

OLD TRANSLATION (1908)	REVISED TRANSLATION (2015)
ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHETS IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMANITY	ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHETS IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMANITY
NATURE IS GOVERNED BY ONE UNIVERSAL LAW	NATURE IS GOVERNED BY A UNIVERSAL LAW
Nature is that condition, that reality, which in appearance consists in life and death, or, in other words, in the composition and decomposition of all things.	Nature is that condition or reality which outwardly is the source of the life and death, or, in other words, of the composition and decomposition, of all things.
This Nature is subjected to an absolute organization, to determined laws, to a complete order and a finished design, from which it will never depart—to such a degree, indeed, that if you look carefully and with keen sight, from the smallest invisible atom up to such large bodies of the world of existence as the globe of the sun or the other great stars and luminous spheres, whether you regard their arrangement, their composition, their form or their movement, you will find that all are in the highest degree of organization and are under one law from which they will never depart.	This nature is subject to a sound organization, to inviolable laws, to a perfect order and a consummate design, from which it never departs. To such an extent is this true that were you to gaze with the eye of insight and discernment, you would observe that all things — from the smallest invisible atom to the largest globes in the world of existence, such as the sun or the other great stars and luminous bodies — are most perfectly organized, be it with regard to their order, their composition, their outward form or their motion; and that all are subject to one universal law from which they never depart.
But when you look at Nature itself, you see that it has no intelligence, no will. For instance, the nature of fire is to burn; it burns without will or intelligence. The nature of water is fluidity; it flows without will or intelligence. The nature of the sun is radiance; it shines without will or intelligence. The nature of vapor is to ascend; it ascends without will or intelligence. Thus it is clear that the natural movements of all things are compelled; there are no voluntary movements except those of animals and, above all, those of man.	When you consider nature itself, however, you see that it has neither awareness nor will. For instance, the nature of fire is to burn; it burns without consciousness or will. The nature of water is to flow; it flows without consciousness or will. The nature of the sun is to shed light; it shines without consciousness or will. The nature of vapour is to rise; it rises without consciousness or will. It is therefore evident that the natural movements of all created things are compelled, and that nothing moves of its own will save animals and, in particular, man.
Man is able to resist and to oppose Nature because he discovers the constitution of things, and through this he commands the forces of Nature; all the inventions he has made are due to his discovery of the constitution of things. For example, he invented the telegraph, which is the means of communication between the East and the West. It is evident, then, that man rules over Nature.	Man is able to resist and oppose nature inasmuch as he discovers the natures of things and, by virtue of this discovery, has mastery over nature itself. Indeed, all the crafts that man has devised proceed from this discovery. For example, he has invented the telegraph, which connects the East and the West. It is therefore evident that man rules over nature.
Now, when you behold in existence such organizations, arrangements and laws, can you say that all these are the effect of Nature, though Nature has neither intelligence nor perception? If	Now, can such organization, order and laws as you observe in existence be attributed merely to the effect of nature, notwithstanding that nature itself has neither consciousness nor

<p>not, it becomes evident that this Nature, which has neither perception nor intelligence, is in the grasp of Almighty God, Who is the Ruler of the world of Nature; whatever He wishes, He causes Nature to manifest.</p>	<p>understanding? It is therefore evident that this nature, which has neither consciousness nor understanding, is in the grasp of the omnipotent Lord, Who is the Ruler of the world of nature and Who causes it to manifest whatsoever He desires.</p>
<p>One of the things which has appeared in the world of existence, and which is one of the requirements of Nature, is human life. Considered from this point of view man is the branch; nature is the root. Then can the will and the intelligence, and the perfections which exist in the branch, be absent in the root?</p>	<p>Some say that human existence is among those things that have appeared in the world of being and that are due to the exigencies of nature. Were this true, man would be the branch and nature the root. But is it possible that there could exist a will, a consciousness, and certain perfections in the branch which are absent in the root?</p>
<p>It is said that Nature in its own essence is in the grasp of the power of God, Who is the Eternal Almighty One: He holds Nature within accurate regulations and laws, and rules over it.</p>	<p>Hence it is clear that nature, in its very essence, is in the grasp of God's might, and that it is that Eternal and Almighty One Who subjects nature to ideal laws and organizing principles, and Who rules over it.</p>
<p>PROOFS AND EVIDENCES OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD</p>	<p>PROOF AND ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD</p>
<p>One of the proofs and demonstrations of the existence of God is the fact that man did not create himself: nay, his creator and designer is another than himself.</p> <p>It is certain and indisputable that the creator of man is not like man because a powerless creature cannot create another being. The maker, the creator, has to possess all perfections in order that he may create.</p>	<p>Among the proofs and arguments for the existence of God is the fact that man has not created himself, but rather that his creator and fashioner is another than he. And it is certain and indisputable that the creator of man is not like man himself, because a powerless being cannot create another being, and an active creator must possess all perfections to produce his handiwork.</p>
<p>Can the creation be perfect and the creator imperfect? Can a picture be a masterpiece and the painter imperfect in his art? For it is his art and his creation. Moreover, the picture cannot be like the painter; otherwise, the painting would have created itself. However perfect the picture may be, in comparison with the painter it is in the utmost degree of imperfection.</p>	<p>Is it possible for the handiwork to be perfect and the craftsman imperfect? Is it possible for a painting to be a masterpiece and the painter to be deficient in his craft, notwithstanding that he is its creator? No: the painting cannot be like the painter, for otherwise it would have painted itself. And no matter how perfect the painting may be, in comparison with the painter it is utterly deficient.</p>
<p>The contingent world is the source of imperfections: God is the origin of perfections. The imperfections of the contingent world are in themselves a proof of the perfections of God.</p> <p>For example, when you look at man, you see that he is weak. This very weakness of the creature is a proof of the power of the Eternal Almighty One,</p>	<p>Thus the contingent world is the source of deficiencies and God is the source of perfection. The very deficiencies of the contingent world testify to God's perfections. For example, when you consider man, you observe that he is weak, and this very weakness of the creature betokens the power of One Who is Eternal and Almighty, for were it not for power, weakness could not be</p>

<p>because, if there were no power, weakness could not be imagined. Then the weakness of the creature is a proof of the power of God; for if there were no power, there could be no weakness; so from this weakness it becomes evident that there is power in the world.</p>	<p>imagined. Thus the weakness of the creature is evidence of the power of God — without power there could be no weakness. This weakness makes it evident that there is a power in the world.</p>
<p>Again, in the contingent world there is poverty; then necessarily wealth exists, since poverty is apparent in the world. In the contingent world there is ignorance; necessarily knowledge exists, because ignorance is found; for if there were no knowledge, neither would there be ignorance. Ignorance is the nonexistence of knowledge, and if there were no existence, nonexistence could not be realized.</p>	<p>Again, in the contingent world there is poverty; hence there must be wealth for there to be poverty in the world. In the contingent world there is ignorance; hence there must be knowledge for there to be ignorance. If there were no knowledge, neither could there be ignorance, for ignorance is the non-existence of knowledge, and if there were no existence, non-existence could not be.</p>
<p>It is certain that the whole contingent world is subjected to a law and rule which it can never disobey; even man is forced to submit to death, to sleep and to other conditions—that is to say, man in certain particulars is governed, and necessarily this state of being governed implies the existence of a governor. Because a characteristic of contingent beings is dependency, and this dependency is an essential necessity, therefore, there must be an independent being whose independence is essential.</p> <p>In the same way it is understood from the man who is sick that there must be one who is in health; for if there were no health, his sickness could not be proved.</p>	<p>It is certain that the entire contingent world is subject to an order and a law which it can never disobey. Even man is forced to submit to death, sleep and other conditions — that is, in certain matters he is compelled, and this very compulsion implies the existence of One Who is All-Compelling. So long as the contingent world is characterized by dependency, and so long as this dependency is one of its essential requirements, there must be One Who in His own Essence is independent of all things. In the same way, the very existence of a sick person shows that there must be one who is healthy; for without the latter the existence of the former could not be established.</p>
<p>Therefore, it becomes evident that there is an Eternal Almighty One, Who is the possessor of all perfections, because unless He possessed all perfections He would be like His creation.</p> <p>Throughout the world of existence it is the same; the smallest created thing proves that there is a creator. For instance, this piece of bread proves that it has a maker.</p>	<p>It is therefore evident that there is an Eternal and Almighty One Who is the sum of all perfections, for otherwise He would be even as the creatures. Likewise, throughout the world of existence the smallest created thing attests to the existence of a creator. For instance, this piece of bread attests that it has a maker.</p>
<p>Praise be to God! the least change produced in the form of the smallest thing proves the existence of a creator: then can this great universe, which is endless, be self-created and come into existence from the action of matter and the elements? How self-evidently wrong is such a supposition!</p>	<p>Gracious God! The change in the outward form of the smallest thing proves the existence of a creator: then how could this vast, boundless universe have created itself and come to exist solely through the mutual interaction of the elements? How patently false is such a notion!</p>

<p>These obvious arguments are adduced for weak souls; but if the inner perception be open, a hundred thousand clear proofs become visible. Thus, when man feels the indwelling spirit, he is in no need of arguments for its existence; but for those who are deprived of the bounty of the spirit, it is necessary to establish external arguments.</p>	<p>These are theoretical arguments adduced for weak souls; but if the eye of inner vision be opened, a hundred thousand clear proofs will be seen. Thus, when man feels the indwelling spirit he is in no need of arguments for its existence; but for those who are deprived of the grace of the spirit it is necessary to set forth external arguments.</p>
<p>THE NEED OF AN EDUCATOR</p>	<p>THE NEED FOR AN EDUCATOR</p>
<p>When we consider existence, we see that the mineral, vegetable, animal and human worlds are all in need of an educator.</p>	<p>When we consider existence, we observe that the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human realms, each and all, are in need of an educator.</p>
<p>If the earth is not cultivated, it becomes a jungle where useless weeds grow; but if a cultivator comes and tills the ground, it produces crops which nourish living creatures. It is evident, therefore, that the soil needs the cultivation of the farmer. Consider the trees: if they remain without a cultivator, they will be fruitless, and without fruit they are useless; but if they receive the care of a gardener, these same barren trees become fruitful, and through cultivation, fertilization and engrafting the trees which had bitter fruits yield sweet fruits. These are rational proofs; in this age the peoples of the world need the arguments of reason.</p>	<p>If the land is deprived of a cultivator, it becomes a thicket of thriving weeds, but if a farmer is found to cultivate it, the resulting harvest provides sustenance for living things. It is therefore evident that the land is in need of the farmer's cultivation. Consider the trees: If they remain uncultivated they bear no fruit, and without fruit they are of no use. But when committed to a gardener's care, the barren tree becomes fruitful, and, through cultivation, crossing and grafting, the tree with bitter fruit yields sweet-tasting ones. These are rational arguments, which are what the people of the world require in this day.</p>
<p>The same is true with respect to animals: notice that when the animal is trained it becomes domestic, and also that man, if he is left without education, becomes bestial, and, moreover, if left under the rule of nature, becomes lower than an animal, whereas if he is educated he becomes an angel. For the greater number of animals do not devour their own kind, but men, in the Sudan, in the central regions of Africa, kill and eat each other.</p>	<p>Consider likewise the animals: If an animal is trained it becomes domesticated; whereas man, if he is left without education, becomes like an animal. Indeed, if man is abandoned to the rule of nature, he sinks even lower than the animal, whereas if he is educated he becomes even as an angel. For most animals do not devour their own kind, but men in the Sudan, in the middle of Africa, rend and eat each other.</p>
<p>Now reflect that it is education that brings the East and the West under the authority of man; it is education that produces wonderful industries; it is education that spreads great sciences and arts; it is education that makes manifest new discoveries and institutions. If there were no educator, there would be no such things as</p>	<p>Now observe that it is education that brings East and West under man's dominion, produces all these marvellous crafts, promotes these mighty arts and sciences, and gives rise to these new discoveries and undertakings. Were it not for an educator, the means of comfort, civilization and human virtues could in no wise have been</p>

<p>comforts, civilization or humanity. If a man be left alone in a wilderness where he sees none of his own kind, he will undoubtedly become a mere brute; it is then clear that an educator is needed.</p>	<p>acquired. If a man is left alone in a wilderness where he sees none of his own kind, he will undoubtedly become a mere animal. It is therefore clear that an educator is needed.</p>
<p>But education is of three kinds: material, human and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease. This education is common to animals and man.</p>	<p>But education is of three kinds: material, human, and spiritual. Material education aims at the growth and development of the body, and consists in securing its sustenance and obtaining the means of its ease and comfort. This education is common to both man and animal.</p>
<p>Human education signifies civilization and progress—that is to say, government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries and elaborate institutions, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal.</p>	<p>Human education, however, consists in civilization and progress, that is, sound governance, social order, human welfare, commerce and industry, arts and sciences, momentous discoveries and great undertakings, which are the central features distinguishing man from the animal.</p>
<p>Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this state man becomes the focus of divine blessings, the manifestation of the words, “Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness.” This is the goal of the world of humanity.</p>	<p>As to divine education, it is the education of the Kingdom and consists in acquiring divine perfections. This is indeed true education, for by its virtue man becomes the focal centre of divine blessings and the embodiment of the verse “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” This is the ultimate goal of the world of humanity.</p>
<p>Now we need an educator who will be at the same time a material, human and spiritual educator, and whose authority will be effective in all conditions. So if anyone should say, “I possess perfect comprehension and intelligence, and I have no need of such an educator,” he would be denying that which is clear and evident, as though a child should say, “I have no need of education; I will act according to my reason and intelligence, and so I shall attain the perfections of existence”; or as though the blind should say, “I am in no need of sight, because many other blind people exist without difficulty.”</p>	<p>Now, we need an educator who can be at the same time a material, a human and a spiritual educator, that his authority may have effect at every degree of existence. And should anyone say, “I am endowed with perfect reason and comprehension, and have no need for such an educator,” he would be denying the obvious. It is as though a child were to say, “I have no need of education, but will act and seek the perfections of existence according to my own thinking and intelligence,” or as though a blind man were to claim, “I have no need of sight, for there are many blind people who get by.”</p>
<p>Then it is plain and evident that man needs an educator, and this educator must be unquestionably and indubitably perfect in all respects and distinguished above all men. Otherwise, if he should be like the rest of humanity, he could not be their educator, more particularly because he must be at the same time their material and human as well as their spiritual educator—that is to say, he must teach men to</p>	<p>It is therefore clear and evident that man stands in need of an educator. This educator must undeniably be perfect in every way and distinguished above all men. For if he were like others he could never be their educator, particularly since he must at once be their material, human and spiritual educator. That is, he must organize and administer their material affairs and establish a social order, that they may</p>

<p>organize and carry out physical matters, and to form a social order in order to establish cooperation and mutual aid in living so that material affairs may be organized and regulated for any circumstances that may occur.</p>	<p>aid and assist each other in securing the means of livelihood and that their material affairs may be ordered and arranged in every respect.</p>
<p>In the same way he must establish human education—that is to say, he must educate intelligence and thought in such a way that they may attain complete development, so that knowledge and science may increase, and the reality of things, the mysteries of beings and the properties of existence may be discovered; that, day by day, instructions, inventions and institutions may be improved; and from things perceptible to the senses conclusions as to intellectual things may be deduced.</p>	<p>He must likewise lay the foundations of human education, that is, he must so educate human minds and thoughts that they may become capable of substantive progress; that science and knowledge may expand; that the realities of things, the mysteries of the universe and the properties of all that exists may be revealed; that learning, discoveries and major undertakings may day by day increase; and that matters of the intellect may be deduced from and conveyed through the sensible.</p>
<p>He must also impart spiritual education, so that intelligence and comprehension may penetrate the metaphysical world, and may receive benefit from the sanctifying breeze of the Holy Spirit, and may enter into relationship with the Supreme Concourse. He must so educate the human reality that it may become the center of the divine appearance, to such a degree that the attributes and the names of God shall be resplendent in the mirror of the reality of man, and the holy verse “We will make man in Our image and likeness” shall be realized.</p>	<p>He must also impart spiritual education, so that minds may apprehend the metaphysical world, breathe the sanctified breaths of the Holy Spirit, and enter into relationship with the Concourse on high, and that human realities may become the manifestations of divine blessings, that perchance all the names and attributes of God may be reflected in the mirror of the human reality, and the meaning of the blessed verse, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” may be realized.</p>
<p>It is clear that human power is not able to fill such a great office, and that reason alone could not undertake the responsibility of so great a mission. How can one solitary person without help and without support lay the foundations of such a noble construction? He must depend on the help of the spiritual and divine power to be able to undertake this mission. One Holy Soul gives life to the world of humanity, changes the aspect of the terrestrial globe, causes intelligence to progress, vivifies souls, lays the basis of a new life, establishes new foundations, organizes the world, brings nations and religions under the shadow of one standard, delivers man from the world of imperfections and vices, and inspires him with the desire and need of natural and acquired perfections. Certainly nothing short of a divine power could accomplish so great a work.</p>	<p>It is clear, however, that mere human power is incapable of fulfilling this great office, and that the results of human thought alone cannot secure such bounties. How can a single person, with no aid or assistance, lay the foundations of such a lofty edifice? A divine and spiritual power is therefore needed to enable him to carry out this mission. Behold! One sanctified Soul revives the world of humanity, transforms the face of the globe, develops the minds, quickens the souls, inaugurates a new life, establishes new foundations, orders the world, gathers the nations and religions under the shadow of one banner, delivers man from the realm of baseness and deficiency, and exhorts and encourages him to develop his innate and acquired perfections. Certainly nothing short of a divine power could accomplish this feat! One must examine this</p>

<p>We ought to consider this with justice, for this is the office of justice.</p>	<p>matter fairly, as this indeed is an occasion for fairness.</p>
<p>A Cause which all the governments and peoples of the world, with all their powers and armies, cannot promulgate and spread, one Holy Soul can promote without help or support! Can this be done by human power? No, in the name of God! For example, Christ, alone and solitary, upraised the standard of peace and righteousness, a work which all the victorious governments with all their hosts are unable to accomplish. Consider what was the fate of so many and diverse empires and peoples: the Roman Empire, France, Germany, Russia, England, etc.; all were gathered together under the same tent—that is to say, the appearance of Christ brought about a union among these diverse nations, some of whom, under the influence of Christianity, became so united that they sacrificed their lives and property for one another. After the time of Constantine, who was the protagonist of Christianity, divisions broke out among them. The point is this, that Christ united these nations but after a while governments became the cause of discord.</p>	<p>A Cause which all the governments and peoples of the earth, notwithstanding all their powers and their armies, are unable to promote and promulgate, one holy Soul promulgates without aid or assistance! Can this be accomplished through the agency of mere human power? No, by God! For example, Christ, alone and single-handedly, raised the banner of peace and amity — a feat that the combined forces of all the mighty governments of the world are unable to accomplish. Consider how numerous are the diverse governments and peoples — such as Italy, France, Germany, Russia, England, and the like — who have been gathered together under the same canopy! The point is that the advent of Christ brought about fellowship among these differing peoples. Indeed some among the peoples who believed in Christ were so closely united as to offer up their life and substance for one another. Such was the case until the days of Constantine, through whom the Cause of Christ was exalted. After a time, however, and as a result of differing motives, divisions broke out again among them. Our meaning is that Christ united these nations, but after a long while the governments caused the resurgence of discord.</p>
<p>What I mean is that Christ sustained a Cause that all the kings of the earth could not establish! He united the various religions and modified ancient customs. Consider what great differences existed between Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Israelites and other peoples of Europe. Christ removed these differences and became the cause of love between these communities. Although after some time governments destroyed this union, the work of Christ was accomplished.</p>	<p>The main point is that Christ accomplished what all the kings of the earth were powerless to achieve. He united differing nations and changed ancient customs. Consider what great differences existed between Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Israelites, as well as other peoples of Europe. Christ abolished these differences and became the cause of concord among these peoples. Although after a long while the governments disrupted this unity, Christ had indeed accomplished His task.</p>
<p>Therefore, the Universal Educator must be at the same time a physical, human and spiritual educator; and He must possess a supernatural power, so that He may hold the position of a divine teacher. If He does not show forth such a holy power, He will not be able to educate, for if He be imperfect, how can He give a perfect education? If He be ignorant, how can He make others wise? If He be unjust, how can He make</p>	<p>Our meaning is that the universal Educator must be at once a material, a human and a spiritual educator, and, soaring above the world of nature, must be possessed of another power, so that He may assume the station of a divine teacher. Were He not to wield such a celestial power, He would not be able to educate, for He would be imperfect Himself. How then could He foster perfection? If He were ignorant, how could He</p>

others just? If He be earthly, how can He make others heavenly?	make others wise? If He were unjust, how could He make others just? If He were earthly, how could He make others heavenly?
Now we must consider justly: did these Divine Manifestations Who have appeared possess all these qualifications or not? If They had not these qualifications and these perfections, They were not real Educators.	Now, we must consider fairly whether these divine Manifestations that have appeared had all these attributes or not. If they were devoid of these attributes and perfections, then they were not true educators.
Therefore, it must be our task to prove to the thoughtful by reasonable arguments the prophethood of Moses, of Christ and of the other Divine Manifestations. And the proofs and evidences which we give are not based on traditional but on rational arguments.	Therefore it is through rational arguments that we must prove to rational minds the prophethood of Moses, of Christ and of the other divine Manifestations. And the proofs and arguments which we provide here are based on rational and not on traditional arguments.
It has now been proved by rational arguments that the world of existence is in the utmost need of an educator, and that its education must be achieved by divine power. There is no doubt that this holy power is revelation, and that the world must be educated through this power which is above human power.	It has thus been established by rational arguments that the world of existence stands in utmost need of an educator, and that its education must be achieved through a celestial power. There is no doubt that this celestial power is divine revelation, and that the world must be educated through this power which transcends human power.
ABRAHAM	ABRAHAM
One of those Who possessed this power and was assisted by it was Abraham. And the proof of it was that He was born in Mesopotamia, and of a family who were ignorant of the Oneness of God. He opposed His own nation and people, and even His own family, by rejecting all their gods. Alone and without help He resisted a powerful tribe, a task which is neither simple nor easy. It is as if in this day someone were to go to a Christian people who are attached to the Bible, and deny Christ; or in the Papal Court—God forbid!—if such a one were in the most powerful manner to blaspheme against Christ and oppose the people.	Among those who possessed this divine power and were assisted by it was Abraham. The proof is this: Abraham was born in Mesopotamia of a family that was ignorant of the oneness of God; He opposed His own people and government, and even His own kin; He rejected all their gods; and, alone and single-handedly, He withstood a powerful nation. Such opposition and resistance were not simple or trivial. It is as though one were in this day to deny Christ among Christian nations who firmly cling to the Bible; or as though one were — God forbid! — to blaspheme Christ in the papal court, oppose all His followers, and to act thus in the most vehement manner.
These people believed not in one God but in many gods, to whom they ascribed miracles; therefore, they all arose against Him, and no one supported Him except Lot, His brother's son, and one or two other people of no importance. At last, reduced to the utmost distress by the opposition of His enemies, He was obliged to leave His native land. In reality they banished Him in order that He might be crushed and destroyed, and that no trace of Him might be left.	These people believed not in one God but in many gods, to whom they ascribed miracles, and hence they all rose up against Abraham. No one supported Him except His nephew Lot, and one or two other individuals of no consequence. At last the intensity of His enemies' opposition obliged Him, utterly wronged, to forsake His native land. In reality He was banished, that He might be reduced to naught and that no trace of

