 13:36)***

Did you know that the Bible contains 16 time prophecies concerning the year of the Second Advent? No wonder so many scholars discovered the same date. Did you also know that all those 16 prophecies point to the same year: 1844? ***Bahá'ís believe that the promise of the Second Advent has already been fulfilled, precisely as predicted.*** Christ did return in 1844, ***"like a thief,"*** in a way that ***the News of His coming did not draw much attention.*** And as the Book of Revelation predicts, God gave Him a new name: ***Bahá'u'lláh***, meaning ***the Glory of God.***

Obviously ***we expect you to be very skeptical***, but we invite you ***to stay spiritually awake, to "watch," to pay close attention, and to investigate this most glorious News.*** How can you do this? Start your search by examining the evidence presented in ***I Shall Come Again***, the first of a six-volume series on the fulfillment of biblical prophecies by ***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.***

***I Shall Come Again***, written after three decades of research, takes you step by step through 16 prophecies that point to 1844, and hundreds of other prophecies, concerning the return of Christ. It proves how these prophecies, without exception, were fulfilled by ***Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*** and His martyred Herald, ***the Báb (the Gate)***, who appeared in 1844. ***I Shall Come Again*** is one of the most fascinating books of our time. If you have faith in God's promises and a desire to know the truth, you will receive incomparable joy and hope from reading it.

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:

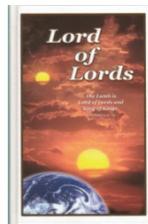
Some have suggested...that the prophecies were accidentally fulfilled in Jesus. In other words, he happened to be in the right place at the right time...If there is a God who is in control of the universe, as we have said, then chance is ruled out. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these events would have converged in the life of one man. Mathematicians have calculated the probability of 16 predictions being fulfilled in one man at 1 in 10<sup>45</sup> ...

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.

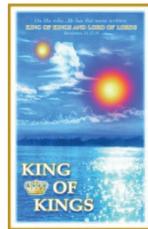
*Lord of Lords* shows that the probability of biblical prophecies coming true in the Bahá’í Faith by chance alone is about 1 in  $10^{80}$ . The number  $10^{80}$  is equal to the number of atoms in the known universe! What does this evidence indicate? ***It indicates that if anyone could pick a specific 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...*

*Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*

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

*Christ (Rev. 16:15)*

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

*Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*



### ***What do others say about:***

I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords,  
King of Kings?

*A scholarly work of meticulous research. Appealing to reason and applying the scientific method to prophetic scripture, it demonstrates that God has once again revealed Himself to humankind and has provided hope for unity and peace on this planet.*

**John Paul Vader, M.D.**

Author of For the Good of Mankind

*A book with a message of hope and fulfillment, a message that can transform our planet into a place of peace, into a kingdom that has been the dream and hope of humanity since the dawn of history...a scholarly, comprehensive, and fascinating work that has been long overdue. No wonder it took over three decades to complete it.*

**Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson**

Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

*A story with an incredible ending that is made credible by the sheer weight of evidence. It is a must for anyone interested in the proofs of the advent of the Promised One of all ages.*

**John Huddleston**

Former Chief of Budget and Planning  
Division, International Monetary Fund,  
Author of The Earth Is But One Country

*...a treasure house of great value for both Bahá'ís and seekers.*

**Adib Taherzadeh**

Author and Scholar

*I am in awe at the extent of research you have undertaken!*

**Waldo Boyd**

Writer and Editor

***Your work never fails to astound me. The effort and breadth of your knowledge both of the Bible and other literature as well as the depth of your understanding of Bahá'í Scripture is truly amazing. Also, a hallmark of your work is your thoroughness. Anyone who believes in biblical prophecy, and reads these volumes with an open mind, cannot fail to be convinced.***

**Dr. Tom Rowe**  
Professor of Psychology

***Your work is the best I've seen on biblical prophecies and proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. You offer so much information in relatively few pages. Your many references prove clearly the book's central claim. Your language is simple and exciting. You take the reader through a complete spiritual and prophetic adventure. Your approach is modest, yet dynamic. I pray it will excite all your readers as it has excited me.***