<p>Abraham then came into the region of the Holy Land.</p>	<p>Him might remain. Abraham then came to these regions, that is, to the Holy Land.</p>
<p>His enemies considered that His exile would lead to His destruction and ruin, as it seemed impossible that a man banished from His native land, deprived of His rights and oppressed on all sides—even though He were a king—could escape extermination. But Abraham stood fast and showed forth extraordinary firmness—and God made this exile to be to His eternal honor—until He established the Unity of God in the midst of a polytheistic generation.</p>	<p>My point is that His enemies imagined that this exile would lead to His destruction and ruin. And indeed, if a man is banished from his native land, deprived of his rights, and oppressed from every side, he is bound — even if he be a king — to be reduced to naught. But Abraham stood fast and showed forth extraordinary constancy, and God changed His exile into abiding honour, till at last He established the oneness of God, for at that time the generality of mankind were idol-worshippers.</p>
<p>This exile became the cause of the progress of the descendants of Abraham, and the Holy Land was given to them. As a result the teachings of Abraham were spread abroad, a Jacob appeared among His posterity, and a Joseph who became ruler in Egypt. In consequence of His exile a Moses and a being like Christ were manifested from His posterity, and Hagar was found from whom Ishmael was born, one of whose descendants was Muḥammad. In consequence of His exile the Báb appeared from His posterity, and the Prophets of Israel were numbered among the descendants of Abraham. And so it will continue for ever and ever. Finally, in consequence of His exile the whole of Europe and most of Asia came under the protecting shadow of the God of Israel. See what a power it is that enabled a Man Who was a fugitive from His country to found such a family, to establish such a faith, and to promulgate such teachings. Can anyone say that all this occurred accidentally? We must be just: was this Man an Educator or not?</p>	<p>This exile became the cause of the progress of Abraham’s descendants. This exile resulted in their being given the Holy Land. This exile resulted in the diffusion of Abraham’s teachings. This exile resulted in the appearance of a Jacob from the seed of Abraham, and of a Joseph who became ruler in Egypt. This exile resulted in the appearance of a Moses from that same seed. This exile resulted in the appearance of a being such as Christ from that lineage. This exile resulted in a Hagar being found, of whom Ishmael was begotten, and from whom Muḥammad in turn descended. This exile resulted in the appearance of the Báb from the lineage of Abraham. This exile resulted in the appearance of the Prophets of Israel from the progeny of Abraham — and so will it continue forevermore. This exile resulted in the whole of Europe and most of Asia entering under the shadow of the God of Israel. Behold what a power it was that enabled an emigrant to establish such a family, to found such a nation and to promulgate such teachings. Now, can anyone claim that all this was purely fortuitous? We must be fair: was this Man an Educator or not?</p>
<p>Since the exile of Abraham from Ur to Aleppo in Syria produced this result, we must consider what will be the effect of the exile of Bahá’u’lláh in His several removes from Ṭihrán to Baghdád, from thence to Constantinople, to Rumelia and to the Holy Land.</p>	<p>It behoves us to ponder awhile that if the emigration of Abraham from Ur to Aleppo in Syria produced such results, what will be the effect of the exile of Bahá’u’lláh from Ṭihrán to Baghdád, and from thence to Constantinople, to Rumelia and to the Holy Land!</p>
<p>See what a perfect Educator Abraham was!</p>	<p>Behold then what an accomplished Educator Abraham was!</p>

<p>MOSES</p> <p>Moses was for a long time a shepherd in the wilderness. Regarded outwardly, He was a Man brought up in a tyrannical household, and was known among men as One Who had committed a murder and become a shepherd. By the government and the people of Pharaoh He was much hated and detested.</p> <p>It was such a Man as this that freed a great nation from the chains of captivity, made them contented, brought them out from Egypt, and led them to the Holy Land.</p>	<p>MOSES</p> <p>Moses was for a long time a shepherd in the wilderness. To outward seeming He was a man who had been reared in the bosom of tyranny, had become reputed among men as a murderer, had taken up the shepherd's staff, and was fiercely hated and reviled by Pharaoh's government and people. It was such a man who freed a great people from the fetters of captivity, and persuaded them to leave Egypt and settle in the Holy Land.</p>
<p>This people from the depths of degradation were lifted up to the height of glory. They were captive; they became free. They were the most ignorant of peoples; they became the most wise. As the result of the institutions that Moses gave them, they attained a position which entitled them to honor among all nations, and their fame spread to all lands, to such a degree indeed that among surrounding nations if one wished to praise a man one said, "Surely he is an Israelite." Moses established laws and ordinances; these gave life to the people of Israel, and led them to the highest possible degree of civilization at that period.</p>	<p>That people had sunk to the depths of degradation and were lifted up to the heights of glory. They were captives and were set free. They were the most ignorant of peoples and became the most learned. By virtue of that which He established they so progressed as to be singled out among all nations, and their fame spread to every land, to such a degree that when the inhabitants of neighbouring lands wanted to praise someone they would say, "Surely he must be an Israelite!" Moses established laws and ordinances that conferred new life upon the people of Israel and led them to attain the highest degree of civilization at that time.</p>
<p>To such a development did they attain that the philosophers of Greece would come and acquire knowledge from the learned men of Israel. Such an one was Socrates, who visited Syria, and took from the children of Israel the teachings of the Unity of God and of the immortality of the soul. After his return to Greece, he promulgated these teachings. Later the people of Greece rose in opposition to him, accused him of impiety, arraigned him before the Areopagus, and condemned him to death by poison.</p>	<p>Such was their progress that the philosophers of Greece would come to seek knowledge from the learned men of Israel. Among them was Socrates, who came to Syria and acquired from the children of Israel the teachings of the oneness of God and the immortality of the spirit. He then returned to Greece and promulgated these teachings, whereupon the people of that land rose up in opposition to him, accused him of impiety, arraigned him before the court, and condemned him to death by poison.</p>
<p>Now, how could a Man Who was a stammerer, Who had been brought up in the house of Pharaoh, Who was known among men as a murderer, Who through fear had for a long time remained in concealment, and Who had become a shepherd, establish so great a Cause, when the wisest philosophers on earth have not displayed one thousandth part of this influence? This is indeed a prodigy.</p>	<p>Now, how could a man who was a stammerer, who had been brought up in the house of Pharaoh, who was known among men as a murderer, and who out of fear had long been a fugitive and a shepherd, establish in the world so mighty a Cause that the wisest philosophers of the earth would be incapable of producing a thousandth part thereof? This is clearly an extraordinary feat.</p>

<p>A Man Who had a stammering tongue, Who could not even converse correctly, succeeded in sustaining this great Cause! If He had not been assisted by divine power, He would never have been able to carry out this great work. These facts are undeniable. Materialist philosophers, Greek thinkers, the great men of Rome became famous in the world, each one of them having specialized in one branch of learning only. Thus Galen and Hippocrates became celebrated in medicine, Aristotle in logic and reasoning, and Plato in ethics and theology. How is it that a shepherd could acquire all of this knowledge? It is beyond doubt that He must have been assisted by an omnipotent power.</p>	<p>A man with a stammering tongue can hardly sustain an ordinary conversation, let alone accomplish what He did! No: Were He not assisted by a divine power, He would never have been able to carry out such a mighty task. These are arguments that none can deny. The materialistic thinkers, the Greek philosophers and the great men of Rome who became renowned in the world were each versed in but one branch of learning. Thus Galen and Hippocrates were celebrated for their skill in medicine, Aristotle in logic and speculative reasoning, and Plato in ethics and divine philosophy. How can a mere shepherd lay the foundation for all these branches of learning? There is no doubt that He was assisted by an extraordinary power.</p>
<p>Consider also what trials and difficulties arise for people. To prevent an act of cruelty, Moses struck down an Egyptian and afterward became known among men as a murderer, more notably because the man He had killed was of the ruling nation. Then He fled, and it was after that that He was raised to the rank of a Prophet!</p> <p>In spite of His evil repute, how wonderfully He was guided by a supernatural power in establishing His great institutions and laws!</p>	<p>Observe how the people are subjected to tests and trials. Moses struck down an Egyptian to prevent an act of oppression, became known among men as a murderer — especially since the victim belonged to the ruling nation — and was obliged to flee, and it was after all this that He was raised up as a Prophet. Behold how, in spite of His disrepute, He was aided through an extraordinary power to establish such great institutions and mighty undertakings!</p>
<p>CHRIST</p>	<p>CHRIST</p>
<p>Afterward Christ came, saying, “I am born of the Holy Spirit.” Though it is now easy for the Christians to believe this assertion, at that time it was very difficult. According to the text of the Gospel the Pharisees said, “Is not this the son of Joseph of Nazareth Whom we know? How can He say, therefore, I came down from heaven?”</p>	<p>Afterwards Christ appeared, saying, “I am born of the Holy Spirit.” If it is easy today, among Christians, to acknowledge the truth of this claim, at the time it was very difficult. Thus, according to the text of the Gospel, the Pharisees said, “Is this not the son of Joseph of Nazareth, whom we know? How then can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”</p>
<p>Briefly, this Man, Who, apparently, and in the eyes of all, was lowly, arose with such great power that He abolished a religion that had lasted fifteen hundred years, at a time when the slightest deviation from it exposed the offender to danger or to death. Moreover, in the days of Christ the morals of the whole world and the condition of the Israelites had become completely confused and corrupted, and Israel had fallen into a state of the utmost degradation, misery and bondage. At one time they had been taken captive by the Chaldeans and Persians; at</p>	<p>Briefly, this Man, Who appeared lowly in the eyes of all, arose nonetheless with such power as to abrogate a fifteen-hundred-year-old Dispensation, notwithstanding that the least deviation from its laws would expose the offender to grave danger and bring about his death and annihilation. Moreover, in the time of Christ the general morals and manners of the Israelites had become entirely confused and corrupted, and Israel had fallen into a state of utmost degradation, misery and bondage. At one time they fell captive to the Chaldeans and the</p>

<p>another time they were reduced to slavery to the Assyrians; then they became the subjects and vassals of the Greeks; and finally they were ruled over and despised by the Romans.</p>	<p>Persians; at another they were under the yoke of the Assyrian empire. One day they became the subjects and vassals of the Greeks; another they were subjugated and humiliated by the Romans.</p>
<p>This young Man, Christ, by the help of a supernatural power, abrogated the ancient Mosaic Law, reformed the general morals, and once again laid the foundation of eternal glory for the Israelites. Moreover, He brought to humanity the glad tidings of universal peace, and spread abroad teachings which were not for Israel alone but were for the general happiness of the whole human race.</p>	<p>This young Man, Christ, through an extraordinary power abrogated the ancient Mosaic Law and undertook to reform the morals of the people. He once again laid the foundation of eternal honour for the Israelites — nay, he undertook to rehabilitate the fortunes of the entire human race — and spread abroad teachings that were not reserved for Israel alone but formed the basis for the universal happiness of human society.</p>
<p>Those who first strove to do away with Him were the Israelites, His own kindred. To all outward appearances they overcame Him and brought Him into direst distress. At last they crowned Him with the crown of thorns and crucified Him. But Christ, while apparently in the deepest misery and affliction, proclaimed, “This Sun will be resplendent, this Light will shine, My grace will surround the world, and all My enemies will be brought low.” And as He said, so it was; for all the kings of the earth have not been able to withstand Him. Nay, all their standards have been overthrown, while the banner of that Oppressed One has been raised to the zenith.</p>	<p>The first to arise to destroy Him were the Israelites, His own people and kindred. And to outward seeming they indeed overcame Him and reduced Him to utter abasement, till at last they crowned Him with the crown of thorns and crucified Him. But this Man, while outwardly immersed in deepest affliction, proclaimed: “This Sun will rise, this Light will shine resplendent, My grace will encompass the world, and all Mine enemies will be confounded.” And even as He spoke, so it came to pass, for all the kings of the earth were unable to resist Him. Nay, all their standards were cast down, while the standard of that Wronged One was raised to the loftiest heights.</p>
<p>But this is opposed to all the rules of human reason. Then it becomes clear and evident that this Glorious Being was a true Educator of the world of humanity, and that He was helped and confirmed by divine power.</p>	<p>Is this at all possible in accordance with the rules of human reason? No, by God! Then it is clear and evident that this glorious Being was a true educator of the world of humanity and that He was aided and assisted by a divine power.</p>
<p>MUHAMMAD</p>	<p>Muhammad</p>
<p>Now we come to Muhammad. Americans and Europeans have heard a number of stories about the Prophet which they have thought to be true, although the narrators were either ignorant or antagonistic: most of them were clergy; others were ignorant Muslims who repeated unfounded traditions about Muhammad which they ignorantly believed to be to His praise.</p> <p>Thus some benighted Muslims made His polygamy the pivot of their praises and held it to be a wonder, regarding it as a miracle; and</p>	<p>Now as to Muhammad, the people of Europe and America have heard certain tales about the Prophet, to which they have given credence, even though the providers of these accounts, many of whom belonged to the ranks of the Christian clergy, were either ignorant or ill-intentioned. Likewise, a number of ignorant Muslims relayed unfounded tales concerning Muhammad, which in their minds redounded to His glory. Thus some benighted Muslims made His polygamy the object of their highest praise and held it to be a sign of His wondrous powers, since these ignorant souls considered the</p>

<p>European historians, for the most part, rely on the tales of these ignorant people.</p>	<p>multiplicity of wives to be a miraculous thing. The accounts of European historians rely for the most part upon the sayings of such ignorant people.</p>
<p>For example, a foolish man said to a clergyman that the true proof of greatness is bravery and the shedding of blood, and that in one day on the field of battle a follower of Muḥammad had cut off the heads of one hundred men! This misled the clergyman to infer that killing is considered the way to prove one’s faith to Muḥammad, while this is merely imaginary. The military expeditions of Muḥammad, on the contrary, were always defensive actions: a proof of this is that during thirteen years, in Mecca, He and His followers endured the most violent persecutions. At this period they were the target for the arrows of hatred: some of His companions were killed and their property confiscated; others fled to foreign lands. Muḥammad Himself, after the most extreme persecutions by the Qurayshites, who finally resolved to kill Him, fled to Medina in the middle of the night. Yet even then His enemies did not cease their persecutions, but pursued Him to Medina, and His disciples even to Abyssinia.</p>	<p>For example, a foolish individual once told a Christian priest that the proof of true greatness lies in surpassing bravery and bloodshed, and that in a single day one of the followers of Muḥammad had beheaded a hundred men on the battlefield! This led the priest to surmise that the proof of Muḥammad’s religion consisted in killing, which is nothing but vain imagination. On the contrary, Muḥammad’s military expeditions were always defensive in nature. The clear proof is this: For thirteen years both He and His companions endured in Mecca the most intense persecutions and were the constant target of the darts of hatred. Some of His companions were killed and their possessions pillaged, others forsook their native country and fled to foreign lands. Muḥammad Himself was subjected to the severest persecutions and was obliged, when His enemies resolved to kill Him, to flee Mecca in the middle of the night and emigrate to Medina. Yet even then His enemies did not relent, but pursued the Muslims all the way to Medina and to Abyssinia.</p>
<p>These Arab tribes were in the lowest depths of savagery and barbarism, and in comparison with them the savages of Africa and wild Indians of America were as advanced as a Plato. The savages of America do not bury their children alive as these Arabs did their daughters, glorying in it as being an honorable thing to do. Thus many of the men would threaten their wives, saying, “If a daughter is born to you, I will kill you.” Even down to the present time the Arabs dread having daughters.</p>	<p>These Arab tribes were most barbarous and rapacious, and in comparison with them the wild and fierce natives of America were the Platos of the age, for they did not bury their children alive as these Arabs did their daughters, claiming this to be an act of honour and taking pride therein. Thus many of the men would threaten their wives, saying “If a daughter is born to you, I will kill you.” Even to the present day the Arabs dread having daughters.</p>
<p>Further, a man was permitted to take a thousand women, and most husbands had more than ten wives in their household. When these tribes made war, the one which was victorious would take the women and children of the vanquished tribe captive and treat them as slaves.</p>	<p>Moreover, one man could take a thousand wives, and most husbands had more than ten wives in their household. When these tribes waged war against each other, the victors would take captive the women and children of the vanquished, regard them as slaves, and engage in buying and selling them.</p>
<p>When a man who had ten wives died, the sons of these women rushed at each other’s mothers; and if one of the sons threw his mantle over the head of his father’s wife and cried out, “This</p>	<p>if a man died and left behind ten wives, the sons of these women would rush at each other’s mothers, and as soon as one of them had thrown his mantle over the head of one of his</p>

<p>woman is my lawful property,” at once the unfortunate woman became his prisoner and slave. He could do whatever he wished with her. He could kill her, imprison her in a well, or beat, curse and torture her until death released her. According to the Arab habits and customs, he was her master. It is evident that malignity, jealousy, hatred and enmity must have existed between the wives and children of a household, and it is, therefore, needless to enlarge upon the subject. Again, consider what was the condition and life of these oppressed women!</p>	<p>stepmothers and claimed her as his lawful property, that unfortunate woman would become the captive and slave of her stepson and the latter could do with her as he pleased. He could kill her, or shut her up in a pit, or beat, curse and torment her day after day until at last she perished. In all this he was, in accordance with the laws and customs of the Arabs, free to do as he pleased. The rancour and jealousy, the hatred and enmity that must have existed between the wives of a man and their respective children are perfectly clear and require no elaboration. Consider then what the life and condition of those wronged women must have been!</p>
<p>Moreover, the means by which these Arab tribes lived consisted in pillage and robbery, so that they were perpetually engaged in fighting and war, killing one another, plundering and devastating each other’s property, and capturing women and children, whom they would sell to strangers. How often it happened that the daughters and sons of a prince, who spent their day in comfort and luxury, found themselves, when night fell, reduced to shame, poverty and captivity. Yesterday they were princes, today they are captives; yesterday they were great ladies, today they are slaves.</p>	<p>Moreover, these Arab tribes subsisted upon mutual pillage and robbery, so that they were perpetually engaged in strife and warfare, killing one another, plundering each other’s property, and seizing the women and children and selling them to strangers. How often would the sons and daughters of a prince spend the day in luxury and ease and find themselves at nightfall reduced to utter abasement, wretchedness and bondage. Yesterday they were princes, today they are captives; yesterday they were honoured ladies, today they are slaves.</p>
<p>Muḥammad received the Divine Revelation among these tribes, and after enduring thirteen years of persecution from them, He fled. But this people did not cease to oppress; they united to exterminate Him and all His followers. It was under such circumstances that Muḥammad was forced to take up arms. This is the truth: we are not bigoted and do not wish to defend Him, but we are just, and we say what is just. Look at it with justice. If Christ Himself had been placed in such circumstances among such tyrannical and barbarous tribes, and if for thirteen years He with His disciples had endured all these trials with patience, culminating in flight from His native land—if in spite of this these lawless tribes continued to pursue Him, to slaughter the men, to pillage their property, and to capture their women and children—what would have been Christ’s conduct with regard to them? If this oppression had fallen only upon Himself, He</p>	<p>It was among such tribes that Muḥammad was sent forth. For thirteen years He suffered at their hands every conceivable tribulation, till at last He fled the city and emigrated to Medina. And yet, far from desisting, these people joined forces, raised an army, and attacked with the aim of exterminating every man, woman and child among His followers. It was under such circumstances and against such people that Muḥammad was forced to take up arms. This is the plain truth — we are not prompted by fanatical attachment, nor do we blindly seek to defend, but we examine and relate matters with fairness. You should likewise consider in fairness the following: If Christ Himself had been placed in similar circumstances and among such lawless and barbarous tribes; if for thirteen years He and His disciples had patiently endured every manner of cruelty at their hands; if they were forced through this oppression to forsake their</p>

<p>would have forgiven them, and such an act of forgiveness would have been most praiseworthy; but if He had seen that these cruel and bloodthirsty murderers wished to kill, to pillage and to injure all these oppressed ones, and to take captive the women and children, it is certain that He would have protected them and would have resisted the tyrants.</p>	<p>homeland and take to the wilderness; and if these lawless tribes still persisted in pursuing them with the aim of slaughtering the men, pillaging their property, and seizing their women and children — how would Christ have dealt with them? If this oppression had been directed towards Him alone, He would have forgiven them, and such an act of forgiveness would have been most acceptable and praiseworthy; but had He seen that cruel and bloodthirsty murderers were intent upon killing, pillaging, and tormenting a number of defenceless souls and taking captive the women and children, it is certain that He would have defended the oppressed and stayed the hand of the oppressors.</p>
<p>What objection, then, can be taken to Muḥammad’s action? Is it this, that He did not, with His followers, and their women and children, submit to these savage tribes? To free these tribes from their bloodthirstiness was the greatest kindness, and to coerce and restrain them was a true mercy. They were like a man holding in his hand a cup of poison, which, when about to drink, a friend breaks and thus saves him. If Christ had been placed in similar circumstances, it is certain that with a conquering power He would have delivered the men, women and children from the claws of these bloodthirsty wolves.</p>	<p>What objection, then, can be directed against Muḥammad? Is it this, that He did not, with His followers and their women and children, place himself at the mercy of these lawless tribes? Moreover, to free these tribes from their bloodthirstiness was the greatest gift, and to curb and restrain them was pure bounty. It is like a man who holds in his hand a cup of poison and who is about to drink it. A loving friend would certainly shatter the cup and restrain the drinker. If Christ had been placed in similar circumstances, He would have undoubtedly delivered, through an all-conquering power, those men, women and children from the claws of such ravenous wolves.</p>
<p>Muḥammad never fought against the Christians; on the contrary, He treated them kindly and gave them perfect freedom. A community of Christian people lived at Najrân and were under His care and protection. Muḥammad said, “If anyone infringes their rights, I Myself will be his enemy, and in the presence of God I will bring a charge against him.” In the edicts which He promulgated it is clearly stated that the lives, properties and honor of the Christians and Jews are under the protection of God; and that if a Muḥammadan married a Christian woman, the husband must not prevent her from going to church, nor oblige her to veil herself; and that if she died, he must place her remains in the care of the Christian clergy. Should the Christians desire to build a church, Islâm ought to help them. In case of war between Islâm and her enemies, the Christians</p>	<p>Muḥammad never fought against the Christians; on the contrary, He treated them with consideration and accorded them complete freedom. In Najrân there lived a community of Christians, and they were under His care and protection. Muḥammad said: “Should anyone infringe upon their rights, I myself will be his enemy and will charge him before God.” In the edicts He promulgated it is clearly stated that the lives, property and honour of Jews and Christians are under the protection of God; that a Muslim husband may not prevent his Christian wife from going to church, nor oblige her to wear a veil; that if she died he must entrust her remains to the care of a priest; and that if the Christians desired to build a church the Muslims must support them. Furthermore, in time of war between Islam and her enemies, the Christians</p>

<p>should be exempted from the obligation of fighting, unless they desired of their own free will to do so in defense of Islám, because they were under its protection. But as a compensation for this immunity, they should pay yearly a small sum of money. In short, there are seven detailed edicts on these subjects, some copies of which are still extant at Jerusalem. This is an established fact and is not dependent on my affirmation. The edict of the second Caliph still exists in the custody of the orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, and of this there is no doubt.</p> <p>Nevertheless, after a certain time, and through the transgression of both the Muḥammadans and the Christians, hatred and enmity arose between them.</p>	<p>were to be exempt from fighting, unless they desired of their own accord to join and assist the Muslims in battle in view of the protection they enjoyed. In compensation for this exemption they were to pay each year a small amount. In short, there are seven lengthy edicts on these subjects, copies of some of which are to this day extant in Jerusalem. This is the very truth and not merely my own assertion: The edict of the second Caliph is still in the custody of the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the matter is beyond doubt. Nevertheless, after a time rancour and envy arose between Muslims and Christians as transgressions were committed by both sides.</p>
<p>Beyond this fact, all the narrations of the Muslims, Christians and others are simply fabrications, which have their origin in fanaticism, or ignorance, or emanate from intense hostility.</p> <p>For example, the Muslims say that Muḥammad cleft the moon, and that it fell on the mountain of Mecca: they think that the moon is a small body which Muḥammad divided into two parts and threw one part on this mountain, and the other part on another mountain.</p> <p>Such stories are pure fanaticism. Also the traditions which the clergy quote, and the incidents with which they find fault, are all exaggerated, if not entirely without foundation.</p>	<p>Beyond this truth, whatever Muslims, Christians or others may say is pure fabrication and proceeds from fanaticism, ignorance, or intense hostility. For example, the Muslims claim that the moon was cleft asunder by Muḥammad and fell upon the mountain of Mecca. They imagine the moon to be a small body which Muḥammad divided in twain, casting one part on one mountain and the other part on another! These tales are prompted by sheer fanaticism. Likewise, the accounts that the Christian clergy provide and the charges that they level are always exaggerated and often baseless.</p>
<p>Briefly, Muḥammad appeared in the desert of Hijáz in the Arabian Peninsula, which was a desolate, sterile wilderness, sandy and uninhabited. Some parts, like Mecca and Medina, are extremely hot; the people are nomads with the manners and customs of the dwellers in the desert, and are entirely destitute of education and science. Muḥammad Himself was illiterate, and the Qur’án was originally written upon the bladebones of sheep, or on palm leaves. These details indicate the condition of the people to whom Muḥammad was sent.</p>	<p>Briefly, Muḥammad appeared in the desert of Hijáz in the Arabian Peninsula, which was a treeless and barren wilderness: sandy, desolate in the extreme, and in some places, such as Mecca and Medina, exceedingly hot. Its inhabitants were nomads, had the morals and manners of desert-dwellers, and were entirely bereft of knowledge and learning. Even Muḥammad Himself was illiterate, and the Qur’án was originally written upon the blade bones of sheep or on palm leaves. Infer then from this the conditions prevailing among the people to whom Muḥammad was sent!</p>
<p>The first question which He put to them was, “Why do you not accept the Pentateuch and the Gospel, and why do you not believe in Christ and</p>	<p>His first reproach to them was this: “Why do you reject the Torah and the Gospel, and wherefore do you refuse to believe in Christ and in Moses?”</p>

<p>in Moses?" This saying presented difficulties to them, and they argued, "Our forefathers did not believe in the Pentateuch and the Gospel; tell us, why was this?" He answered, "They were misled; you ought to reject those who do not believe in the Pentateuch and the Gospel, even though they are your fathers and your ancestors."</p>	<p>This statement came indeed hard upon them, for they asked: "What then is to be said of our fathers and forefathers, who did not believe in the Torah and the Gospel?" He answered, "They had gone astray, and it is incumbent upon you to renounce those who do not believe in the Torah and the Gospel, though they be your own forefathers."</p>
<p>In such a country, and amidst such barbarous tribes, an illiterate Man produced a book in which, in a perfect and eloquent style, He explained the divine attributes and perfections, the prophethood of the Messengers of God, the divine laws, and some scientific facts.</p>	<p>It was in such a land and amidst such barbarous tribes that an illiterate Man brought forth a Book in which the attributes and perfections of God, the prophethood of His Messengers, the precepts of His religion, and certain fields of knowledge and questions of human learning, have been expounded in a most perfect and eloquent manner.</p>
<p>Thus, you know that before the observations of modern times—that is to say, during the first centuries and down to the fifteenth century of the Christian era—all the mathematicians of the world agreed that the earth was the center of the universe, and that the sun moved. The famous astronomer who was the protagonist of the new theory discovered the movement of the earth and the immobility of the sun. Until his time all the astronomers and philosophers of the world followed the Ptolemaic system, and whoever said anything against it was considered ignorant. Though Pythagoras, and Plato during the latter part of his life, adopted the theory that the annual movement of the sun around the zodiac does not proceed from the sun, but rather from the movement of the earth around the sun, this theory had been entirely forgotten, and the Ptolemaic system was accepted by all mathematicians. But there are some verses revealed in the Qur'án contrary to the theory of the Ptolemaic system. One of them is "The sun moves in a fixed place," which shows the fixity of the sun, and its movement around an axis. Again, in another verse, "And each star moves in its own heaven." Thus is explained the movement of the sun, of the moon, of the earth, and of other bodies. When the Qur'án appeared, all the mathematicians ridiculed these statements and attributed the theory to ignorance. Even the doctors of Islám, when they saw that these</p>	<p>For example, as you know, before the observations of the renowned astronomer of later times, that is, from the first centuries down to the fifteenth century of the Christian era, all the mathematicians of the world were unanimous in upholding the centrality of the earth and the movement of the sun. This modern astronomer was the source of the new theory that postulated the movement of the earth and the fixity of the sun. Until his time all the mathematicians and philosophers of the world held to the Ptolemaic system, and whosoever uttered a word against it was considered ignorant. It is true that Pythagoras, and Plato during the latter part of his life, conceived that the sun's annual movement around the zodiac did not proceed from the sun itself but from the earth's movement around it, but this theory was entirely forgotten and the Ptolemaic theory was universally accepted by all mathematicians. But in the Qur'án a number of verses were revealed which contradicted the Ptolemaic system. One of them, "The sun moves in a fixed place of its own," alludes to the fixity of the sun and its movement around an axis. Likewise, in another verse, "And each swims in its own heaven," the movement of the sun, the moon, the earth, and the other celestial bodies is specified. When the Qur'án was spread abroad, all the mathematicians scoffed and attributed this view to ignorance. Even the Muslim divines, finding these verses contrary to the Ptolemaic system,</p>

<p>verses were contrary to the accepted Ptolemaic system, were obliged to explain them away.</p>	<p>were obliged to interpret them figuratively, for the latter was accepted as incontrovertible fact and yet was explicitly contradicted by the Qur'án.</p>
<p>It was not until after the fifteenth century of the Christian era, nearly nine hundred years after Muḥammad, that a famous astronomer made new observations and important discoveries by the aid of the telescope, which he had invented. The rotation of the earth, the fixity of the sun, and also its movement around an axis, were discovered. It became evident that the verses of the Qur'án agreed with existing facts, and that the Ptolemaic system was imaginary.</p>	<p>It was not before the fifteenth century of the Christian era, nearly nine hundred years after Muḥammad, that new observations were made by a famous mathematician, that the telescope was invented, that important discoveries were made, that the rotation of the earth and the fixity of the sun were proven and that the latter's movement about an axis was likewise discovered. Then it became evident that the explicit text of the Qur'án was in full agreement with reality and that the Ptolemaic system was sheer imagination.</p>
<p>In short, many Oriental peoples have been reared for thirteen centuries under the shadow of the religion of Muḥammad. During the Middle Ages, while Europe was in the lowest depths of barbarism, the Arab peoples were superior to the other nations of the earth in learning, in the arts, mathematics, civilization, government and other sciences. The Enlightener and Educator of these Arab tribes, and the Founder of the civilization and perfections of humanity among these different races, was an illiterate Man, Muḥammad. Was this illustrious Man a thorough Educator or not? A just judgment is necessary.</p>	<p>In short, multitudes of Eastern peoples were reared for thirteen centuries under the shadow of the Muḥammadan Faith. During the Middle Ages, while Europe had sunk to the lowest depths of barbarity, the Arabs excelled all other nations of the earth in sciences and crafts, mathematics, civilization, governance, and other arts. The Educator and Prime Mover of the tribes of the Arabian peninsula, and the Founder of the civilization of human perfections among those contending clans, was an illiterate Man, Muḥammad. Was this illustrious Man a universal Educator or not? Let us be fair.</p>
<p>THE BÁB</p>	<p>The Báb</p>
<p>As for the Báb—may my soul be His sacrifice!—at a youthful age, that is to say, when He had reached the twenty-fifth year of His blessed life, He stood forth to proclaim His Cause. It was universally admitted by the Shí'is that He had never studied in any school and had not acquired knowledge from any teacher; all the people of Shíráz bear witness to this. Nevertheless, He suddenly appeared before the people, endowed with the most complete erudition. Although He was but a merchant, He confounded all the 'ulamá of Persia. All alone, in a way which is beyond imagination, He upheld the Cause among the Persians, who are renowned for their religious fanaticism. This illustrious Soul arose with such power that He shook the supports of the religion, of the morals, the conditions, the habits and the customs of Persia, and instituted new rules, new laws and a new religion. Though the great personages of the State, nearly all the</p>	<p>As for the Báb — may my soul be His sacrifice! — it was at a young age, that is, in the twenty-fifth year of His blessed life, that He arose to proclaim His Cause. Among the Shí'is it is universally acknowledged that He never studied in any school, nor acquired learning from any teacher. To this the people of Shíráz each and all bear witness. Nevertheless, He suddenly appeared before the people endowed with consummate knowledge and, though but a merchant, confounded all the divines of Persia. Alone, He undertook a task that can scarcely be conceived, for the Persians are known throughout the world for their religious fanaticism. This illustrious Being arose with such power as to shake the foundations of the religious laws, customs, manners, morals, and habits of Persia, and instituted a new law, faith and religion. Though the eminent men of the State, the majority of the people, and the leaders of religion arose one and</p>

<p>clergy, and the public men arose to destroy and annihilate Him, He alone withstood them and moved the whole of Persia.</p> <p>Many ‘ulamá and public men, as well as other people, joyfully sacrificed their lives in His Cause, and hastened to the plain of martyrdom.</p>	<p>all to destroy and annihilate Him, He single-handedly withstood them and set all of Persia in motion. How numerous the divines, the leaders and inhabitants of that land who with perfect joy and gladness offered up their lives in His path and hastened to the field of martyrdom!</p>
<p>The government, the nation, the doctors of divinity and the great personages desired to extinguish His light, but they could not do so. At last His moon arose, His star shone forth, His foundations became firmly established, and His dawning-place became brilliant. He imparted divine education to an unenlightened multitude and produced marvelous results on the thoughts, morals, customs and conditions of the Persians. He announced the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Sun of Bahá to His followers and prepared them to believe.</p>	<p>The government, the nation, the clergy and prominent leaders sought to extinguish His light, but to no avail. At last His moon rose, His star shone forth, His foundation was secured, and His horizon was flooded with light. He trained a large multitude through divine education and exerted a marvellous influence upon the thoughts, customs, morals and manners of the Persians. He proclaimed the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Sun of Bahá to all His followers and readied them for faith and certitude.</p>
<p>The appearance of such wonderful signs and great results; the effects produced upon the minds of the people, and upon the prevailing ideas; the establishment of the foundations of progress; and the organization of the principles of success and prosperity by a young merchant, constitute the greatest proof that He was a perfect Educator. A just person will never hesitate to believe this.</p>	<p>The manifestation of such marvellous signs and mighty undertakings, the influence exerted upon the thoughts and minds of the people, the laying of the foundations of progress, and the establishment of the prerequisites of success and prosperity by a young merchant constitute the greatest proof that He was a universal Educator — a fact that no fair-minded person would ever hesitate to acknowledge.</p>
<p>BAHÁ’U’LLÁH</p>	<p>Bahá’u’lláh</p>
<p>Bahá’u’lláh appeared at a time when the Persian Empire was immersed in profound obscurantism and ignorance and lost in the blindest fanaticism.</p> <p>In the European histories, no doubt, you have read detailed accounts of the morals, customs and ideas of the Persians during the last centuries. It is useless to repeat them. Briefly, we will say that Persia had fallen so low that to all foreign travelers it was a matter of regret that this country, which in former times had been so glorious and highly civilized, had now become so decayed, ruined and upset, and that its population had lost its dignity.</p>	<p>Bahá’u’lláh appeared at a time when Persia was plunged in the darkest ignorance and consumed by the blindest fanaticism. You have no doubt read at length the accounts that European histories provide of the morals, manners and thoughts of the Persians during the last few centuries, and these require no repetition. Suffice it to say that Persia had sunk to such abysmal depths that foreign travellers would all deplore that a country which had in former times occupied the pinnacle of greatness and civilization had by then fallen into such abasement, desolation and ruin, and that its people had been reduced to utter wretchedness.</p>
<p>It was at this time that Bahá’u’lláh appeared. His father was one of the viziers, not one of the ‘ulamá. As all the people of Persia know, He had never studied in any school, nor had He</p>	<p>It was at such a time that Bahá’u’lláh appeared. His father was a court minister, not a divine, and it is well known throughout Persia that He never studied in a school or associated with the learned</p>

<p>associated with the ‘ulamá or the men of learning. The early part of His life was passed in the greatest happiness. His companions and associates were Persians of the highest rank, but not learned men.</p>	<p>and the divines. He passed the early part of His life in the utmost comfort and happiness, and His companions and associates were Persians of rank rather than learned men.</p>
<p>As soon as the Báb became manifested, Bahá’u’lláh said, “This great Man is the Lord of the righteous, and faith in Him is incumbent upon all.” And He arose to assist the Báb and gave many proofs and positive evidences of His truth, in spite of the fact that the ‘ulamá of the state religion had constrained the Persian government to oppose and resist Him and had further issued decrees ordering the massacre, pillage, persecution and expulsion of His followers. In all the provinces they began to kill, to burn, to pillage the converts and even to assault the women and children. Regardless of this, Bahá’u’lláh arose to proclaim the word of the Báb with the greatest firmness and energy. Not for one moment was He in concealment; He mixed openly with His enemies. He was occupied in showing forth evidences and proofs and was recognized as the Herald of the Word of God. In many changes and chances He endured the greatest misfortunes, and at every moment He ran the risk of being martyred.</p>	<p>As soon as the Báb revealed His Cause, Bahá’u’lláh proclaimed: “This great Man is the Lord of the righteous, and it is incumbent upon all to bear allegiance unto Him.” He arose to promote the Cause of the Báb, adducing decisive proofs and conclusive arguments of His truth. Although the divines of the nation had obliged the Persian government to exert the most vehement opposition; although they had all issued decrees ordering the massacre, pillage, persecution and annihilation of the Báb’s followers; and although throughout the land the people had undertaken to kill, burn, and plunder them, and even harass their women and children; yet despite all this Bahá’u’lláh was engaged, with the utmost constancy and composure, in exalting the word of the Báb. Nor did He seek for a moment to conceal Himself, but associated openly and visibly with His enemies, occupied Himself with adducing proofs and arguments, and became renowned for exalting the Word of God. Time and again He suffered intense adversities, and at every moment His life was in grave danger.</p>
<p>He was put into chains and confined in an underground prison. His vast property and inheritance were pillaged and confiscated. He was exiled four times from land to land and found rest only in the “Greatest Prison.”</p>	<p>He was put in chains and thrown into a subterranean dungeon. His extensive hereditary possessions were entirely plundered, He was four times exiled from land to land, and in the end He came to abide in the Most Great Prison.</p>
<p>In spite of all this He never ceased for one instant His proclamation of the greatness of the Cause of God. He manifested such virtue, knowledge and perfections that He became a wonder to all the people of Persia. So much so that in Ṭihrán, Baghdád, Constantinople, Rumelia, and even in ‘Akká, every one of the learned and scientific men who entered His presence, whether friend or enemy, never failed to receive the most sufficient and convincing answer to whatever question was propounded. All frequently acknowledged that He was alone and unique in all perfections.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding all this, the call of God was ceaselessly raised and the fame of His Cause was noised abroad. Such were the knowledge, learning and perfections He evinced that everyone in Persia was astonished. All the learned people, friend and foe alike, who attained His presence in Ṭihrán, Baghdád, Constantinople, Adrianople, and ‘Akká, received a complete and convincing answer to their every question. All readily acknowledged that in every perfection He was peerless and unique throughout the world.</p>

<p>It often happened that in Baghdád certain Muḥammadan ‘ulamá, Jewish rabbis and Christians met together with some European scholars, in a blessed reunion: each one had some question to propose, and although they were possessed of varying degrees of culture, they each heard a sufficient and convincing reply, and retired satisfied. Even the Persian ‘ulamá who were at Karbilá and Najaf chose a wise man whom they sent on a mission to Him; his name was Mullá Ḥasan ‘Amú. He came into the Holy Presence, and proposed a number of questions on behalf of the ‘ulamá, to which Bahá’u’lláh replied. Then Ḥasan ‘Amú said, “The ‘ulamá recognize without hesitation and confess the knowledge and virtue of Bahá’u’lláh, and they are unanimously convinced that in all learning he has no peer or equal; and it is also evident that he has never studied or acquired this learning; but still the ‘ulamá say, ‘We are not contented with this; we do not acknowledge the reality of his mission by virtue of his wisdom and righteousness. Therefore, we ask him to show us a miracle in order to satisfy and tranquilize our hearts.’”</p>	<p>It often happened in Baghdád that Muslim, Jewish and Christian divines and European men of learning would be gathered in His blessed presence. They would each ask a different question and, despite their varying beliefs, would each receive so complete and convincing a reply as to be fully satisfied. Even the Persian divines residing in Karbilá and Najaf chose a learned man by the name of Mullá Ḥasan ‘Amú and dispatched him as their representative. He came into His blessed presence and asked a number of questions on their behalf, to which Bahá’u’lláh responded. He then said, “The divines fully recognize the extent of your knowledge and attainments, and it is acknowledged by all that you are without peer or equal in every field of learning. It is moreover evident that you have never studied or acquired this learning. But the divines say that they are not satisfied with this and cannot acknowledge the truth of your claim on the basis of your knowledge and attainments alone. They therefore ask you to produce a miracle in order to satisfy and assure their hearts.”</p>
<p>Bahá’u’lláh replied, “Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request. But the Cause of God is not a theatrical display that is presented every hour, of which some new diversion may be asked for every day. If it were thus, the Cause of God would become mere child’s play.</p>	<p>Bahá’u’lláh replied, “Although they have no right to ask this, since it is for God to test His creatures and not for them to test God, yet their request is in this case accepted and allowed. But the Cause of God is not a theatrical stage where every hour a new performance may be offered and every day a new demand presented. For otherwise the Cause of God would become the plaything of children.</p>
<p>“The ‘ulamás must, therefore, assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture.”</p>	<p>“Let the divines, therefore, assemble and choose unanimously one miracle, and let them stipulate in writing that once it has been performed they will no longer entertain any doubt but will all acknowledge and confess the truth of this Cause. Let them seal that paper and bring it to Me. They must fix this as the criterion of truth: If it be performed, they should have no remaining doubt; and if not, We shall stand convicted of imposture.”</p>
<p>The learned man, Ḥasan ‘Amú, rose and replied, “There is no more to be said”; he then kissed the knee of the Blessed One although he was not a believer, and went. He gathered the ‘ulamá and</p>	<p>That learned man arose and replied, “There is no more to be said.” He kissed Bahá’u’lláh’s knee, even though he was not a believer, and departed. Then he gathered the divines and conveyed</p>

<p>gave them the sacred message. They consulted together and said, "This man is an enchanter; perhaps he will perform an enchantment, and then we shall have nothing more to say." Acting on this belief, they did not dare to push the matter further.</p>	<p>Bahá'u'lláh's message. They consulted together and said, "This man is a magician; perchance he will perform some enchantment, and then we will have no recourse," and so they dared not respond.</p>
<p>This man, Ḥasan 'Amú, mentioned this fact at many meetings. After leaving Karbilá he went to Kirmansháh and Tìhrán and spread a detailed account of it everywhere, laying emphasis on the fear and the withdrawal of the 'ulamá.</p>	<p>Mullá Ḥasan 'Amú, however, reported this fact in many gatherings. He left Karbilá for Kirmánsháh and Tìhrán, where he provided all with a detailed account of this episode and spoke of the fear and inaction of the divines.</p>
<p>Briefly, all His adversaries in the Orient acknowledged His greatness, grandeur, knowledge and virtue; and though they were His enemies, they always spoke of Him as "the renowned Bahá'u'lláh."</p>	<p>Our point is that all the adversaries of Bahá'u'lláh in the East acknowledged His greatness, distinction, knowledge and learning, and that in spite of their enmity they referred to Him as "the renowned Bahá'u'lláh."</p>
<p>At the time when this great Light suddenly arose upon the horizon of Persia, all the people, the ministers, the 'ulamá and men of other classes rose against Him, pursuing Him with the greatest animosity, and proclaiming "that this man wishes to suppress and destroy the religion, the law, the nation and the empire." The same was said of Christ. But Bahá'u'lláh alone and without support resisted them all, without ever showing the least weakness.</p>	<p>In brief, this most great Luminary appeared suddenly above the horizon of Persia, and all the people of that land, whether ministers, divines, or the general populace, rose against Him with the fiercest animosity, claiming that He was bent upon annihilating and extinguishing their religion, laws, nation and empire, even as had been said of Christ. Yet Bahá'u'lláh, alone and single-handedly, withstood them all without faltering in the slightest.</p>
<p>At last they said, "As long as this man is in Persia, there will be no peace and tranquillity; we must banish him, so that Persia may return to a state of quietude."</p> <p>They proceeded to use violence toward Him to oblige Him to ask for permission to leave Persia, thinking that by this means the light of His truth would be extinguished, but the result was quite the contrary. The Cause became magnified, and its flame more intense. At first it spread throughout Persia only, but the exile of Bahá'u'lláh caused the diffusion of the Cause throughout other countries. Afterward His enemies said, "'Iráq-i-'Arab is not far enough from Persia; we must send him to a more distant kingdom." This is why the Persian government determined to send Bahá'u'lláh from 'Iráq to Constantinople. Again the event proved that the Cause was not in the least weakened. Once more they said, "Constantinople is a place of passage and of sojourn for various races and peoples;</p>	<p>At last they said, "So long as this man is in Persia there will be no peace or tranquillity. He should be banished, that Persia might again find rest." They subjected Bahá'u'lláh, therefore, to severe hardships, so that He would be forced to seek permission to leave Persia, and they imagined that the lamp of the Cause would be thereby extinguished. But this persecution produced the contrary effect: The Cause grew in stature and its flame waxed brighter. It had until then spread only within Persia; this caused it to spread to other regions. Later they said, "Iraq is too close to Persia; we must dispatch Him to distant lands." Thus the Persian government persisted until Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Iraq to Constantinople. But again they saw that He did not falter in the least. They said, "Constantinople is a crossroads for diverse peoples and nations, and there are many Persians there." Hence they took further steps and had Him exiled to Adrianople. But that flame gathered still more intensity and the Cause grew even greater in</p>