**Joe Killeen**  
Bible Scholar, with a Degree in  
Eschatology and Soteriology

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

***An important work that will be referenced by future Bahá'í scholars for millennia to come.***

**Robert F. Riggs**  
Aerospace and Marine Scientist, Inventor,  
Author of *The Apocalypse Unsealed*

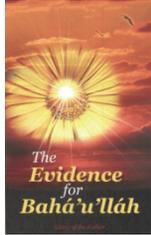
***By writing these volumes Dr. Motlagh has made a momentous contribution to our understanding of biblical prophecy. As a former Baptist minister, I urge all Christians to investigate the news of the return of our Lord as presented in I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you" (Isa. 60:1).***

**Mel Campbell**  
Former Baptist Minister



***Come Now,  
Let Us Reason  
Together***  
286 Pages

This book is written in response to the objections raised by a pastor against the Bahá'í Faith. ***It removes all the main obstacles that prevent Christians from recognizing the return of the Son in the glory of the Father***, from acknowledging the promised Redeemer of our time—***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God***. Once you start reading this book, you will find it hard to put down.



***The Evidence  
for Bahá'u'lláh:***

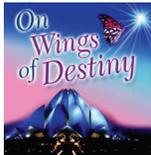
**The Glory of  
the Father**  
329 pages

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***

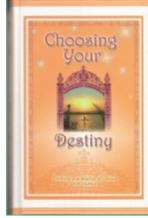


***On Wings of  
Destiny***  
274 Pages

***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.

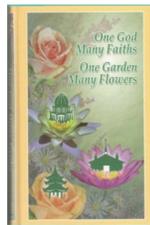
***On Wings of Destiny*** shows that the only way you can attain true joy and happiness in all the worlds of God is to cultivate your spiritual potential and to draw nearer and nearer to God. If you value your soul and wish to choose your destiny in the light of knowledge and freedom, take the time to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



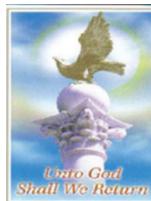
***One God, Many  
Faiths; One Garden,  
Many Flowers***  
290 Pages

***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.



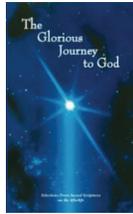
## ***The Afterlife***



***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***

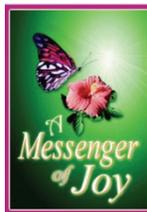
*Return* is compiled and arranged to portray a clear vision of the meaning of life—both here and hereafter—and to offer guidance about how we can prepare our soul for God’s “many mansions in heaven.”



***The Glorious  
Journey to God***

256 Pages

*The Glorious Journey to God* contains quotations from the Bible, the Qur’án, and Bahá’í Scriptures on the Afterlife. The book shows a remarkable similarity between these sacred Scriptures.



***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***

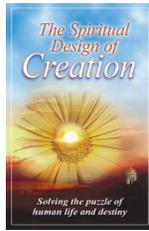
**A Near-Death Vision  
of the Next Life**

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***



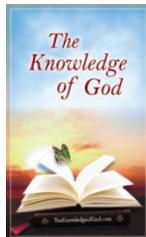
### ***The Spiritual Design of Creation***

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.

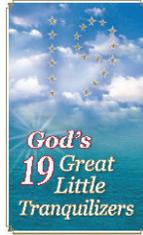
Our purpose in coming to this world is spiritual transformation, which can be attained only by knowing and loving God. ***The Spiritual Design of Creation*** will help you attain this Most Glorious Purpose. It appeals both to the mind and to the heart. It satisfies the mind by presenting the latest scientific 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?



### ***The Knowledge of God***

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

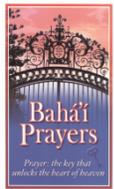
This is God's prescription for peaceful living. Without knowing, accepting, and living by these principles, no one can attain true happiness. This mini-book presents briefly the 19 most significant spiritual principles that bind us to our Creator.