<p>among them are many Persians.” For this reason the Persians had Him further exiled to Rumelia; but, when there, the flame became more powerful, and the Cause more exalted. At last the Persians said, “Not one of these places is safe from his influence; we must send him to some place where he will be reduced to powerlessness, and where his family and followers will have to submit to the direst afflictions.” So they chose the prison of ‘Akká, which is reserved especially for murderers, thieves and highway robbers, and in truth they classed Him with such people. But the power of God became manifested: His word was promulgated, and the greatness of Bahá’u’lláh then became evident, for it was from this prison and under such humiliating circumstances that He caused Persia to advance from one state into another state. He overcame all His enemies and proved to them that they could not resist the Cause. His holy teachings penetrated all regions, and His Cause was established.</p>	<p>stature. Finally the Persians said, “None of these locations was a place of humiliation: He must be sent to a place where He will be disgraced and subjected to trials and persecutions, and where His kindred and followers will suffer the direst afflictions.” Thus they chose the prison city of ‘Akká, which was reserved for rebels, murderers, thieves and highway robbers, and in this wise they made Him associate with such people. But the power of God was made manifest, for this prison became the means of the promotion of His Faith and the glorification of His Word. The greatness of Bahá’u’lláh became apparent, in that He succeeded, from within such a prison and under such humiliating circumstances, in wholly transforming the condition of Persia, in overcoming His enemies, and in proving to all the resistless power of His Cause. His sacred teachings spread to all regions and His Cause was firmly established.</p>
<p>Indeed, in all parts of Persia His enemies arose against Him with the greatest hatred, imprisoning, killing and beating His converts, and burning and razing to the ground thousands of dwellings, striving by every means to exterminate and crush the Cause. In spite of all this, from the prison of murderers, highway robbers and thieves, it became exalted. His teachings were spread abroad, and His exhortations affected many of those who had been the most full of hatred, and made them firm believers. Even the Persian government itself became awakened and regretted that which had arisen through the fault of the ‘ulamá.</p>	<p>In every province of Persia His enemies arose with the utmost hatred, seizing and killing, beating and burning, uprooting a thousand households, and resorting to every violent means to extinguish His Cause. Notwithstanding all this, He promoted His Cause and promulgated His teachings from within this prison of murderers, thieves and highwaymen, awakening many of His most virulent enemies and making them firm believers. Such was the influence of His actions that the Persian government itself arose from its slumber and regretted what had been wrought at the hands of the wicked divines.</p>
<p>When Bahá’u’lláh came to this prison in the Holy Land, the wise men realized that the glad tidings which God gave through the tongue of the Prophets two or three thousand years before were again manifested, and that God was faithful to His promise; for to some of the Prophets He had revealed and given the good news that “the Lord of Hosts should be manifested in the Holy Land.” All these promises were fulfilled; and it is difficult to understand how Bahá’u’lláh could have been obliged to leave Persia, and to pitch His tent in this Holy Land, but for the persecution</p>	<p>When Bahá’u’lláh arrived at this prison in the Holy Land, discerning souls were awakened to the fact that the prophecies which God had voiced through the tongue of His Prophets two or three thousand years before had been realized and that His promises had been fulfilled, for He had revealed unto certain Prophets and announced unto the Holy Land that the Lord of Hosts would be manifested therein. All these promises were fulfilled, and, but for the opposition of His enemies and His banishment and exile, it can scarcely be imagined how</p>

<p>of His enemies, His banishment and exile. His enemies intended that His imprisonment should completely destroy and annihilate the blessed Cause, but this prison was in reality of the greatest assistance and became the means of its development. The divine renown of Bahá'ú'lláh reached the East and the West, and the rays of the Sun of Truth illuminated all the world. Praise be to God! though He was a prisoner, His tent was raised on Mount Carmel, and He moved abroad with the greatest majesty. Every person, friend or stranger, who came into His presence used to say, "This is a prince, not a captive."</p>	<p>Bahá'ú'lláh could have left Persia and pitched His tent in this sacred land. His enemies intended that this imprisonment should completely destroy and annihilate His Cause, but His incarceration became instead the greatest confirmation and the means of its promotion. The call of God reached the East and the West, and the rays of the Sun of Truth illumined every land. Praise be to God! Though He was a prisoner, His tent was raised on Mount Carmel, and He moved about with the utmost majesty. And whoever entered His presence, be it friend or stranger, would exclaim, "This is not a captive but a king!"</p>
<p>Upon His arrival in prison He addressed an epistle to Napoleon, which He sent through the French ambassador. The gist of it was, "Ask what is Our crime, and why We are confined in this prison and this dungeon." Napoleon made no reply. Then a second epistle was issued, which is contained in the Súriy-i-Haykal. The epitome of it is: "Oh Napoleon, as thou hast not listened to My proclamation, and as thou hast not answered it, thy dominion will before long be taken away from thee, and thou wilt be utterly destroyed." This epistle was sent to Napoleon by post, through the care of Cesar Ketaphakou, as was known to all the companions of His exile. The text of this warning reached the whole of Persia, for it was at that time that the Kitáb-i-Haykal was spread in Persia, and this epistle was among the contents of this book. This happened in A.D. 1869, and as this Súriy-i-Haykal was circulated in Persia and India and was in the hands of all believers, they were waiting to see what would come to pass. Not long after, in A.D. 1870, the war between Germany and France broke out; and though no one at that time expected the victory of Germany, Napoleon was defeated and dishonored; he surrendered to his enemies, and his glory was changed into deep abasement.</p>	<p>Immediately upon His arrival in prison, He addressed an epistle to Napoleon which He sent through the French ambassador, the substance of which was: "Ask what crime We have committed to be confined in this prison." Napoleon made no reply. Then a second epistle was issued, which is contained in the Súrih of the Temple, and which in substance says: "O Napoleon! Since thou hast failed to heed and answer My call, thou shalt lose Thy dominion and be reduced to naught." This epistle was dispatched to Napoleon by post, through the care of Cesar Catafago and with the full knowledge of His companions in exile. The text of this address quickly reached all of Persia, for the Book of the Temple was sent at that time to every corner of that land and this address was included therein. This took place in the year 1869, and as this Súrih of the Temple had been circulated throughout Persia and India, all the believers had it in their hands and were awaiting the outcome of this address. Not long after, in 1870, the fire of war was ignited between Germany and France, and although no one at the time anticipated the triumph of Germany, Napoleon was resoundingly defeated, surrendered to his enemies, and saw his glory changed into deepest abasement.</p>
<p>Tablets were also sent to other kings, and among them was the letter to H. M. Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. In that epistle Bahá'ú'lláh said, "Have Me summoned, gather the 'ulamá, and ask for proofs and arguments, so that the truth and falsehood may become known." H. M. Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh sent the blessed epistle to the 'ulamá and</p>	<p>Tablets were likewise dispatched to other kings, among them an epistle to His Majesty Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. In that epistle Bahá'ú'lláh said: "Summon Me to thy presence and gather all the divines, and ask for proof and testimony, that truth might be distinguished from error." His Majesty sent Bahá'ú'lláh's epistle to the divines</p>

<p>proposed to them that they should undertake this mission, but they dared not do so. Then he asked seven of the most celebrated among them to write an answer to the challenge. After some time they returned the blessed letter, saying, "This man is the opposer of religion and the enemy of the Sháh." His majesty the Sháh of Persia was much vexed, and said, "This is a question for proofs and arguments, and of truth or falsehood: what has it to do with enmity to the government? Alas! how much we respected these 'ulamá, who cannot even reply to this epistle."</p>	<p>and assigned them this task, but they dared not undertake it. He then asked seven of the most renowned divines to respond to this epistle. After a while they returned it, saying, "This man is an opponent of the Faith and an enemy of the King." His Majesty the Sháh of Persia was sorely vexed and said, "This is a matter of proof and testimony, of truth and error. What has it to do with enmity towards the government? How pitiful that we have shown forth such respect to these divines, and yet they cannot even reply to this address."</p>
<p>Briefly, all that was recorded in the Tablets to the Kings is being fulfilled: if from the year A.D. 1870 we compare the events that have occurred, we will find everything that has happened has appeared as predicted; only a few remain which will afterward become manifested.</p>	<p>Briefly, all that was recorded in the Tablets to the kings has come to pass. One needs only compare their contents with the events that have transpired since the year 1870 to see that every prediction has been fulfilled, save for a few that remain to be manifested in the future.</p>
<p>So also foreign peoples, and other sects who were not believers, attributed many wonderful things to Bahá'u'lláh. Some believed that He was a saint, and some even wrote treatises about Him. One of them, Siyyid Dávúdí, a Sunnite savant of Baghdád, wrote a short treatise in which he related certain supernatural acts of Bahá'u'lláh. Even now, in all parts of the East, there are some people who, though they do not believe in His manifestation, nevertheless believe Him to be a saint and relate miracles attributed to Him.</p>	<p>Moreover, foreign peoples and non-believers attributed wondrous works to Bahá'u'lláh. Some believed He was a saint, and some even wrote accounts to this effect, such as Siyyid Dávúdí, a Sunni divine of Baghdád, who composed a short treatise in which he related in some connection certain extraordinary feats of Bahá'u'lláh. To this day there are people throughout the East who do not believe in Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God, but who regard Him as a saint and attribute miracles to Him.</p>
<p>To sum up, both His antagonists and His partisans, as well as all those who were received in the sacred spot, acknowledged and bore witness to the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh. Though they did not believe in Him, still they acknowledged His grandeur, and as soon as they entered the sacred spot, the presence of Bahá'u'lláh produced such an effect on most of them that they could not utter a word. How many times it happened that one of His most bitter enemies would resolve within himself, "I will say such and such things when I reach His presence, and I will dispute and argue thus with Him," but when he entered the Holy Presence, he would become amazed and confounded, and remain speechless.</p>	<p>To summarize, not a single soul, whether friend or foe, who attained Bahá'u'lláh's presence failed to acknowledge and attest to His greatness. Although he might not become a believer, he would invariably bear witness to His greatness. No sooner would someone appear before Him than the encounter would produce such an impression as to prevent him, in most cases, from uttering a word. How often would a bitter enemy resolve in his heart to say such-and-such or to argue so-and-so when he had attained His presence, only to find himself amazed, bewildered and reduced to utter silence!</p>

<p>Bahá'u'lláh had never studied Arabic; He had not had a tutor or teacher, nor had He entered a school. Nevertheless, the eloquence and elegance of His blessed expositions in Arabic, as well as His Arabic writings, caused astonishment and stupefaction to the most accomplished Arabic scholars, and all recognized and declared that He was incomparable and unequalled.</p>	<p>Bahá'u'lláh never studied Arabic, had a teacher or tutor, or entered a school. Nevertheless His eloquence and fluency in spoken Arabic, as well as in His Arabic Tablets, would astonish the most articulate and accomplished among the Arab men of letters, and all acknowledged that in this His attainments were without peer or equal.</p>
<p>If we carefully examine the text of the Torah, we see that the Divine Manifestation never said to those who denied Him, "Whatever miracle you desire, I am ready to perform, and I will submit to whatever test you propose." But in the Epistle to the Sháh, Bahá'u'lláh said clearly, "Gather the 'ulamá, and summon Me, that the evidences and proofs may be established."</p>	<p>If we carefully examine the text of the Torah, we see that none of the Manifestations of God ever said to those who denied them, "whatever miracle you desire, I am ready to perform, and I will submit to whatever test you propose." Yet in His epistle to the Sháh Bahá'u'lláh clearly stated: "Gather together the divines and summon Me to thy presence, that the proof and testimony might be established."</p>
<p>For fifty years Bahá'u'lláh faced His enemies like a mountain: all wished to annihilate Him and sought His destruction. A thousand times they planned to crucify and destroy Him, and during these fifty years He was in constant danger.</p>	<p>For fifty years Bahá'u'lláh withstood His enemies like a mountain: They all sought to annihilate Him; they all assailed Him; they plotted a thousand times to crucify and destroy Him; and throughout those fifty years He was in the greatest peril.</p>
<p>In this day Persia is in such a state of decadence and ruin that all intelligent men, whether Persians or foreigners, who realize the true state of affairs, recognize that its progress, its civilization and its reconstruction depend upon the promulgation of the teachings and the development of the principles of this great Personage.</p>	<p>As to Persia, which to this day remains in such an abject and ruinous state, every man of wisdom, whether from within or without its borders, who knows her true state of affairs recognizes that her progress, her prosperity and her civilization depend entirely upon the promulgation of the teachings and the dissemination of the principles of this glorious Being.</p>
<p>Christ, in His blessed day, in reality only educated eleven men: the greatest of them was Peter, who, nevertheless, when he was tested, thrice denied Christ. In spite of this, the Cause of Christ subsequently permeated the world. At the present day Bahá'u'lláh has educated thousands of souls who, while under the menace of the sword, raised to the highest heaven the cry of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá"; and in the fire of tests, their faces became illuminated like gold. Then reflect what will take place in the future.</p>	<p>In His blessed lifetime Christ educated in reality only eleven souls, the greatest of whom, Peter, nonetheless denied Him thrice when put to the test. Notwithstanding this, behold how the Cause of Christ subsequently pervaded the whole earth! In this day Bahá'u'lláh has educated thousands of souls who, under the threat of the sword, have raised to the highest heaven the cry of "O Thou the Glory of Glories!" and whose faces have shone as brightly as gold in the crucible of trials. Infer then from this what shall transpire in the future!</p>
<p>Finally, we must be just and acknowledge what an Educator this Glorious Being was, what marvelous signs were manifested by Him, and</p>	<p>Now, we must be fair and acknowledge what an Educator of mankind this illustrious Being was, what marvellous signs He has manifested, and</p>

<p>what power and might have been realized in the world through Him.</p>	<p>what power and might have been realized in the world of existence through Him.</p>
<p>TRADITIONAL PROOFS EXEMPLIFIED FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL</p>	<p>Rational Proofs and Traditional Arguments from the Sacred Scriptures</p>
<p>Today, at table, let us speak for a little of proofs. If you had come to this blessed place in the days of the manifestation of the evident Light, if you had attained to the court of His presence, and had witnessed His luminous beauty, you would have understood that His teachings and perfection were not in need of further evidence.</p> <p>Only through the honor of entering His presence, many souls became confirmed believers; they had no need of other proofs. Even those people who rejected and hated Him bitterly, when they had met Him, would testify to the grandeur of Bahá'u'lláh, saying, "This is a magnificent man, but what a pity that he makes such a claim! Otherwise, all that he says is acceptable."</p>	<p>Today at table let us speak a little of proofs. Had you come to this blessed spot in the days of the manifestation of that most resplendent Light, entered the court of His presence, and beheld His luminous countenance, you would have recognized that His utterance and His beauty were in want of no further proof. How numerous the souls who upon attaining His presence became at once confirmed believers, dispensing with any further proof! Even those who were steeped in the deepest hatred and denial would, upon meeting Bahá'u'lláh, testify to His greatness, saying, "This is indeed a distinguished man, but how regrettable that he makes such a claim! For whatever else he might say would be acceptable."</p>
<p>But now, as that Light of Reality has set, all are in need of proofs; so we have undertaken to demonstrate rational proofs of the truth of His claim. We will cite another which alone is sufficient for all who are just, and which no one can deny. It is that this illustrious Being uplifted His Cause in the "Greatest Prison"; from this Prison His light was shed abroad, His fame conquered the world, and the proclamation of His glory reached the East and West. Until our time no such thing has ever occurred.</p> <p>If there be justice, this will be acknowledged; but there are some people who, even if all the proofs in the world be adduced before them, still will not judge justly! Thus nations and states with all their strength could not resist Him. Verily, single and alone, imprisoned and oppressed, He accomplished whatever He desired.</p>	<p>Now, since that Luminary of truth has set, all stand in need of proofs, and so we have been occupied with providing rational proofs. Let us mention another, and this undeniable proof should alone suffice any fair-minded soul: It is that this illustrious Being advanced His Cause from within the Most Great Prison, whence His light shone forth, His fame encircled the globe, and the word of His glory reached both East and West. To this day such a thing has never come to pass, if the matter be examined with fairness. But there are certain souls who, even if they were to hear every proof in the world, would not judge fairly! Governments and peoples with all their might failed to resist Him, while He, alone and single-handedly, wronged and imprisoned, accomplished whatsoever He had purposed.</p>
<p>I do not wish to mention the miracles of Bahá'u'lláh, for it may perhaps be said that these are traditions, liable both to truth and to error, like the accounts of the miracles of Christ in the Gospel, which come to us from the apostles, and not from anyone else, and are denied by the Jews. Though if I wish to mention the supernatural acts of Bahá'u'lláh, they are</p>	<p>I will not mention the miracles of Bahá'u'lláh, for the hearer might say that these are merely traditions which may or may not be true. Such, too, is the case with the Gospel, where the accounts of the miracles of Christ come down to us from the Apostles and not from other observers, and are denied by the Jews. Were I nonetheless to mention the supernatural feats of</p>

<p>numerous; they are acknowledged in the Orient, and even by some non-Bahá'ís. But these narratives are not decisive proofs and evidences to all; the hearer might perhaps say that this account may not be in accordance with what occurred, for it is known that other sects recount miracles performed by their founders. For instance, the followers of Brahmanism relate miracles. From what evidence may we know that those are false and that these are true? If these are fables, the others also are fables; if these are generally accepted, so also the others are generally accepted. Consequently, these accounts are not satisfactory proofs. Yes, miracles are proofs for the eyewitness only, and even he may regard them not as a miracle but as an enchantment. Extraordinary feats have also been related of some conjurors.</p>	<p>Bahá'u'lláh, they are numerous and unequivocally acknowledged in the East, even by some of the non-believers. But these accounts cannot be a decisive proof and testimony for all, since the hearer might say that they are not factually true, as the followers of other denominations also recount miracles from their leaders. For instance, Hindus recount certain miracles of Brahma. How can we know that those are false and that these are true? If these are reported accounts, so too are those; if these are widely attested, then the same holds true of those. Thus such accounts do not constitute a sufficient proof. Of course, a miracle may be a proof for the eyewitness, but even then he might not be sure whether what he beheld was a true miracle or mere sorcery. Indeed, extraordinary feats have also been attributed to certain magicians.</p>
<p>Briefly, my meaning is that many wonderful things were done by Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth, and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them: they may think that they are merely enchantments.</p>	<p>In brief, our meaning is that many marvellous things appeared from Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, for not only do they not constitute a proof and testimony for all mankind, but they are not even a decisive proof for those who witnessed them and who may ascribe them to magic.</p>
<p>Also, most of the miracles of the Prophets which are mentioned have an inner significance. For instance, in the Gospel it is written that at the martyrdom of Christ darkness prevailed, and the earth quaked, and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the dead came forth from their graves. If these events had happened, they would indeed have been awesome, and would certainly have been recorded in the history of the times. They would have become the cause of much troublings of heart. Either the soldiers would have taken down Christ from the cross, or they would have fled. These events are not related in any history; therefore, it is evident they ought not to be taken literally, but as having an inner significance. Our purpose is not to deny such miracles; our only meaning is that they do not constitute decisive proofs, and that they have an inner significance.</p>	<p>Moreover, most of the miracles attributed to the Prophets have an inner meaning. For instance, it is recorded in the Gospel that upon the martyrdom of Christ darkness fell, the earth shook, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and the dead arose from their graves. If this had outwardly come to pass it would have been a stupendous thing. Such an event would have undoubtedly been recorded in the chronicles of the time and would have seized with dismay the hearts of men. At the very least the soldiers would have removed Christ from the cross or would have fled. But as these events have not been recorded in any history it is evident that they are not to be understood literally but according to their inner meaning. Our purpose is not to deny, but merely to say that these accounts do not constitute a decisive proof, and that they have an inner meaning — nothing more.</p>
<p>Accordingly, today, at table, we will refer to the explanation of the traditional proofs which are in</p>	<p>Accordingly, today at table we will refer to explanations of traditional arguments drawn</p>

<p>the Holy Books. Until now, all that we have spoken of are rational proofs.</p>	<p>from the sacred scriptures, for all that we have spoken of thus far have been rational arguments.</p>
<p>The state in which one should be to seriously search for the truth is the condition of the thirsty, burning soul desiring the water of life, of the fish struggling to reach the sea, of the sufferer seeking for the true doctor to obtain the divine cure, of the lost caravan endeavoring to find the right road, of the lost and wandering ship striving to reach the shore of salvation.</p> <p>Therefore, the seeker must be endowed with certain qualities. First of all, he must be just and severed from all else save God; his heart must be entirely turned to the supreme horizon; he must be free from the bondage of self and passion, for all these are obstacles. Furthermore, he must be able to endure all hardships. He must be absolutely pure and sanctified, and free from the love or the hatred of the inhabitants of the world. Why? Because the fact of his love for any person or thing might prevent him from recognizing the truth in another, and, in the same way, hatred for anything might be a hindrance in discerning truth. This is the condition of seeking, and the seeker must have these qualities and attributes. Until he reaches this condition, it is not possible for him to attain to the Sun of Reality.</p>	<p>Since this is the station of searching after truth and seeking the knowledge of the real — that station wherein the sore athirst longs for the water of life and the struggling fish reaches the sea, wherein the ailing soul seeks the true physician and partakes of divine healing, wherein the lost caravan finds the path of truth and the aimless and wandering ship attains the shore of salvation — the seeker must therefore be endowed with certain attributes. First, he must be fair-minded and detached from all save God. His heart must be entirely directed towards the Supreme Horizon and freed from the bondage of vain and selfish desires, for these are obstacles on the path. Furthermore, he must endure every tribulation, embody the utmost purity and sanctity, and renounce the love or hatred of all the peoples of the world, lest his love for one thing hinder him from investigating another, or his hatred for something prevent him from discerning its truth. This is the station of search, and the seeker must be endowed with these qualities and attributes — that is, until he attains this station it will be impossible for him to gain the knowledge of the Sun of Truth.</p>
<p>Let us now return to our subject.</p> <p>All the peoples of the world are awaiting two Manifestations, Who must be contemporaneous; all wait for the fulfillment of this promise. In the Bible the Jews have the promise of the Lord of Hosts and the Messiah; in the Gospel the return of Christ and Elijah is promised.</p> <p>In the religion of Muḥammad there is the promise of the Mihdí and the Messiah, and it is the same with the Zoroastrian and the other religions, but if we relate these matters in detail, it would take too long. The essential fact is that all are promised two Manifestations, Who will come, one following on the other. It has been prophesied that in the time of these two Manifestations the earth will be transformed, the world of existence will be renewed, and beings will be clothed in new garments. Justice and truth</p>	<p>Let us return to our theme. All the peoples of the world are awaiting two Manifestations, Who must be contemporaneous. This is what they all have been promised. In the Torah the Jews are promised the Lord of Hosts and the Messiah. In the Gospel, the return of Christ and Elijah is foretold. In the religion of Muḥammad there is the promise of the Mahdí and the Messiah. The same holds true of the Zoroastrians and others, but to belabour this matter would prolong our discourse. Our meaning is that all have been promised the advent of two successive Manifestations. It has been prophesied that, through these twin Manifestations, the earth will become another earth; all existence will be renewed; the contingent world will be clothed with the robe of a new life; justice and righteousness will encompass the globe; hatred and enmity will disappear; whatever is the cause of division among peoples, races and nations will</p>

<p>will encompass the world; enmity and hatred will disappear; all causes of division among peoples, races and nations will vanish; and the cause of union, harmony and concord will appear. The negligent will awake, the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dumb will speak, the sick will be cured, the dead will arise. War will give place to peace, enmity will be conquered by love, the causes of dispute and wrangling will be entirely removed, and true felicity will be attained. The world will become the mirror of the Heavenly Kingdom; humanity will be the Throne of Divinity. All nations will become one; all religions will be unified; all individual men will become of one family and of one kindred. All the regions of the earth will become one; the superstitions caused by races, countries, individuals, languages and politics will disappear; and all men will attain to life eternal, under the shadow of the Lord of Hosts.</p>	<p>be obliterated; and that which ensures unity, harmony and concord will be promoted. The heedless will arise from their slumber; the blind will see; the deaf will hear; the dumb will speak; the sick will be healed; the dead will be quickened; and war will give way to peace. Enmity will be transmuted into love; the root causes of contention and strife will be eliminated; mankind will attain true felicity; this world will mirror forth the heavenly Kingdom; and the earth below will become the throne of the realm above. All nations will become one nation; all religions will become one religion; all mankind will become one family and one kindred; all the regions of the earth will become as one; racial, national, personal, linguistic, and political prejudices will be effaced and extinguished; and all will attain everlasting life under the shadow of the Lord of Hosts.</p>
<p>Now we must prove from the Holy Books that these two Manifestations have come, and we must divine the meaning of the words of the Prophets, for we wish for proofs drawn from the Holy Books.</p> <p>A few days ago, at table, we put forth rational proofs establishing the truth of these two Manifestations.</p>	<p>Now, one must prove the advent of these twin Manifestations by reference to the sacred scriptures and by inference from the sayings of the Prophets. For our intention now is to provide arguments drawn from the sacred scriptures, since rational arguments establishing the truth of these two Manifestations were presented at table a few days ago.</p>
<p>To conclude: in the Book of Daniel, from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the martyrdom of Christ, seventy weeks are appointed; for by the martyrdom of Christ the sacrifice is accomplished and the altar destroyed. This is a prophecy of the manifestation of Christ.</p>	<p>The Book of Daniel fixes the period between the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the martyrdom of Christ at seventy weeks, for it is through the martyrdom of Christ that the sacrifice is ended and the altar destroyed. This prophecy thus refers to the advent of Christ.</p>
<p>These seventy weeks begin with the restoration and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, concerning which four edicts were issued by three kings.</p> <p>The first was issued by Cyrus in the year 536 B.C.; this is recorded in the first chapter of the Book of Ezra. The second edict, with reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, is that of Darius of Persia in the year 519 B.C.; this is recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra. The third is that of Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign—that is, in 457 B.C.; this is recorded in the seventh chapter of Ezra. The fourth is that of Artaxerxes in the year 444</p>	<p>These seventy weeks begin with the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem, concerning which four edicts were issued by three kings. The first was by Cyrus in 536 B.C., and this is recorded in the first chapter of the Book of Ezra. The second edict regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued by Darius of Persia in 519 B.C., and this is recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra. The third was issued by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, that is, in 457 B.C., and this is recorded in the seventh chapter of Ezra. The fourth edict was issued by Artaxerxes in 444 B.C., and this is recorded in the second chapter of Nehemiah.</p>

<p>B.C.; this is recorded in the second chapter of Nehemiah.</p>	
<p>But Daniel refers especially to the third edict which was issued in the year 457 B.C. Seventy weeks make four hundred and ninety days. Each day, according to the text of the Holy Book, is a year. For in the Bible it is said: "The day of the Lord is one year." Therefore, four hundred and ninety days are four hundred and ninety years. The third edict of Artaxerxes was issued four hundred and fifty-seven years before the birth of Christ, and Christ when He was martyred and ascended was thirty-three years of age. When you add thirty-three to four hundred and fifty-seven, the result is four hundred and ninety, which is the time announced by Daniel for the manifestation of Christ.</p>	<p>What Daniel intended is the third edict, which was issued in 457 B.C. Seventy weeks make four hundred and ninety days. Each day, according to the text of the Bible, is one year, for in the Torah it is said: "The day of the Lord is one year." Therefore, four hundred and ninety days are four hundred and ninety years. The third edict of Artaxerxes was issued four hundred and fifty-seven years before the birth of Christ, and Christ was thirty-three years old at the time of His martyrdom and ascension. Thirty-three added to four hundred and fifty-seven is four hundred and ninety, which is the time announced by Daniel for the advent of Christ.</p>
<p>But in the twenty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel this is expressed in another manner, as seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; and apparently this differs from the first saying. Many have remained perplexed at these differences, trying to reconcile these two statements. How can seventy weeks be right in one place, and sixty-two weeks and seven weeks in another? These two sayings do not accord.</p>	<p>But in Daniel 9:25 this is expressed in another manner, that is, as seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, which outwardly differs from the first statement. Many have been at a loss to reconcile these two statements. How can reference be made to seventy weeks in one place and to sixty-two weeks and seven weeks in another? These two statements do not accord.</p>
<p>But Daniel mentions two dates. One of these dates begins with the command of Artaxerxes to Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem: this is the seventy weeks which came to an end with the ascension of Christ, when by His martyrdom the sacrifice and oblation ceased.</p> <p>The second period, which is found in the twenty-sixth verse, means that after the termination of the rebuilding of Jerusalem until the ascension of Christ, there will be sixty-two weeks: the seven weeks are the duration of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which took forty-nine years. When you add these seven weeks to the sixty-two weeks, it makes sixty-nine weeks, and in the last week (69–70) the ascension of Christ took place. These seventy weeks are thus completed, and there is no contradiction.</p>	<p>In reality Daniel is referring to two different dates. One begins with the edict Artaxerxes issued to Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem, and corresponds to the seventy weeks which came to an end with the ascension of Christ, when sacrifice and oblation were ended through His martyrdom. The second begins after the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which is sixty-two weeks until the ascension of Christ. The rebuilding of Jerusalem took seven weeks, which are equivalent to forty-nine years. Seven weeks added to sixty-two weeks make sixty-nine weeks, and in the last week the ascension of Christ took place. This completes the seventy weeks, and no contradiction remains.</p>
<p>Now that the manifestation of Christ has been proved by the prophecies of Daniel, let us prove the manifestations of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb. Up to the present we have only mentioned</p>	<p>Now that the advent of Christ has been proven through the prophecies of Daniel, let us establish the advent of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb. So far</p>

<p>rational proofs; now we shall speak of traditional proofs.</p>	<p>we have only provided rational arguments; let us now turn to traditional ones.</p>
<p>In the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, verse thirteen, it is said: "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Then he answered (v. 14): "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"; (v. 17) "But he said unto me ... at the time of the end shall be the vision." That is to say, how long will this misfortune, this ruin, this abasement and degradation last? meaning, when will be the dawn of the Manifestation? Then he answered, "Two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Briefly, the purport of this passage is that he appoints two thousand three hundred years, for in the text of the Bible each day is a year. Then from the date of the issuing of the edict of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the day of the birth of Christ there are 456 years, and from the birth of Christ until the day of the manifestation of the Báb there are 1844 years. When you add 456 years to this number it makes 2300 years. That is to say, the fulfillment of the vision of Daniel took place in the year A.D. 1844, and this is the year of the Báb's manifestation according to the actual text of the Book of Daniel. Consider how clearly he determines the year of manifestation; there could be no clearer prophecy for a manifestation than this.</p>	<p>In Daniel 8:13 it is said: "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed", until it says: "...at the time of the end shall be the vision." That is to say, how long shall this misfortune, this ruin, this abasement and degradation endure? Or, when will the morn of Revelation dawn? Then he said, "Two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Briefly, the point is that he fixes a period of two thousand three hundred years, for according to the text of the Torah each day is one year. Therefore, from the date of the edict of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the day of the birth of Christ there are four hundred and fifty-six years, and from the birth of Christ until the day of the advent of the Báb there are one thousand eight hundred and forty-four years, and if four hundred and fifty-six years are added to this number it makes two thousand three hundred years. That is to say, the fulfillment of the vision of Daniel took place in A.D. 1844, and this is the year of the advent of the Báb. Examine the text of the Book of Daniel and observe how clearly he fixes the year of His advent! There could indeed be no clearer prophecy for a Manifestation than this.</p>
<p>In Matthew, chapter 24, verse 3, Christ clearly says that what Daniel meant by this prophecy was the date of the manifestation, and this is the verse: "As He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" One of the explanations He gave them in reply was this (v. 15): "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)." In this answer He referred them to the eighth chapter of the Book</p>	<p>In Matthew 24:3 Christ clearly says that what Daniel meant by this prophecy was the date of the advent, and this is the verse: "As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Among the words He uttered in reply were the following: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)." Thus He referred them to the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, implying</p>

<p>of Daniel, saying that everyone who reads it will understand that it is this time that is spoken of. Consider how clearly the manifestation of the Báb is spoken of in the Old Testament and in the Gospel.</p>	<p>that whoever reads it should grasp when that time shall be. Consider how clearly the advent of the Báb has been specified in the Torah and the Gospel!</p>
<p>To conclude, let us now explain the date of the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh from the Bible. The date of Bahá'u'lláh is calculated according to lunar years from the mission and the Hejira of Muḥammad; for in the religion of Muḥammad the lunar year is in use, as also it is the lunar year which is employed concerning all commands of worship.</p>	<p>Let us now establish the date of the advent of Bahá'u'lláh from the Torah. This date is calculated in lunar years from the revelation of the mission and the emigration of Muḥammad. For in the religion of Muḥammad the lunar calendar is used, and all the ordinances regarding religious observances have been expressed in terms of that calendar.</p>
<p>In Daniel, chapter 12, verse 6, it is said: "And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and that when He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."</p>	<p>In Daniel 12:6 it is said: "And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."</p>
<p>As I have already explained the signification of one day, it is not necessary to explain it further; but we will say briefly that each day of the Father counts as a year, and in each year there are twelve months. Thus three years and a half make forty-two months, and forty-two months are twelve hundred and sixty days. The Báb, the precursor of Bahá'u'lláh, appeared in the year 1260 from the Hejira of Muḥammad, by the reckoning of Islám.</p>	<p>As I have already explained the meaning of "day," no further explanation is needed, but let me briefly say that each day of the Father is equivalent to one year, and each year consists of twelve months. Thus three and a half years make forty-two months, and forty-two months are twelve hundred and sixty days, and each day in the Bible is equivalent to one year. And it is in the very year 1260 from the emigration of Muḥammad, according to the Muslim calendar, that the Báb, the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh, revealed His mission.</p>
<p>Afterward, in verse 11, it is said: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolation be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."</p>	<p>Afterward, in verses eleven and twelve, it is said: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."</p>
<p>The beginning of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muḥammad in the country of Hijáz; and that was three years after His mission, because in the</p>	<p>The commencement of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muḥammad in the land of Hijáz; and that was three years after the revelation of</p>

<p>beginning the prophethood of Muḥammad was kept secret, and no one knew it save Khadíjah and Ibn Nawfal. After three years it was announced. And Bahá'u'lláh, in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muḥammad, caused His manifestation to be known.</p>	<p>His mission, because in the beginning the prophethood of Muḥammad was concealed, and no one knew of it save Khadíjah and Ibn Nawfal, until it was publicly announced three years later. And it was in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muḥammad that Bahá'u'lláh announced His Revelation.</p>
<p>COMMENTARY ON THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN</p>	<p>Commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of the Revelation of John</p>
<p>In the beginning of the eleventh chapter of the Revelation of St. John it is said:</p> <p>“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.</p> <p>“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”</p>	<p>In Revelation 11:1–2 it is said: “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”</p>
<p>This reed is a Perfect Man Who is likened to a reed, and the manner of its likeness is this: when the interior of a reed is empty and free from all matter, it will produce beautiful melodies; and as the sound and melodies do not come from the reed, but from the flute player who blows upon it, so the sanctified heart of that blessed Being is free and emptied from all save God, pure and exempt from the attachments of all human conditions, and is the companion of the Divine Spirit. Whatever He utters is not from Himself, but from the real flute player, and it is a divine inspiration. That is why He is likened to a reed; and that reed is like a rod—that is to say, it is the helper of every impotent one, and the support of human beings. It is the rod of the Divine Shepherd by which He guards His flock and leads them about the pastures of the Kingdom.</p>	<p>By this reed is meant the Perfect Man, and the reason for His being likened to a reed is that when the latter is entirely freed and emptied of its pith, it becomes capable of producing wondrous melodies. Moreover, these songs and airs proceed not from the reed itself but from the player who blows into it. In the same way, the sanctified heart of that blessed Being is free and empty of all save God, is averse to and exempt from attachment to every selfish inclination, and is intimately acquainted with the breath of the Divine Spirit. That which He utters proceeds not from Himself but from the ideal Player and from divine revelation. Hence He is likened to a reed, and that reed is like a rod, that is, it is the succour of the weak and the support of every mortal soul. It is the rod of the True Shepherd by which He guards His flock and leads it about in the pastures of the Kingdom.</p>
<p>Then it is said: “The angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein”—that is to say, compare and measure: measuring is the discovery of proportion. Thus the angel said: compare the temple of God and the altar and them that are praying therein—that is to say, investigate what is their true condition and</p>	<p>Then it is said that the angel addressed him, saying, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein”, that is, weigh and gauge. To gauge is to determine the quantity of a thing. Thus the angel said: Weigh the Holy of Holies, and the altar, and them that are worshipping therein — that is, investigate their true condition, discover their</p>

<p>discover in what degree and state they are, and what conditions, perfections, behavior and attributes they possess; and make yourself cognizant of the mysteries of those holy souls who dwell in the Holy of Holies in purity and sanctity.</p>	<p>rank and station, their attainments, their perfections, their conduct and their attributes, and acquaint thyself with the mysteries of those holy souls who abide in the station of purity and sanctity in the Holy of Holies.</p>
<p>“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles.”</p> <p>In the beginning of the seventh century after Christ, when Jerusalem was conquered, the Holy of Holies was outwardly preserved—that is to say, the house which Solomon built; but outside the Holy of Holies the outer court was taken and given to the Gentiles.</p>	<p>“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles.” When, in the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era, Jerusalem was conquered, the Holy of Holies — that is, the edifice that Solomon had erected — was outwardly preserved, but its outer court was seized and given over to the Gentiles.</p>
<p>“And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months”—that is to say, the Gentiles shall govern and control Jerusalem forty and two months, signifying twelve hundred and sixty days; and as each day signifies a year, by this reckoning it becomes twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the cycle of the Qur’án. For in the texts of the Holy Book, each day is a year; as it is said in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, verse 6: “Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”</p>	<p>“And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months,” that is, the Gentiles will seize and subdue Jerusalem for forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, or, each day being equivalent to a year, twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the Quranic Dispensation. For according to the text of the Bible each day is a year, as it is said in Ezekiel 4:6: “Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”</p>
<p>This prophesies the duration of the Dispensation of Islám when Jerusalem was trodden under foot, which means that it lost its glory—but the Holy of Holies was preserved, guarded and respected—until the year 1260. This twelve hundred and sixty years is a prophecy of the manifestation of the Báb, the “Gate” of Bahá’u’lláh, which took place in the year 1260 of the Hejira of Muḥammad, and as the period of twelve hundred and sixty years has expired, Jerusalem, the Holy City, is now beginning to become prosperous, populous and flourishing. Anyone who saw Jerusalem sixty years ago, and who sees it now, will recognize how populous and flourishing it has become, and how it is again honored.</p>	<p>This is a prophecy concerning the duration of the Dispensation of Islám, when Jerusalem was trodden under foot, meaning that it was dishonoured, while the Holy of Holies remained preserved, guarded and honoured. This state of affairs continued until the year 1260. This twelve hundred and sixty years is a prophecy concerning the advent of the Báb, the “Gate” leading to Bahá’u’lláh, which took place in the year A.H. 1260. As the period of twelve hundred and sixty years has been completed, the Holy City of Jerusalem is now beginning to prosper and flourish again. Anyone who saw Jerusalem sixty years ago, and who sees it again today, will recognize how it has come to prosper and flourish and how it has regained its honour.</p>
<p>This is the outward meaning of these verses of the Revelation of St. John; but they have another explanation and a symbolic sense, which is as follows: the Law of God is divided into two parts.</p>	<p>This is the outward sense of these verses of the Revelation of John, but they also have an inward interpretation and a symbolic meaning, which is as follows: The religion of God consists of two</p>

<p>One is the fundamental basis which comprises all spiritual things—that is to say, it refers to the spiritual virtues and divine qualities; this does not change nor alter: it is the Holy of Holies, which is the essence of the Law of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh, and which lasts and is established in all the prophetic cycles. It will never be abrogated, for it is spiritual and not material truth; it is faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, righteousness, trustworthiness, love of God, benevolence, purity, detachment, humility, meekness, patience and constancy. It shows mercy to the poor, defends the oppressed, gives to the wretched and uplifts the fallen.</p> <p>These divine qualities, these eternal commandments, will never be abolished; nay, they will last and remain established for ever and ever. These virtues of humanity will be renewed in each of the different cycles; for at the end of every cycle the spiritual Law of God—that is to say, the human virtues—disappears, and only the form subsists.</p>	<p>parts. One is the very foundation and belongs to the spiritual realm; that is, it pertains to spiritual virtues and divine qualities. This part suffers neither change nor alteration: it is the Holy of Holies, which constitutes the essence of the religion of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh, and which will endure throughout all the prophetic Dispensations. It will never be abrogated, for it consists in spiritual rather than material truth. It is faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, high-mindedness, trustworthiness, love of God, and charity. It is mercy to the poor, assistance to the oppressed, generosity to the needy, and upliftment of the fallen. It is purity, detachment, humility, forbearance, patience, and constancy. These are divine qualities. These commandments will never be abrogated, but will remain in force and effect for all eternity. These human virtues are renewed in every Dispensation, for at the close of each Dispensation the spirit of the law of God, which consists in the human virtues, vanishes in substance and persists only in form.</p>
<p>Thus among the Jews, at the end of the cycle of Moses, which coincides with the Christian manifestation, the Law of God disappeared, only a form without spirit remaining. The Holy of Holies departed from among them, but the outer court of Jerusalem—which is the expression used for the form of the religion—fell into the hands of the Gentiles. In the same way, the fundamental principles of the religion of Christ, which are the greatest virtues of humanity, have disappeared; and its form has remained in the hands of the clergy and the priests. Likewise, the foundation of the religion of Muḥammad has disappeared, but its form remains in the hands of the official 'ulamá.</p>	<p>Thus, at the end of the Mosaic Dispensation, which coincided with the advent of Christ, the true religion of God vanished from among the Jews, leaving behind a form without a spirit. The Holy of Holies was no more, but the outer court of the Temple — which signifies the outward form of the religion — fell into the hands of the Gentiles. In the same way, the very heart of the religion of Christ, which consists in the greatest human virtues, is no more, but its outward form has remained in the hands of the priests and monks. Likewise, the foundation of the religion of Muḥammad is no more, but its outward form remains in the hands of the Muslim divines.</p>
<p>These foundations of the Religion of God, which are spiritual and which are the virtues of humanity, cannot be abrogated; they are irremovable and eternal, and are renewed in the cycle of every Prophet.</p>	<p>Those foundations of the religion of God, however, which are spiritual and consist in human virtues, are never subject to abrogation but are eternal and everlasting, and are renewed in every prophetic Dispensation.</p>
<p>The second part of the Religion of God, which refers to the material world, and which comprises fasting, prayer, forms of worship, marriage and divorce, the abolition of slavery, legal processes,</p>	<p>The second part of the religion of God, which pertains to the material world and which concerns such things as fasting, prayer, worship, marriage, divorce, manumission, legal rulings,</p>

<p>transactions, indemnities for murder, violence, theft and injuries—this part of the Law of God, which refers to material things, is modified and altered in each prophetic cycle in accordance with the necessities of the times.</p>	<p>transactions, penalties and punishments for murder, assault, theft and injury, is changed and altered in every prophetic Dispensation and may be abrogated — for policies, transactions, punishments, and other laws are bound to change according to the exigencies of the time.</p>
<p>Briefly, what is meant by the term Holy of Holies is that spiritual Law which will never be modified, altered or abrogated; and the Holy City means the material Law which may be abrogated; and this material Law, which is described as the Holy City, was to be trodden under foot for twelve hundred and sixty years.</p>	<p>Briefly, what is meant by the term “Holy of Holies” is that spiritual law which can never be changed or abrogated, and what is meant by the “Holy City” is the material law which may indeed be abrogated; and this material law — the Holy City — was to be trodden under foot for twelve hundred and sixty years.</p>
<p>“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.” These two witnesses are Muḥammad the Messenger of God, and ‘Alí, son of Abú Tálíb.</p> <p>In the Qur’án it is said that God addressed Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, saying: “We made You a Witness, a Herald of good news, and a Warner”—that is to say, We have established Thee as the witness, the giver of good tidings, and as One bringing the wrath of God. The meaning of “a witness” is one by whose testimony things may be verified. The commands of these two witnesses were to be performed for twelve hundred and sixty days, each day signifying a year. Now, Muḥammad was the root, and ‘Alí the branch, like Moses and Joshua. It is said they “are clothed in sackcloth,” meaning that they, apparently, were to be clothed in old raiment, not in new raiment; in other words, in the beginning they would possess no splendor in the eyes of the people, nor would their Cause appear new; for Muḥammad’s spiritual Law corresponds to that of Christ in the Gospel, and most of His laws relating to material things correspond to those of the Pentateuch. This is the meaning of the old raiment.</p>	<p>“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.” By these two witnesses are intended Muḥammad the Messenger of God and ‘Alí the son of Abú Tálíb. In the Qur’án it is said that God addressed Muḥammad saying, “We made Thee a witness, a herald and a warner,” that is, We have established Thee as one Who bears witness, Who imparts the glad tidings of that which is to come, and Who warns of the wrath of God. A “witness” means one by whose affirmation matters are ascertained. The commandments of these two witnesses were to be followed for twelve hundred and sixty days, each day corresponding to a year. Now, Muḥammad was the root and ‘Alí the branch, like Moses and Joshua. It is said they were “clothed in sackcloth,” meaning that they appeared to wear not a new raiment but an old one. In other words, they would initially appear to be of no consequence in the eyes of other peoples and their Cause would not seem new. For the spiritual principles of the religion of Muḥammad correspond to those of Christ in the Gospel, and His material commandments correspond for the most part to those of the Torah. This is the symbolism of the old raiment.</p>
<p>Then it is said: “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” These two souls are likened to olive trees because at that time all lamps were lighted by olive oil. The meaning is two persons from whom that spirit of the wisdom of God, which is the cause of the illumination of the world,</p>	<p>“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” These two Souls have been likened to olive trees since all the lamps of that time were lit at night with olive oil. In other words, these are two Souls from Whom the oil of divine wisdom — which is the cause of the illumination</p>