**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. <b><i>Bahá'í Faith: God's Greatest Gift to Humankind</i></b> 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. <b><i>Bahá'u'lláh: The One Promised in All Scriptures</i></b> 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. <b><i>Bahá'í Proofs</i></b></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. <b><i>The Greatest News: The News Everyone Should Hear</i></b> 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. <b><i>Death: the Door to Heaven</i></b> 182 pages</p>		<p>This volume describes the mysteries of the afterlife as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. <b><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></b> Without gaining a glimpse of the afterlife, this life has no meaning.</p>
<p>6. <b><i>God's 19 Great Little Tranquilizers</i></b> 62 pages</p>		<p>We have been created to know and love God. This small book presents the "<b><i>Knowledge of God.</i></b>" 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. <b><i>Bahá'i Prayers</i></b> 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 <b><i>Bahá'u'lláh—the Glory of God.</i></b></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?

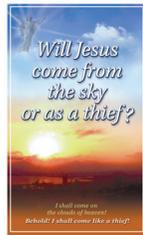


## ***Forthcoming Books***

### ***The Evidence for Jesus***

#### **The Glory of the Son**

It is absolutely essential to know why we believe in Jesus. Where can we find the answer? Only in the Words of Jesus Himself. ***The Evidence for Jesus*** offers a brief summary of all the reasons Jesus—not His followers—gave to substantiate His claim. This is a book that every Christian should read. It will also be of great value to those of the Jewish faith who have a desire to know the evidence for their glorious King and Redeemer: Jesus Christ.



### ***Will Jesus Come from the Sky or as a Thief?***

***Be always on the watch! Luke 21:36***

***The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. I Thess. 5:2***

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century many Christian scholars had discovered that, according to numerous biblical prophecies and promises, Christ would return in 1844. Thousands of Christians around the world expected His Return in that year. Why did so many discover the same date? And what piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did they miss? Let us explore this critical question.

Jesus declared that He would return “***like a thief***.” He also repeatedly warned us to “***Watch!***” How does a thief come? Secretly. A thief does not want to draw attention to himself. This is his foremost concern. How can we catch a thief? By being awake and “***watchful***,” by “***paying attention***” to his coming. Jesus’ warning that He would return “***like a thief***,” and His recommended strategy for recognizing Him by staying ***awake*** and by “***watching***” for Him, are complementary:

***The warning: I shall come like a thief!***

***The way to recognize me: Watch, pay close attention! Do not be complacent!***

What, then, did Jesus mean by warning us repeatedly and emphatically to “***Watch!***”? He meant: “***Pay close attention to the news of My coming!***”

How did Jesus come the first time? Like a thief. He walked among the Jews. He knew every one of them, but with a few exceptions, they did not know Him. Jesus concealed His supreme glory from “the strangers,” from all those who were unworthy of seeing the Spirit of God in Him (John 12:40), from all those who “***may look and look but see nothing***” (Mark 10:12). ***Only the spiritually-sighted paid close attention to Him***, only they “watched” with their hearts and souls, and only they saw the glory of God in Him. Jesus did not allow the spiritually blind to witness His divine glory.

By the vivid expression “*like a thief*” Jesus instructs us to expect a repetition of the way He came the first time. He further confirms this fact by predicting that *people will respond to the News of His coming the same way that they responded to the News of the coming of Noah*. They will be complacent, non-attentive, negligent, and spiritually asleep!

What piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did Christians (who expected the Return of Christ in 1844) miss? The same “piece” that the Jews had missed 18 centuries earlier and are still missing! That piece is the word “*SPIRIT*!”

### *The “missing piece” for Jews:*

He will come as a “*king*” means: “*His Spirit* will come as a king.”

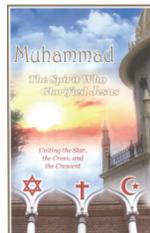
### *The “missing piece” for Christians:*

He will come from *heaven* means: “*His Spirit* will come from heaven.”

Jesus Himself decoded the word “sky” or “heaven” several times. Compare the following two verses, one from *Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God*; the other from *Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God*:

*I [the Spirit of God, Christ] have come down from heaven.* *Christ (John 6:38)*

*He [the Spirit of God, Bahá’u’lláh], verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time.* *Bahá’u’lláh (the Glory of God)*



*Muhammad:  
the Spirit Who  
Glorified Jesus*

This book introduces Islám from a Bahá’í perspective. It demonstrates a remarkable harmony between the Bible and the Qur’án. It also responds to the objections raised against Islám.

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