<p>appears. These lights of God were to radiate and shine; therefore, they are likened to two candlesticks: the candlestick is the abode of the light, and from it the light shines forth. In the same way the light of guidance would shine and radiate from these illumined souls.</p>	<p>of the world — will appear, and through Whom the lights of God will shine bright and resplendent. Thus have they also been likened to candlesticks. The candlestick is the locus of the light and the place from whence it emanates. In the same way the light of guidance would shine resplendent from these luminous Countenances.</p>
<p>Then it is said: “They are standing before God,” meaning that they are standing in the service of God, and educating the creatures of God, such as the barbarous nomad Arab tribes of the Arabian peninsula, whom they educated in such a way that in those days they reached the highest degree of civilization, and their fame and renown became worldwide.</p>	<p>“They are standing before God,” — that is, they have arisen in His service and are educating His creatures. For instance, they so educated the barbarous, desert-dwelling tribes of the Arabian Peninsula as to cause them to attain the loftiest heights of human civilization at the time and to spread their fame and renown throughout the world.</p>
<p>“And if any man would hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.” That is to say, that no one would be able to withstand them, that if a person wished to belittle their teachings and their law, he would be surrounded and exterminated by this same law which proceedeth out of their mouth; and everyone who attempted to injure, to antagonize and to hate them would be destroyed by a command which would come out of their mouth. And thus it happened: all their enemies were vanquished, put to flight and annihilated. In this most evident way God assisted them.</p>	<p>“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies...” This means that no soul would be able to withstand their might. That is, should anyone seek to subvert their teachings or their law, he would be overcome and defeated by virtue of that law which proceeds, whether in brief or in full, from their mouth. In other words they would issue a command that would destroy any enemy that would attempt to harm or oppose them. And so it came to pass, for their opponents were all vanquished, dispersed and destroyed, and these two witnesses were outwardly assisted by the power of God.</p>
<p>Afterward it is said: “These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy,” meaning that in that cycle they would be like kings. The law and teachings of Muḥammad, and the explanations and commentaries of ‘Alí, are a heavenly bounty; if they wish to give this bounty, they have power to do so. If they do not wish it, the rain will not fall: in this connection rain stands for bounty.</p>	<p>“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy....” This means that they would rule supreme in that age. In other words, the law and teachings of Muḥammad, and the exposition and commentaries of ‘Alí, are a heavenly grace. Should they wish to bestow this grace, it is in their power to do so, and should they wish otherwise, no rain will fall, and by rain is meant here the outpouring grace.</p>
<p>Then it is said: “They have power over water to turn it to blood,” meaning that the prophethood of Muḥammad was the same as that of Moses, and that the power of ‘Alí was the same as that of Joshua: if they wished, they could turn the water of the Nile into blood, so far as the Egyptians and those who denied them were concerned—that is to say, that that which was the cause of their life, through their ignorance</p>	<p>“...and have power over waters to turn them to blood...” This means that the prophethood of Muḥammad was similar to that of Moses, and the power of ‘Alí like that of Joshua. That is, it was in their power, had they so desired, to turn the waters of the Nile into blood for the Egyptians and the deniers — or, in other words, to turn, in consequence of their ignorance and pride, that which was the source of their life into the cause</p>

<p>and pride, became the cause of their death. So the kingdom, wealth and power of Pharaoh and his people, which were the causes of the life of the nation, became, through their opposition, denial and pride, the cause of death, destruction, dispersion, degradation and poverty. Hence these two witnesses have power to destroy the nations.</p>	<p>of their death. Thus the sovereignty, wealth and power of Pharaoh and of his people, which were the source of that nation's life, became, as a result of their opposition, denial and pride, the very cause of their death, ruin, destruction, degradation and wretchedness. Hence these two witnesses have power to destroy nations.</p>
<p>Then it is said: "And smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will," meaning that they also would have the power and the material force necessary to educate the wicked and those who are oppressors and tyrants, for to these two witnesses God granted both outward and inward power, that they might educate and correct the ferocious, bloodthirsty, tyrannical nomad Arabs, who were like beasts of prey.</p>	<p>"...and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." This means that they would also be endowed with outward power and ascendancy, that they might school the workers of iniquity and the embodiments of oppression and tyranny. For God had granted these two witnesses both outward might and inward power, and so it is that they reformed and educated the wicked, bloodthirsty, and iniquitous Arabs of the desert who were like ravening wolves and beasts.</p>
<p>"And when they shall have finished their testimony" means when they should have performed that which they are commanded, and should have delivered the divine message, promoting the Law of God and propagating the heavenly teachings, to the intent that the signs of spiritual life might be manifest in souls, and the light of the virtues of the world of humanity might shine forth, until complete development should be brought about among the nomad tribes.</p>	<p>"And when they shall have finished their testimony...." That is, when they have accomplished that which they were bidden, and have delivered the divine message, and promoted the religion of God, and spread abroad His heavenly teachings, so that the signs of spiritual life might be manifested in the souls of men, the light of human virtues might shine forth, and these desert tribes might achieve substantive progress.</p>
<p>"The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them": this beast means the Umayyads who attacked them from the pit of error, and who rose against the religion of Muḥammad and against the reality of 'Alí—in other words, the love of God.</p>	<p>"...the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." By this beast is meant the Umayyads, who assailed these witnesses from the pit of error. And indeed it came to pass that the Umayyads assailed the religion of Muḥammad and the truth of 'Alí, which consist in the love of God.</p>
<p>It is said, "The beast made war against these two witnesses" —that is to say, a spiritual war, meaning that the beast would act in entire opposition to the teachings, customs and institutions of these two witnesses, to such an extent that the virtues and perfections which were diffused by the power of those two witnesses among the peoples and tribes would be entirely dispelled, and the animal nature and carnal desires would conquer. Therefore, this beast making war against them would gain the</p>	<p>"The beast made war against these two witnesses." By this is intended a spiritual war, meaning that the beast would act in complete opposition to the teachings, conduct and character of these two witnesses, to such an extent that the virtues and perfections that had been diffused among the peoples and nations by virtue of their power would entirely vanish, and animal qualities and carnal desires would predominate. Therefore, this beast would wage war against them and would gain ascendancy,</p>

<p>victory—meaning that the darkness of error coming from this beast was to have ascendancy over the horizons of the world, and kill those two witnesses—in other words, that it would destroy the spiritual life which they spread abroad in the midst of the nation, and entirely remove the divine laws and teachings, treading under foot the Religion of God. Nothing would thereafter remain but a lifeless body without spirit.</p>	<p>meaning that the darkness of the error propagated by this beast would prevail throughout the world and slay those two witnesses — that is, it would extinguish their spiritual life amidst the people, obliterate their divine laws and teachings, and trample under foot the religion of God, leaving behind naught but a dead and soulless body.</p>
<p>“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” “Their bodies” means the Religion of God, and “the street” means in public view. The meaning of “Sodom and Egypt,” the place “where also our Lord was crucified,” is this region of Syria, and especially Jerusalem, where the Umayyads then had their dominions; and it was here that the Religion of God and the divine teachings first disappeared, and a body without spirit remained. “Their bodies” represents the Religion of God, which remained like a dead body without spirit.</p>	<p>“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” By “their bodies” is meant the religion of God and by “the street”, exposure to public view. “Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,” refers to the land of Syria and especially to Jerusalem, for the Umayyads had their seat of power in this land and it was here that the religion of God and the divine teachings first disappeared, leaving behind a soulless body. “Their bodies” refers to the religion of God, which remained as a dead and soulless body.</p>
<p>“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” As it was before explained, in the terminology of the Holy Books three days and a half signify three years and a half, and three years and a half are forty and two months, and forty and two months twelve hundred and sixty days; and as each day by the text of the Holy Book signifies one year, the meaning is that for twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the cycle of the Qur’án, the nations, tribes and peoples would look at their bodies—that is to say, that they would make a spectacle of the Religion of God: though they would not act in accordance with it, still, they would not suffer their bodies—meaning the Religion of God—to be put in the grave. That is to say, that in appearance they would cling to the Religion of God and not allow it to completely disappear from their midst, nor the body of it to be entirely destroyed and annihilated. Nay, in reality they would leave it, while outwardly preserving its name and remembrance.</p>	<p>“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” As was already explained, in the terminology of the sacred scriptures three days and a half signify three years and a half, and three years and a half represent forty-two months, and forty-two months twelve hundred and sixty days. Since according to the explicit text of the Bible each day is equivalent to a year, this means that for twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the Quranic Dispensation, the nations, tribes and peoples would behold their bodies, that is, they would keep the religion of God before their eyes but would not act in accordance with it. Yet, they would not suffer these bodies — the religion of God — to be laid to rest in the grave. That is, they would hold fast to its outward form and not let it entirely vanish from their midst nor allow the body to be wholly destroyed and annihilated. Rather, they would forsake its reality while outwardly preserving its name and remembrance.</p>
<p>Those “kindreds, people and nations” signify those who are gathered under the shadow of the</p>	<p>That which is intended here are such kindreds, peoples and nations as were gathered beneath</p>

<p>Qur'án, not permitting the Cause and Law of God to be, in outward appearance, entirely destroyed and annihilated—for there are prayer and fasting among them—but the fundamental principles of the Religion of God, which are morals and conduct, with the knowledge of divine mysteries, have disappeared; the light of the virtues of the world of humanity, which is the result of the love and knowledge of God, is extinguished; and the darkness of tyranny, oppression, satanic passions and desires has become victorious. The body of the Law of God, like a corpse, has been exposed to public view for twelve hundred and sixty days, each day being counted as a year, and this period is the cycle of Muḥammad.</p>	<p>the shadow of the Qur'án. These are they who would not allow the Cause and religion of God to be destroyed and annihilated outwardly as well. Thus, some manner of prayer and fasting was practiced among them, but the very foundations of the religion of God, which are goodly character, upright conduct, and the knowledge of the divine mysteries, had disappeared; the light of human virtues, which proceeds from the love and knowledge of God, had been extinguished; the darkness of oppression and tyranny, of carnal desires and satanic attributes, prevailed; and the body of the religion of God, like unto a corpse, was exposed to public view.</p>
<p>The people forfeited all that these two persons had established, which was the foundation of the Law of God, and destroyed the virtues of the world of humanity, which are the divine gifts and the spirit of this religion, to such a degree that truthfulness, justice, love, union, purity, sanctity, detachment and all the divine qualities departed from among them. In the religion only prayers and fasting persisted; this condition lasted for twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the cycle of the Furqán. It was as if these two persons were dead, and their bodies were remaining without spirit.</p>	<p>For twelve hundred and sixty days, each day being a year, that is, for the duration of the Islamic Dispensation, all that these two Persons had established as the foundations of the religion of God was forfeited by their followers. To such an extent were the traces of human virtues — which are the bestowals of God and which constituted the spirit of this religion — erased that truthfulness, justice, love, concord, purity, sanctity, detachment and all the heavenly attributes vanished from their midst, and what remained of the religion was mere prayer and fasting. This condition lasted for twelve hundred and sixty years, which corresponds to the Dispensation of the Qur'án. It was as though these two Persons had died and their bodies were left without a soul.</p>
<p>“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” “Those who dwelt upon the earth” means the other nations and races, such as the peoples of Europe and distant Asia, who, when they saw that the character of Islám was entirely changed, the Law of God forsaken—that virtues, zeal and honor had departed from among them, and that their qualities were changed—became happy, and rejoiced that corruption of morals had infected the people of Islám, and that they would in consequence be overcome by other nations. So this thing has come to pass. Witness this people</p>	<p>“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” By “them that dwelt on the earth” is meant other peoples and nations, such as those of Europe and of distant Asian lands, who, seeing that the character of Islam had entirely changed, that the religion of God had been forsaken, that virtue, decency and honour had vanished, and that characters had been subverted, rejoiced that the morals of the Muslims had been corrupted and that they stood therefore to be vanquished by other nations. And this indeed came to pass in a most conspicuous manner. Witness how this</p>

<p>which had attained the summit of power, how degraded and downtrodden it is now.</p>	<p>people who once wielded supreme power have been abased and subjugated!</p>
<p>The other nations “shall send gifts to one another,” meaning that they should help each other, for “these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth”—that is, they overcame the other nations and peoples of the world and conquered them.</p>	<p>The other nations “shall send gifts to one another,” meaning that they would help each other, for “these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth,” that is, they subdued and subjugated the other peoples and nations of the earth.</p>
<p>“And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that saw them.” Three days and a half, as we before explained, is twelve hundred and sixty years. Those two persons whose bodies were lying spiritless are the teachings and the law that Muḥammad established and ‘Alí promoted, from which, however, the reality had departed and only the form remained. The spirit came again into them means that those foundations and teachings were again established. In other words, the spirituality of the Religion of God had been changed into materiality, and virtues into vices; the love of God had been changed into hatred, enlightenment into darkness, divine qualities into satanic ones, justice into tyranny, mercy into enmity, sincerity into hypocrisy, guidance into error, and purity into sensuality. Then after three days and a half, which by the terminology of the Holy Books is twelve hundred and sixty years, these divine teachings, heavenly virtues, perfections and spiritual bounties were again renewed by the appearance of the Báb and the devotion of Jináb-i-Quddús.</p>	<p>“And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.” Three days and a half, as we explained earlier, is twelve hundred and sixty years. These two Persons whose bodies were lying soulless — that is, the teachings and the religion that Muḥammad had established and that ‘Alí had promoted, whose reality had vanished and of which only an empty form had remained — were again endowed with spirit. That is, the spirituality of the religion of God that had become materiality, the virtues that had become vices, the love of God that had become hatred, the light that had become darkness, the divine qualities that had become satanic attributes, the justice that had become tyranny, the mercy that had become malice, the sincerity that had become hypocrisy, the guidance that had become error, the purity that had become carnality, all these divine teachings, heavenly virtues and perfections, and spiritual bounties were, after three and a half days — which by the terminology of the sacred scriptures is twelve hundred and sixty years — renewed by the advent of the Báb and by the allegiance of Quddús.</p>
<p>The holy breezes were diffused, the light of truth shone forth, the season of the life-giving spring came, and the morn of guidance dawned. These two lifeless bodies again became living, and these two great ones—one the Founder and the other the promoter—arose and were like two candlesticks, for they illumined the world with the light of truth.</p>	<p>Thus did the breezes of sanctity waft, the light of truth shine, the life-giving springtime arrive, and the morn of guidance dawn. These two dead bodies were once again quickened to life, and these two great Personages — one the Founder and the other the promoter — arose and were as two candlesticks, for they illumined the whole world with the light of truth.</p>
<p>“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven,” meaning that from the invisible heaven they heard the voice of God, saying: You have performed all that was proper</p>	<p>“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud,” meaning that from the invisible heaven they heard the voice of God, saying: You have accomplished all that was</p>

<p>and fitting in delivering the teachings and glad tidings; you have given My message to the people and raised the call of God, and have accomplished your duty. Now, like Christ, you must sacrifice your life for the Well-Beloved, and be martyrs. And that Sun of Reality, and that Moon of Guidance, both, like Christ, set on the horizon of the greatest martyrdom and ascended to the Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>called for with regard to educating the people and conveying the glad tidings of that which is to come. You have delivered My message to the people, raised the call of Truth, and fulfilled your every obligation. Now, even as Christ, you must lay down your lives in the path of the Beloved and suffer a martyr's death. And so that Sun of Reality and that Moon of Guidance both set, Christ-like, beneath the horizon of the supreme sacrifice and ascended to the realm of Heaven.</p>
<p>"And their enemies beheld them," meaning that many of their enemies, after witnessing their martyrdom, realized the sublimity of their station and the exaltation of their virtue, and testified to their greatness and perfection.</p>	<p>"And their enemies beheld them," that is, many of their enemies realized after their martyrdom the sublimity of their station and the excellence of their virtues, and testified to their greatness and their perfections.</p>
<p>"And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand."</p> <p>This earthquake occurred in Shíráz after the martyrdom of the Báb. The city was in a turmoil, and many people were destroyed. Great agitation also took place through diseases, cholera, dearth, scarcity, famine and afflictions, the like of which had never been known.</p>	<p>"And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand." This earthquake occurred in Shíráz after the martyrdom of the Báb. The city was plunged into turmoil, and many people were killed. Great agitation ensued, moreover, from diseases, cholera, scarcity, famine, starvation and other afflictions, an agitation the like of which had never before been witnessed.</p>
<p>"And the remnant was affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven."</p> <p>When the earthquake took place in Fárs, all the remnant lamented and cried day and night, and were occupied in glorifying and praying to God. They were so troubled and affrighted that they had no sleep nor rest at night.</p>	<p>"And the remnant was affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." When the earthquake took place in Fárs, the survivors were wailing and lamenting day and night, and were occupied with praising and imploring God. So great was their fear and agitation that at night they could find no rest or composure.</p>
<p>"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." The first woe is the appearance of the Prophet, Muḥammad, the son of 'Abdu'lláh—peace be upon Him! The second woe is that of the Báb—to Him be glory and praise! The third woe is the great day of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts and the radiance of the Beauty of the Promised One. The explanation of this subject, woe, is mentioned in the thirtieth chapter of Ezekiel, where it is said: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near." Therefore, it is certain that the day of woe is the day of the Lord; for in that day woe is for the</p>	<p>"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." The first woe was the advent of the Apostle of God, Muḥammad the son of 'Abdu'lláh, peace be upon Him. The second woe was that of the Báb, upon Him be glory and praise. The third woe is the great Day of the advent of the Lord of Hosts and the revelation of the promised Beauty. The explanation of this matter is provided in the thirtieth chapter of Ezekiel, where it is said: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near." It is therefore evident then that the day of woe is the day of the Lord; for in that day woe is upon the</p>

<p>neglectful, woe is for the sinners, woe is for the ignorant. That is why it is said, “The second woe is past; behold the third woe cometh quickly!” This third woe is the day of the manifestation of Bahá’u’lláh, the day of God; and it is near to the day of the appearance of the Báb.</p>	<p>heedless, the sinners, and the ignorant. That is why it is said, “The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” This third woe is the day of the manifestation of Bahá’u’lláh, the Day of God, and it is near to the day of the appearance of the Báb.</p>
<p>“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”</p> <p>The seventh angel is a man qualified with heavenly attributes, who will arise with heavenly qualities and character. Voices will be raised, so that the appearance of the Divine Manifestation will be proclaimed and diffused. In the day of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts, and at the epoch of the divine cycle of the Omnipotent which is promised and mentioned in all the books and writings of the Prophets—in that day of God, the Spiritual and Divine Kingdom will be established, and the world will be renewed; a new spirit will be breathed into the body of creation; the season of the divine spring will come; the clouds of mercy will rain; the sun of reality will shine; the life-giving breeze will blow; the world of humanity will wear a new garment; the surface of the earth will be a sublime paradise; mankind will be educated; wars, disputes, quarrels and malignity will disappear; and truthfulness, righteousness, peace and the worship of God will appear; union, love and brotherhood will surround the world; and God will rule for evermore—meaning that the Spiritual and Everlasting Kingdom will be established. Such is the day of God. For all the days which have come and gone were the days of Abraham, Moses and Christ, or of the other Prophets; but this day is the day of God, for the Sun of Reality will arise in it with the utmost warmth and splendor.</p>	<p>“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.” That angel refers to human souls who have been endowed with heavenly attributes and invested with an angelic nature and disposition. Voices will be lifted up and the appearance of the divine Manifestation will be proclaimed and noised abroad. It will be announced that this day is the day of the advent of the Lord of Hosts and this Dispensation the merciful Dispensation of the Divine Providence. It has been promised and recorded in all the sacred books and scriptures that in this Day of God His divine and spiritual sovereignty will be established; the world will be renewed; a fresh spirit will be breathed into the body of creation; the divine springtime will be ushered in; the clouds of mercy will rain down; the Sun of Truth will shine forth; the life-giving breezes will blow: the world of humanity will be arrayed in a new garment; the face of the earth will become even as the highest paradise; humanity will be educated; war, dissension, strife and contention will vanish; truthfulness, uprightness, peace and godliness will prevail; love, concord and union will encompass the world; and God will rule forevermore — that is, a spiritual and everlasting sovereignty will be established. Such is the Day of God. For all the days which have come and gone were the days of Abraham, Moses, Christ, or of the other Prophets, but this day is the Day of God, inasmuch as the Sun of Truth will shine forth therein with the utmost intensity and radiance.</p>
<p>“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.</p> <p>“Saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great</p>	<p>“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” In every Dispensation there have been twelve</p>

power, and hast reigned.” In each cycle the guardians and holy souls have been twelve. So Jacob had twelve sons; in the time of Moses there were twelve heads or chiefs of the tribes; in the time of Christ there were twelve Apostles; and in the time of Muḥammad there were twelve Imáms. But in this glorious manifestation there are twenty-four, double the number of all the others, for the greatness of this manifestation requires it. These holy souls are in the presence of God seated on their own thrones, meaning that they reign eternally.

These twenty-four great persons, though they are seated on the thrones of everlasting rule, yet are worshipers of the appearance of the universal Manifestation, and they are humble and submissive, saying, “We give thanks to Thee, O Lord God Almighty, Which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned”—that is to say, Thou wilt issue all Thy teachings, Thou wilt gather all the people of the earth under Thy shadow, and Thou wilt bring all men under the shadow of one tent. Although it is the Eternal Kingdom of God, and He always had, and has, a Kingdom, the Kingdom here means the manifestation of Himself; and He will issue all the laws and teachings which are the spirit of the world of humanity and everlasting life. And that universal Manifestation will subdue the world by spiritual power, not by war and combat; He will do it with peace and tranquillity, not by the sword and arms; He will establish this Heavenly Kingdom by true love, and not by the power of war. He will promote these divine teachings by kindness and righteousness, and not by weapons and harshness. He will so educate the nations and people that, notwithstanding their various conditions, their different customs and characters, and their diverse religions and races, they will, as it is said in the Bible, like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard, the kid, the sucking child and the serpent, become comrades, friends and companions. The contentions of races, the differences of religions, and the barriers between nations will be completely removed, and all will attain perfect union and reconciliation under the shadow of the Blessed Tree.

chosen ones: In the time of Joseph there were twelve brothers; in the time of Moses there were twelve heads or chiefs of the tribes; in the time of Christ there were twelve Apostles; and in the time of Muḥammad there were twelve Imáms. But in this glorious Revelation there are twenty-four such souls, double the number of all the others, for so does its greatness require. These holy souls are in the presence of God seated upon their thrones, meaning that they reign eternally.

These twenty-four glorious souls, though they are established upon the throne of everlasting sovereignty, nonetheless bow down in adoration to, and are humble and submissive before, that universal Manifestation of God, saying, “We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned”. That is, Thou wilt promulgate all Thy teachings, gather all the people of the earth under Thy shadow, and bring all men together under a single tabernacle. And although sovereignty has always belonged to God, and He has ever been and will forever continue to be the supreme Sovereign, the reference in this instance is to the sovereignty of the Manifestation of His own Self, who will promulgate such laws and teachings as are the very spirit of the world of humanity and the cause of everlasting life. That universal Manifestation will subdue the world through a spiritual power, not through war and strife. He will array the world with peace and harmony, not with swords and spears. He will establish this divine sovereignty through genuine love, not through military might. He will promote these divine teachings through kindness and amity, not through violence and arms. Even though these nations and peoples are, in view of the divergence of their conditions, the disparity of their customs and characters, and the diversity of their religions and races, even as the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, and the sucking child and the asp, He will so educate them that they will embrace, consort with, and confide in each other. Racial antipathy, religious animosity and national rivalries will be entirely effaced, and

	all will attain perfect fellowship and complete harmony under the shade of the Blessed Tree.
“And the nations were angry,” for Thy teachings opposed the passions of the other peoples; “and Thy wrath is come” —that is to say, all will be afflicted by evident loss; because they do not follow Thy precepts, counsels and teachings, they will be deprived of Thy everlasting bounty, and veiled from the light of the Sun of Reality.	“And the nations were angry,” for Thy teachings ran counter to the selfish desires of the other nations, and “Thy wrath is come,” meaning that all suffered grievous loss for failing to follow Thy counsels, admonitions and teachings, were deprived of grace everlasting, and were veiled from the light of the Sun of Truth.
“And the time of the dead, that they should be judged” means that the time has come that the dead —that is to say, those who are deprived of the spirit of the love of God and have not a share of the sanctified eternal life—will be judged with justice, meaning they will arise to receive that which they deserve. He will make the reality of their secrets evident, showing what a low degree they occupy in the world of existence, and that in reality they are under the rule of death.	“And the time of the dead, that they should be judged” means that the time has come that the dead — that is, those who are deprived of the spirit of the love of God and bereft of that life which is holy and everlasting — should be judged with equity, meaning that each should be raised up according to their worthiness and capacity, and that the truth should be fully divulged as to what depths of degradation they occupy in this world of existence and how they should in reality be accounted among the dead.
“That Thou shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great” —that is to say, He will distinguish the righteous by endless bounty, making them shine on the horizon of eternal honor, like the stars of heaven. He will assist them by endowing them with behavior and actions which are the light of the world of humanity, the cause of guidance, and the means of everlasting life in the Divine Kingdom.	“That thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great,” that is, that Thou wilt single out the righteous for Thy boundless grace, cause them to shine even as heavenly stars above the horizon of ancient glory, and aid them to show forth such conduct and character as to illumine the world of humanity and to become the means of guidance and the source of everlasting life in the divine Kingdom.
“And shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth” means that He will entirely deprive the neglectful; for the blindness of the blind will be manifest, and the vision of the seers will be evident; the ignorance and want of knowledge of the people of error will be recognized, and the knowledge and wisdom of the people under guidance will be apparent; consequently, the destroyers will be destroyed.	“And shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.” That is, Thou wilt entirely deprive the heedless; for the blindness of the blind will be exposed and the sight of them that see will become evident; the ignorance and folly of the exponents of error will be recognized and the knowledge and wisdom of the rightly guided will be manifested; and thus the destroyers will be destroyed.
“And the temple of God was opened in heaven” means that the divine Jerusalem is found, and the Holy of Holies has become visible. The Holy of Holies, according to the terminology of the people of wisdom, is the essence of the Divine Law, and the heavenly and true teachings of the Lord, which have not been changed in the cycle of any Prophet, as it was before explained. The	“And the temple of God was opened in heaven.” This means that the divine Jerusalem has appeared and the Holy of Holies has become manifest. Among the people of true knowledge the Holy of Holies refers to the essence of the religion of God and His true teachings, which have remained unchanged throughout all the prophetic Dispensations, as was explained

<p>sanctuary of Jerusalem is likened to the reality of the Law of God, which is the Holy of Holies; and all the laws, conventions, rites and material regulations are the city of Jerusalem—this is why it is called the heavenly Jerusalem. Briefly, as in this cycle the Sun of Reality will make the light of God shine with the utmost splendor, therefore, the essence of the teachings of God will be realized in the world of existence, and the darkness of ignorance and want of knowledge will be dispelled. The world will become a new world, and enlightenment will prevail. So the Holy of Holies will appear.</p>	<p>previously, while Jerusalem encompasses the reality of the religion of God, which is the Holy of Holies, as well as all the laws, mutual relationships, rites and material ordinances, which constitute the city. That is why it is called the heavenly Jerusalem. Briefly, in the course of the Dispensation of the Sun of Truth, the lights of God will shine forth with the utmost splendour, and thus the essence of the divine teachings will be realized in the world of being, the darkness of ignorance and folly will be dispelled, the world will become another world, spiritual illumination will encompass all, and hence the Holy of Holies will appear.</p>
<p>“And the temple of God was opened in heaven” means also that by the diffusion of the divine teachings, the appearance of these heavenly mysteries, and the rising of the Sun of Reality, the doors of success and prosperity will be opened in all directions, and the signs of goodness and heavenly benedictions will be made plain.</p>	<p>“And the temple of God was opened in heaven.” This means also that through the dissemination of these divine teachings, the disclosure of these heavenly mysteries, and the dawning of the Sun of Truth, the portals of progress and advancement will be flung open on all sides and the signs of celestial blessings and bestowals will be made manifest.</p>
<p>“And there was seen in His temple the ark of His Testament” —that is to say, the Book of His Testament will appear in His Jerusalem, the Epistle of the Covenant will be established, and the meaning of the Testament and of the Covenant will become evident. The renown of God will overspread the East and West, and the proclamation of the Cause of God will fill the world. The violators of the Covenant will be degraded and dispersed, and the faithful cherished and glorified, for they cling to the Book of the Testament and are firm and steadfast in the Covenant.</p>	<p>“And there was seen in His temple the ark of His Testament.” This means that the Book of His Covenant will appear in His Jerusalem, the Tablet of the Testament will be recorded, and the meaning of the Covenant and Testament will become evident. The call of God will resound throughout East and West, and the earth will be filled with the renown of the Cause of God. The violators of the Covenant will be humbled and abased, and the faithful will attain honour and glory, for they hold fast to the Book of the Covenant and are firm and unwavering in the path of the Testament.</p>
<p>“And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail,” meaning that after the appearance of the Book of the Testament there will be a great storm, and the lightnings of the anger and the wrath of God will flash, the noise of the thunder of the violation of the Covenant will resound, the earthquake of doubts will take place, the hail of torments will beat upon the violators of the Covenant, and even those who profess belief will fall into trials and temptations.</p>	<p>“And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail,” meaning that after the appearance of the Book of the Covenant there will be a great tempest, the lightning of divine anger and wrath will flash, the thunder of the violation of the Covenant will break, the tremor of doubt will shake the earth, the hail of torments will rain upon the violators of the Covenant, and those who claim to believe will be subjected to tests and trials.</p>
<p>COMMENTARY ON THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH</p>	<p>Commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of Isaiah</p>

<p>In Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10, it is said: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”</p>	<p>In Isaiah 11:1–9 it is said: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”</p>
<p>This rod out of the stem of Jesse might be correctly applied to Christ, for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse, the father of David; but as Christ found existence through the Spirit of God, He called Himself the Son of God. If He had not done so, this description would refer to Him. Besides this, the events which he indicated as coming to pass in the days of that rod, if interpreted symbolically, were in part fulfilled in the day of Christ, but not all; and if not interpreted, then decidedly none of these signs happened.</p>	<p>This “rod out of the stem of Jesse” might seem to apply to Christ, for Joseph was a descendant of Jesse, the father of David. However, since Christ had come into being through the Divine Spirit, He called Himself the Son of God. Had this not been the case, this passage could have indeed applied to Him. Moreover, the events that are said to occur in the days of that rod, if they be interpreted figuratively, came to pass only in part, and if they be taken literally, failed absolutely and entirely to take place in the days of Christ.</p>
<p>For example, the leopard and the lamb, the lion and the calf, the child and the asp, are metaphors and symbols for various nations, peoples, antagonistic sects and hostile races, who are as opposite and inimical as the wolf and lamb. We say that by the breath of the spirit of Christ they found concord and harmony, they were vivified, and they associated together.</p>	<p>For instance, we might say that the leopard and the kid, the lion and the calf, the sucking child and the asp, represent the various nations, the hostile peoples and contending kindreds of the earth who in their opposition and enmity were even as the wolf and the lamb, and who through the breezes of the messianic Spirit came to be endowed with the spirit of unity and fellowship,</p>

But “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” These conditions did not prevail in the time of the manifestation of Christ; for until today various and antagonistic nations exist in the world: very few acknowledge the God of Israel, and the greater number are without the knowledge of God. In the same way, universal peace did not come into existence in the time of Christ—that is to say, between the antagonistic and hostile nations there was neither peace nor concord, disputes and disagreements did not cease, and reconciliation and sincerity did not appear. So, even at this day, among the Christian sects and nations themselves, enmity, hatred and the most violent hostility are met with.

But these verses apply word for word to Bahá'u'lláh. Likewise in this marvelous cycle the earth will be transformed, and the world of humanity arrayed in tranquillity and beauty. Disputes, quarrels and murders will be replaced by peace, truth and concord; among the nations, peoples, races and countries, love and amity will appear. Cooperation and union will be established, and finally war will be entirely suppressed. When the laws of the Most Holy Book are enforced, contentions and disputes will find a final sentence of absolute justice before a general tribunal of the nations and kingdoms, and the difficulties that appear will be solved. The five continents of the world will form but one, the numerous nations will become one, the surface of the earth will become one land, and mankind will be a single community. The relations between the countries—the mingling, union and friendship of the peoples and communities—will reach to such a degree that the human race will be like one family and kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine, and the darkness of enmity and hatred will be dispelled from the world. Universal peace will raise its tent in the center of the earth, and the blessed Tree of Life will grow and spread to such an extent that it will overshadow the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, antagonistic sects and hostile nations—which are like the wolf and the

were quickened to life, and associated intimately one with another. But the condition referred to in the statement “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,” did not materialize in the Dispensation of Christ. For to this day there are various hostile and contending nations in the world: few acknowledge the God of Israel, and most are deprived of the knowledge of God. Likewise, universal peace was not established with the advent of Christ; that is, peace and well-being were not realized among the hostile and contending nations, disputes and conflicts were not resolved, and harmony and sincerity were not attained. Thus, even to this day intense enmity, hatred and conflict prevail among the Christian peoples themselves.

But these verses apply word for word to Bahá'u'lláh. Moreover, in this wondrous Dispensation the earth will become another earth and the world of humanity will be arrayed with perfect composure and adornment. Strife, contention and bloodshed will give way to peace, sincerity and harmony. Among the nations, peoples, kindreds and governments, love and amity will prevail and cooperation and close connection will be firmly established. Ultimately, war will be entirely banned, and when the laws of the Most Holy Book are enacted, arguments and disputes will, with perfect justice, be settled before a universal tribunal of governments and peoples, and any difficulties which may arise will be resolved. The five continents of the world will become as one, its diverse nations will become one nation, the earth will become one homeland, and the human race will become one people. Countries will be so intimately connected, and peoples and nations so commingled and united, that the human race will become as one family and one kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine and the gloomy darkness of hatred and enmity will be dispelled as far as possible. Universal peace will raise its pavilion in the midmost heart of creation and the blessed Tree of Life will so grow and flourish as to stretch its sheltering shade over the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, contending

<p>lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf— will act toward each other with the most complete love, friendship, justice and equity. The world will be filled with science, with the knowledge of the reality of the mysteries of beings, and with the knowledge of God.</p>	<p>kindreds and hostile nations — which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf — will treat one another with the utmost love, unity, justice and equity. The earth will be filled with knowledge and learning, with the realities and mysteries of creation, and with the knowledge of God.</p>
<p>Now consider, in this great century which is the cycle of Bahá'ú'lláh, what progress science and knowledge have made, how many secrets of existence have been discovered, how many great inventions have been brought to light and are day by day multiplying in number. Before long, material science and learning, as well as the knowledge of God, will make such progress and will show forth such wonders that the beholders will be amazed. Then the mystery of this verse in Isaiah, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," will be completely evident.</p>	<p>Now, in this glorious age, which is the century of Bahá'ú'lláh, consider how far knowledge and learning have progressed, how fully the mysteries of creation have been unveiled, and how many great undertakings have been embarked upon and are multiplying day by day! Soon will material knowledge and learning, as well as spiritual knowledge, make such progress and display such wonders as to dazzle every eye and to disclose the full meaning of the verse of Isaiah: "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."</p>
<p>Reflect also that in the short time since Bahá'ú'lláh has appeared, people from all countries, nations and races have entered under the shadow of this Cause. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus and Persians all associate together with the greatest friendship and love, as if indeed these people had been related and connected together, they and theirs, for a thousand years; for they are like father and child, mother and daughter, sister and brother. This is one of the meanings of the companionship of the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, and the lion and the calf.</p>	<p>Consider likewise that in the short span of time since the advent of Bahá'ú'lláh, people of all nations, kindreds and races have entered beneath the shadow of this Cause. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists and Persians all consort together with perfect love and fellowship, as if for a thousand years they had belonged to the same kindred and family; indeed, as if they were father and son, mother and daughter, sister and brother. This is one of the meanings of the fellowship between the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, and the lion and the calf.</p>
<p>One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch (Bahá'ú'lláh) is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself. Universal peace and</p>	<p>One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is none other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common homeland, which is the planet itself. Universal peace and concord will be</p>

<p>concord will be realized between all the nations, and that Incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel, signifying that in this cycle Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and that the Jewish people who are scattered to the East and West, South and North, will be assembled together.</p>	<p>established among all nations. That incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel, that is, in His Dispensation Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and the Jewish people who are now scattered in the East and the West, the North and the South, will be assembled together.</p>
<p>Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the One Standard which is the Divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this Flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home.</p>	<p>Now observe that these events did not take place in the Christian Dispensation, for the nations did not enlist under that single banner — that divine Branch — but in this Dispensation of the Lord of Hosts all nations and peoples will enter beneath His shadow. Likewise Israel, which had been scattered throughout the world, was not gathered together in the Holy Land in the course of the Christian Dispensation, but in the beginning of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, which has been clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to materialize. Observe how from all corners of the world Jewish peoples are coming to the Holy Land, acquiring villages and lands to inhabit, and increasing day by day to such an extent that all Palestine is becoming their home.</p>
<p>COMMENTARY ON THE TWELFTH CHAPTER OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN</p>	<p>Commentary on the Twelfth Chapter of the Revelation of St. John</p>
<p>We have before explained that what is most frequently meant by the Holy City, the Jerusalem of God, which is mentioned in the Holy Book, is the Law of God. It is compared sometimes to a bride, and sometimes to Jerusalem, and again to the new heaven and earth. So in chapter 21, verses 1, 2 and 3 of the Revelation of St. John, it is said: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."</p>	<p>We have explained before that what the sacred scriptures most often mean by the Holy City or divine Jerusalem is the religion of God, which has at times been likened to a bride, or called "Jerusalem", or depicted as the new heaven and the new earth. Thus in Revelation chapter twenty-one it is said: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."</p>
<p>Notice how clear and evident it is that the first heaven and earth signify the former Law. For it is said that the first heaven and earth have passed away and there is no more sea—that is to say, that the earth is the place of judgment, and on</p>	<p>Consider how unmistakably "the first heaven" and "the first earth" refer to the outward aspects of the former religion. For it is said that "the first heaven and earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." That is, the earth is the arena</p>

<p>this earth of judgment there is no sea, meaning that the teachings and the Law of God will entirely spread over the earth, and all men will enter the Cause of God, and the earth will be completely inhabited by believers; therefore, there will be no more sea, for the dwelling place and abode of man is the dry land. In other words, at that epoch the field of that Law will become the pleasure-ground of man. Such earth is solid; the feet do not slip upon it.</p>	<p>of the last judgment, and in this arena there will be no more sea, meaning that the law and teachings of God will have spread throughout the earth, all mankind will have embraced His Cause, and the earth will have been entirely peopled by the faithful. Thus there will be no more sea, for man dwells upon solid land and not in the sea — that is, in that Dispensation the sphere of influence of that religion will encompass every land that man has trodden, and it will be established upon solid ground whereon the feet do not falter.</p>
<p>The Law of God is also described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. It is evident that the New Jerusalem which descends from heaven is not a city of stone, mortar, bricks, earth and wood. It is the Law of God which descends from heaven and is called new, for it is clear that the Jerusalem which is of stone and earth does not descend from heaven, and that it is not renewed; but that which is renewed is the Law of God.</p>	<p>Likewise, the religion of God is described as the Holy City or the New Jerusalem. Clearly, the New Jerusalem which descends from heaven is not a city of stone and lime, of brick and mortar, but is rather the religion of God which descends from heaven and is described as new. For it is obvious that the Jerusalem which is built of stone and mortar does not descend from heaven and is not renewed, but that what is renewed is the religion of God.</p>
<p>The Law of God is also compared to an adorned bride who appears with most beautiful ornaments, as it has been said in chapter 21 of the Revelation of St. John: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And in chapter 12, verse 1, it is said: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This woman is that bride, the Law of God that descended upon Muḥammad. The sun with which she was clothed, and the moon which was under her feet, are the two nations which are under the shadow of that Law, the Persian and Ottoman kingdoms; for the emblem of Persia is the sun, and that of the Ottoman Empire is the crescent moon. Thus the sun and moon are the emblems of two kingdoms which are under the power of the Law of God. Afterward it is said: “upon her head is a crown of twelve stars.” These twelve stars are the twelve Imáms, who were the promoters of the Law of Muḥammad and the educators of the people, shining like stars in the heaven of guidance.</p>	<p>Furthermore, the religion of God is likened to an adorned bride who appears with the utmost grace, as it has been said in chapter twenty-one of the Revelation of John: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And in chapter twelve it is said: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This woman is that bride, the religion of God, that descended upon Muḥammad. The sun with which she was clothed, and the moon which was under her feet, are the two governments which are under the shadow of that religion, the Persian and the Ottoman, for the emblem of Persia is the sun and that of the Ottoman Empire is the crescent moon. Thus the sun and the moon allude to two governments which are under the shadow of the religion of God. Afterward it is said: “upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” These twelve stars represent the twelve Imáms, who were the promoters of the religion of Muḥammad and the educators of the nation, and who shone as stars in the heaven of guidance.</p>

Then it is said in the second verse: “and she being with child cried,” meaning that this Law fell into the greatest difficulties and endured great troubles and afflictions until a perfect offspring was produced—that is, the coming Manifestation, the Promised One, Who is the perfect offspring, and Who was reared in the bosom of this Law, which is as its mother. The child Who is referred to is the Báb, the Primal Point, Who was in truth born from the Law of Muḥammad—that is to say, the Holy Reality, Who is the child and outcome of the Law of God, His mother, and Who is promised by that religion, finds a reality in the kingdom of that Law; but because of the despotism of the dragon the child was carried up to God. After twelve hundred and sixty days the dragon was destroyed, and the child of the Law of God, the Promised One, became manifest.

Verses 3 and 4. “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” These signs are an allusion to the dynasty of the Umayyads who dominated the Muḥammadan religion. Seven heads and seven crowns mean seven countries and dominions over which the Umayyads had power: they were the Roman dominion around Damascus; and the Persian, Arabian and Egyptian dominions, together with the dominion of Africa—that is to say, Tunis, Morocco and Algeria; the dominion of Andalusia, which is now Spain; and the dominion of the Turks of Transoxania. The Umayyads had power over these countries. The ten horns mean the names of the Umayyad rulers—that is, without repetition, there were ten names of rulers, meaning ten names of commanders and chiefs—the first is Abú Sufyán and the last Marwán—but several of them bear the same name. So there are two Muáviyá, three Yazíd, two Valíd, and two Marwán; but if the names were counted without repetition there would be ten. The Umayyads, of whom the first was Abú Sufyán, Amír of Mecca and chief of the dynasty of the Umayyads, and the last was Marwán,

Then it is said: “And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered,” meaning that this religion will suffer great difficulties and endure great toil and trouble until a perfect offspring is produced therefrom — that is, until the subsequent and promised Manifestation, Who is a perfect offspring, is reared in the bosom of this religion, which is even as its mother. By this offspring is meant the Báb, the Primal Point, Who was in truth born from the religion of Muḥammad. In other words, that sacred Reality which was the child and the result of the religion of God — its mother — and which was its Promised One, came into being in the heavenly kingdom of that religion, but was caught up unto God to elude the ascendancy of the dragon. After twelve hundred and sixty days the dragon was destroyed and the offspring of the religion of God, the Promised One, was made manifest.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” This dragon represents the Umayyads, who seized the reins of the religion of Muḥammad, and the seven heads and seven crowns represent the seven dominions and kingdoms over which they came to rule: the Roman dominion in Syria; the Persian, the Arabian and the Egyptian dominions; the dominion of Africa, that is, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria; the dominion of Andalusia, which is now Spain; and the dominion of the Turkish tribes of Transoxania. The Umayyads gained power over all these dominions. The ten horns represent the names of the Umayyad rulers, for, barring repetition, they are ten sovereigns, or ten names of chiefs and rulers. The first is Abú Sufyán and the last is Marwán. Some of their names have been repeated, including two Mu’áwiyaḥs, three Yazíds, two Walíds, and two Marwáns. If, however, these names are each counted only once they number ten in total. These Umayyads — the first of whom was Abú Sufyán, the former chief of Mecca and founder of the dynasty, and the last of whom was Marwán — destroyed a third of the holy and sanctified souls who

<p>destroyed the third part of the holy and saintly people of the lineage of Muḥammad who were like the stars of heaven.</p>	<p>descended from the pure lineage of Muḥammad and who were even as the stars of heaven.</p>
<p>Verse 4. “And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour the child as soon as it was born.” As we have before explained, this woman is the Law of God. The dragon was standing near the woman to devour her child, and this child was the promised Manifestation, the offspring of the Law of Muḥammad. The Umayyads were always waiting to get possession of the Promised One, Who was to come from the line of Muḥammad, to destroy and annihilate Him; for they much feared the appearance of the promised Manifestation, and they sought to kill any of Muḥammad’s descendants who might be highly esteemed.</p>	<p>“And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” This woman is the religion of God, as was before explained. The dragon’s standing near her signifies that it was keeping watch to devour her child as soon as it had been delivered. This child was the promised Manifestation, who is the offspring of the religion of Muḥammad. The Umayyads were ever anxious to lay hold on the Promised One Who was to appear from the lineage of Muḥammad, that they might destroy and annihilate Him, for they greatly feared His advent. And so wherever they found a descendant of Muḥammad who was respected in the eyes of the people, they killed him.</p>
<p>Verse 5. “And she brought forth a man child, Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” This great son is the promised Manifestation Who was born of the Law of God and reared in the bosom of the divine teachings. The iron rod is a symbol of power and might—it is not a sword—and means that with divine power and might He will shepherd all the nations of the earth. This son is the Báb.</p>	<p>“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” This glorious son is the promised Manifestation Who was born of the religion of God and reared in the bosom of the divine teachings. The iron rod is a symbol of might and power — it is not a sword — and means that He will shepherd all the nations of the earth by virtue of His divine might and power. And by this son is meant the Báb.</p>
<p>Verse 5. “And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.” This is a prophecy of the Báb, Who ascended to the heavenly realm, to the Throne of God, and to the center of His Kingdom. Consider how all this corresponds to what happened.</p>	<p>“And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” This is a prophecy concerning the Báb, Who ascended to the Kingdom, the Throne of God and the Seat of His sovereignty. Consider how closely this conforms to what indeed came to pass.</p>
<p>Verse 6. “And the woman fled into the wilderness”—that is to say, the Law of God fled to the wilderness, meaning the vast desert of Ḥijáz, and the Arabian Peninsula.</p>	<p>“And the woman fled into the wilderness,” that is, the religion of God betook itself to the desert, meaning the vast desert of Ḥijáz and the Arabian Peninsula.</p>
<p>Verse 6. “Where she had a place prepared of God.” The Arabian Peninsula became the abode and dwelling place, and the center of the Law of God.</p>	<p>“Where she hath a place prepared of God,” that is, the Arabian Peninsula became the home, the habitation and the focal centre of the religion of God.</p>
<p>Verse 6. “That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” In the terminology of the Holy Book these twelve hundred and sixty days mean the twelve hundred and sixty years that the Law of God was set up in</p>	<p>“That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” According to the terminology of the Bible these twelve hundred and sixty days mean twelve hundred and sixty years, as was before explained. Thus for twelve</p>

<p>the wilderness of Arabia, the great desert: from it the Promised One has come. After twelve hundred and sixty years that Law will have no more influence, for the fruit of that tree will have appeared, and the result will have been produced.</p>	<p>hundred and sixty years the religion of God was fostered in the vast desert of Arabia, until the Promised One appeared. After these twelve hundred and sixty years that religion ceased to be in effect, for the fruit of that tree had been manifested and its result had been produced.</p>
<p>Consider how the prophecies correspond to one another. In the Apocalypse, the appearance of the Promised One is appointed after forty-two months, and Daniel expresses it as three times and a half, which is also forty-two months, which are twelve hundred and sixty days. In another passage of John's Revelation it is clearly spoken of as twelve hundred and sixty days, and in the Holy Book it is said that each day signifies one year. Nothing could be clearer than this agreement of the prophecies with one another. The Báb appeared in the year 1260 of the Hejira of Muḥammad, which is the beginning of the universal era-reckoning of all Islám. There are no clearer proofs than this in the Holy Books for any Manifestation. For him who is just, the agreement of the times indicated by the tongues of the Great Ones is the most conclusive proof. There is no other possible explanation of these prophecies. Blessed are the just souls who seek the truth.</p>	<p>Consider how closely the prophecies correspond one to another! The Book of Revelation fixes the advent of the Promised One after forty-two months. The Prophet Daniel specifies three times and a half, which is also forty-two months or twelve hundred and sixty days. Another passage of the Revelation of John directly states twelve hundred and sixty days, and it is explicitly indicated in the Bible that each day signifies one year. Nothing could be clearer than this agreement of the prophecies with each other. The Báb appeared in the year A.H. 1260, which is the starting point of the calendar followed by all Muslims. There are no clearer prophecies than this in the Bible for any Manifestation. If one be fair, the agreement between the times indicated by these glorious Souls is the most conclusive proof and can in no wise be subject to any other interpretation. Blessed are the fair-minded who search after truth.</p>
<p>But failing justice, the people attack, dispute and openly deny the evidence, like the Pharisees who, at the manifestation of Christ, denied with the greatest obstinacy the explanations of Christ and of His disciples. They obscured Christ's Cause before the ignorant people, saying, "These prophecies are not of Jesus, but of the Promised One Who shall come later, according to the conditions mentioned in the Bible." Some of these conditions were that He must have a kingdom, be seated on the throne of David, enforce the Law of the Bible, and manifest such justice that the wolf and the lamb shall gather at the same spring.</p> <p>And thus they prevented the people from knowing Christ.</p> <p>Note.—In these last conversations 'Abdu'l-Bahá wishes to reconcile in a new interpretation the apocalyptic prophecies of the Jews, the Christians</p>	<p>When justice is lacking, however, the people challenge, dispute, and deny the obvious. Their conduct is like that of the Pharisees in the time of Christ, who would obstinately deny the interpretations and utterances He and His Apostles made, and who would wilfully obscure the truth before the ignorant masses, saying, "These prophecies do not apply to Jesus, but to the Promised One Who will ere long appear according to the conditions mentioned in the Torah" — among which being that He would be a king, sit upon the throne of David, enforce the law of the Torah, inaugurate the most great justice, and cause the wolf and the lamb to gather at the same spring. And thus did they veil the people from recognizing Christ.</p>

<p>and the Muslims, rather than to show their supernatural character. On the powers of the Prophets, cf. "The Knowledge of the Divine Manifestations," p. 157; and "Visions and Communication with Spirits," p. 251.</p>	
<p>SPIRITUAL PROOFS</p>	<p>Material and Spiritual Cycles</p>
<p>In this material world time has cycles; places change through alternating seasons, and for souls there are progress, retrogression and education.</p> <p>At one time it is the season of spring; at another it is the season of autumn; and again it is the season of summer or the season of winter.</p>	<p>In this material world, time has changing cycles and place is subject to varying conditions. Seasons follow one another and individuals progress, regress, and develop. At one point it is springtime and at another the autumn season; at one point it is summer and at another it is winter.</p>
<p>In the spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, in animals and in men. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed in new garments, and the black earth is covered with herbage; mountains and plains are adorned with verdure; trees bear leaves and blossoms; gardens bring forth flowers and fragrant herbs. The world becomes another world, and it attains to a life-giving spirit. The earth was a lifeless body; it finds a new spirit, and produces endless beauty, grace and freshness. Thus the spring is the cause of new life and infuses a new spirit.</p>	<p>The vernal season has rain-laden clouds and musk-scented breezes, life-giving zephyrs and perfectly mild weather. The rain falls, the sun shines, the reviving winds blow, the world is renewed, and the breath of life reveals itself in plant, animal and man alike. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed with a new vesture: the black earth is swathed in abundant grass, mountains and plains don an emerald-green robe, trees bear leaves and blossoms, gardens bring forth flowers and sweet herbs, the world becomes another world, and all creation is imbued with a new life. The earth, which was as a soulless body, finds a new spirit and displays the utmost beauty, grace and charm. Thus the springtide produces a new life and infuses a new spirit.</p>
<p>Afterward comes the summer, when the heat increases, and growth and development attain their greatest power. The energy of life in the vegetable kingdom reaches to the degree of perfection, the fruit appears, and the time of harvest ripens; a seed has become a sheaf, and the food is stored for winter.</p>	<p>Then comes summertime, when the heat intensifies and growth and development manifest the fullness of their power. The life force reaches its plenitude in the vegetable kingdom, fruits and crops appear, the harvest time arrives, the seed becomes the sheaf, and provision is made for the winter months.</p>
<p>Afterward comes tumultuous autumn when unwholesome and sterile winds blow; it is the season of sickness, when all things are withered, and the balmy air is vitiated. The breezes of spring are changed to autumn winds; the fertile green trees have become withered and bare; flowers and fragrant herbs fade away; the beautiful garden becomes a dustheap.</p>	<p>Then comes unrelenting autumn, when unwholesome gales blow, barren winds waft, and the season of dearth and want arrives. All things wither; the pleasant air becomes hard and chill; the breezes of spring turn into the blasts of fall; trees, once green and verdant, become wasted and bare; flowers and herbs fade away in sorrow; and delicate gardens become darksome heaps of dust.</p>

<p>Following this comes the season of winter, with cold and tempests. It snows, rains, hails, storms, thunders and lightens, freezes and congeals; all plants die, and animals languish and are wretched.</p>	<p>There follows the winter season, when cold winds blow and tempests arise. It snows and storms, it hails and rains, it thunders and lightens, and lethargy and torpor take hold. Plants become as dead, and animals languish and waste away.</p>
<p>When this state is reached, again a new life-giving spring returns, and the cycle is renewed. The season of spring with its hosts of freshness and beauty spreads its tent on the plains and mountains with great pomp and magnificence. A second time the form of the creatures is renewed, and the creation of beings begins afresh; bodies grow and develop, the plains and wildernesses become green and fertile, trees bring forth blossoms, and the spring of last year returns in the utmost fullness and glory. Such is, and such ought to be, the cycle and succession of existence. Such is the cycle and revolution of the material world.</p>	<p>When this stage is reached, the life-giving springtide returns once again and a new cycle is inaugurated. Springtime, with its hosts of vitality and grace, and in the plenitude of its greatness and majesty, pitches its tent upon the mountains and plains. Once more the temples of created things are revived and the creation of contingent beings is renewed. Living bodies grow and develop; fields and plains become green and verdant; trees put forth blossoms, and last year's spring returns once again in the height of its majesty and glory. The very existence of things must ever depend upon, and be perpetuated through, these cycles and successions. Such are the cycles and revolutions of the material world.</p>
<p>It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets—that is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.</p>	<p>The spiritual cycles associated with the Prophets of God proceed in like manner. That is, the day of the advent of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime. It is divine splendour and heavenly grace; it is the wafting of the breeze of life and the dawning of the Sun of Truth. Spirits are revived, hearts are refreshed, souls are refined, all existence is stirred into motion, and human realities are rejoiced and grow in attainments and perfections. Universal progress is achieved, the souls are gathered up, and the dead are quickened to life — for it is the day of resurrection, the season of commotion and ferment, the hour of joy and gladness, and the time of rapture and abandon.</p>
<p>Afterward the life-giving spring ends in fruitful summer. The word of God is exalted, the Law of God is promulgated; all things reach perfection. The heavenly table is spread, the holy breezes perfume the East and the West, the teachings of God conquer the world, men become educated, praiseworthy results are produced, universal progress appears in the world of humanity, and the divine bounties surround all things. The Sun of Reality rises from the horizon of the Kingdom with the greatest power and heat.</p>	<p>That soul-stirring springtime then gives rise to the fruitful summer. The Word of God is proclaimed, His Law is promulgated, and all things reach a state of perfection. The heavenly table is spread, the breezes of holiness perfume the East and the West, the teachings of God conquer the whole earth, souls are educated, laudable results are produced, universal progress is made in the human realm, the divine bounties encompass all things, and the Sun of Truth shines above the horizon of the heavenly Kingdom in the height of its power and intensity.</p>

<p>When it reaches the meridian, it will begin to decline and descend, and the spiritual summer will be followed by autumn, when growth and development are arrested. Breezes change into blighting winds, and the unwholesome season dissipates the beauty and freshness of the gardens, plains and bowers—that is to say, attraction and goodwill do not remain, divine qualities are changed, the radiance of hearts is dimmed, the spirituality of souls is altered, virtues are replaced by vices, and holiness and purity disappear. Only the name of the Religion of God remains, and the exoteric forms of the divine teachings. The foundations of the Religion of God are destroyed and annihilated, and nothing but forms and customs exist. Divisions appear, firmness is changed into instability, and spirits become dead; hearts languish, souls become inert,</p>	<p>When that Sun reaches its zenith it begins to decline, and that summer season of the spirit is followed by autumn. Growth and development are arrested, soft breezes turn into blighting winds, and the season of dearth and want dissipates the vitality and beauty of the gardens, the fields and the bowers. That is, spiritual attractions vanish, divine qualities decay, the radiance of the hearts is dimmed, the spirituality of the souls is dulled, virtues become vices, and sanctity and purity are no more. Of the law of God naught remains but a name, and of the divine teachings naught but an outward form. The foundations of the religion of God are destroyed and annihilated, mere customs and traditions take their place, divisions appear, and steadfastness is changed into perplexity. Spirits die away, hearts wither, and souls languish.</p>
<p>and winter arrives—that is to say, the coldness of ignorance envelops the world, and the darkness of human error prevails. After this come indifference, disobedience, inconsiderateness, indolence, baseness, animal instincts and the coldness and insensibility of stones. It is like the season of winter when the terrestrial globe, deprived of the effect of the heat of the sun, becomes desolate and dreary. When the world of intelligence and thought has reached to this state, there remain only continual death and perpetual nonexistence.</p>	<p>Winter arrives — that is, the chill of ignorance and unawareness envelops the world, and the darkness of wayward and selfish desires prevails. Apathy and defiance ensue, with indolence and folly, baseness and animal qualities, coldness and stone-like torpor, even as in the wintertime when the terrestrial globe is deprived of the influence of the rays of the sun and becomes waste and desolate. Once the realm of minds and thoughts reaches this stage, there remains naught but perpetual death and unending non-existence.</p>
<p>When the season of winter has had its effect, again the spiritual springtime returns, and a new cycle appears. Spiritual breezes blow, the luminous dawn gleams, the divine clouds give rain, the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth, the contingent world attains unto a new life and is clad in a wonderful garment. All the signs and the gifts of the past springtime reappear, with perhaps even greater splendor in this new season.</p>	<p>When, however, the winter season has run its course, the spiritual springtime returns again and a new cycle reveals its splendour. The breezes of the spirit blow, the radiant morn breaks, the clouds of the Merciful rain down, the rays of the Sun of Truth shine forth, and the world of being is invested with a new life and arrayed in a wondrous robe. All the signs and bestowals of the former springtime, and perhaps even greater ones, reappear in this new season.</p>
<p>The spiritual cycles of the Sun of Reality are like the cycles of the material sun: they are always revolving and being renewed. The Sun of Reality, like the material sun, has numerous rising and dawning places: one day it rises from the zodiacal sign of Cancer, another day from the sign of Libra or Aquarius; another time it is from the sign of</p>	<p>The spiritual cycles of the Sun of Truth, like the cycles of the physical sun, are in a state of perpetual motion and renewal. The Sun of Truth can be likened to the material sun, which rises from many different points. One day it rises from the sign of Cancer and another from the sign of Libra; one day it casts its rays from the sign of</p>

<p>Aries that it diffuses its rays. But the sun is one sun and one reality; the people of knowledge are lovers of the sun, and are not fascinated by the places of its rising and dawning. The people of perception are the seekers of the truth, and not of the places of its appearance, nor of its dawning points; therefore, they will adore the Sun from whatever point in the zodiac it may appear, and they will seek the Reality in every Sanctified Soul Who manifests it. Such people always attain to the truth and are not veiled from the Sun of the Divine World. So the lover of the sun and the seeker of the light will always turn toward the sun, whether it shines from the sign of Aries or gives its bounty from the sign of Cancer, or radiates from Gemini;</p>	<p>Aquarius and another from that of Aries. Yet the sun is but one sun and one single reality. The possessors of true knowledge are lovers of the sun and are not attached to its dawning points. Those who are endued with insight are seekers of the truth itself, not of its exponents and manifestations. Thus they bow in adoration before the sun from whatever sign and above whatever horizon it may appear, and seek the truth from any sanctified soul who might reveal it. Such people inevitably discover the truth and are not veiled from the light of the Sun of the divine firmament. Thus the lover of the rays and the seeker of the light will always turn toward the sun, whether it be shining from the sign of Aries, or bestowing its grace from the sign of Cancer, or casting its rays from the sign of Gemini.</p>
<p>but the ignorant and uninstructed are lovers of the signs of the zodiac, and enamored and fascinated by the rising-places, and not by the sun. When it was in the sign of Cancer, they turned toward it, though afterward the sun changed to the sign of Libra; as they were lovers of the sign, they turned toward it and attached themselves to it, and were deprived of the influences of the sun merely because it had changed its place. For example, once the Sun of Reality poured forth its rays from the sign of Abraham, and then it dawned from the sign of Moses and illuminated the horizon. Afterward it rose with the greatest power and brilliancy from the sign of Christ. Those who were the seekers of Reality worshipped that Reality wherever they saw it, but those who were attached to Abraham were deprived of its influences when it shone upon Sinai and illuminated the reality of Moses. Those who held fast to Moses, when the Sun of Reality shone from Christ with the utmost radiance and lordly splendor, were also veiled; and so forth.</p>	<p>But the foolish and the ignorant are enamoured with the zodiacal signs and enraptured with the dawning points, not with the sun itself. When it was in Cancer they turned toward it, but when it passed into Libra they continued, attached as they were to the former sign, to fix their gaze upon and hold fast unto that sign, and thus they deprived themselves of the rays of the sun when once it had moved. Thus the Sun of Truth at one time shed its rays from the sign of Abraham, later it dawned above the sign of Moses and illumined the horizon, and later still it shone forth with the utmost power, heat and radiance from the sign of Christ. Those who were searching after truth worshipped it wherever they saw it, but those who were attached to Abraham, when once that Sun cast its rays upon Sinai and illumined the reality of Moses, were deprived thereof. And those who clung to Moses, when once the Sun of Truth shed its heavenly splendour in the fullness of its radiance from the point of Christ, were likewise veiled, and so forth.</p>
<p>Therefore, man must be the seeker after the Reality, and he will find that Reality in each of the Sanctified Souls. He must be fascinated and enraptured, and attracted to the divine bounty; he must be like the butterfly who is the lover of the light from whatever lamp it may shine, and like the nightingale who is the lover of the rose in whatever garden it may grow.</p>	<p>Therefore one must search after truth, become enraptured and enthralled with any sanctified soul in whom one finds it, and become wholly attracted to the outpouring grace of God. Like a moth one must be a lover of the light in whatever lamp it may shine, and like a nightingale one must be enamoured of the rose in whatever bower it may bloom.</p>

<p>If the sun were to rise in the West, it would still be the sun; one must not withdraw from it on account of its rising-place, nor consider the West to be always the place of sunset. In the same way, one must look for the heavenly bounties and seek for the Divine Aurora. In every place where it appears, one must become its distracted lover. Consider that if the Jews had not kept turning to the horizon of Moses, and had only regarded the Sun of Reality, without any doubt they would have recognized the Sun in the dawning-place of the reality of Christ, in the greatest divine splendor. But, alas! a thousand times alas! attaching themselves to the outward words of Moses, they were deprived of the divine bounties and the lordly splendors!</p>	<p>Were the sun to rise from the west, it would still be the sun. Indeed, from whatever point the sun may rise, it is still the sun. One must not take its appearance to be confined to a single point and regard the other points as deprived. One must not be veiled by its rising in the east and consider the west as the place of its setting and decline. One must seek after the manifold grace of God, search out the divine effulgences, and become enraptured and enthralled with any reality in which they are clearly and plainly found. Consider that, if the Jews had not clung to the horizon of Moses but had fixed their gaze upon the Sun of Truth, they would have undoubtedly beheld that Sun shining in the fullness of its divine splendour in that true dawning point that was Christ. But a thousand times alas! They clung to the name of Moses and deprived themselves of that supernal grace and heavenly splendour.</p>
<p>TRUE WEALTH</p>	<p>True Felicity</p>
<p>The honor and exaltation of every existing being depends upon causes and circumstances.</p>	<p>The honour and exaltation of every existing thing is contingent upon certain causes and conditions.</p>
<p>The excellency, the adornment and the perfection of the earth is to be verdant and fertile through the bounty of the clouds of springtime. Plants grow; flowers and fragrant herbs spring up; fruit-bearing trees become full of blossoms and bring forth fresh and new fruit. Gardens become beautiful, and meadows adorned; mountains and plains are clad in a green robe, and gardens, fields, villages and cities are decorated. This is the prosperity of the mineral world.</p>	<p>The excellence, adornment and perfection of the earth consist in this, that through the outpourings of the vernal showers it should become green and verdant, that plants should spring forth, that flowers and herbs should grow, that blossom-filled trees should produce an abundant yield and bring forth fresh and succulent fruit, that gardens should be arrayed, that meadows should be adorned, that plains and mountains should don an emerald robe, and that fields and bowers, villages and cities should be decked forth. This is the felicity of the mineral world.</p>
<p>The height of exaltation and the perfection of the vegetable world is that a tree should grow on the bank of a stream of fresh water, that a gentle breeze should blow on it, that the warmth of the sun should shine on it, that a gardener should attend to its cultivation, and that day by day it should develop and yield fruit. But its real prosperity is to progress into the animal and human world, and replace that which has been exhausted in the bodies of animals and men.</p>	<p>The height of exaltation and perfection of the vegetable world consists in this, that a tree should stand tall beside a stream of fresh water, that a gentle breeze should blow and the sun bestow its warmth upon it, that a gardener should tend it, and that day by day it should grow and yield fruit. But its real felicity consists in progressing into the animal and human worlds and in replacing that which has been consumed in the bodies of animals and men.</p>
<p>The exaltation of the animal world is to possess perfect members, organs and powers, and to</p>	<p>The exaltation of the animal world is to possess perfect members, organs and powers, and to</p>

<p>have all its needs supplied. This is its chief glory, its honor and exaltation. So the supreme happiness of an animal is to have possession of a green and fertile meadow, perfectly pure flowing water, and a lovely, verdant forest. If these things are provided for it, no greater prosperity can be imagined. For example, if a bird builds its nest in a green and fruitful forest, in a beautiful high place, upon a strong tree, and at the top of a lofty branch, and if it finds all it needs of seeds and water, this is its perfect prosperity.</p>	<p>have all its needs supplied. This is the height of its glory, honour and exaltation. So the supreme felicity of an animal resides in a green and verdant meadow, in a flowing stream of the sweetest water, and in a forest brimming with life. If these things are provided, no greater felicity can be imagined for the animal. For example, were a bird to build its nest in a green and verdant forest, in a pleasant height, upon a mighty tree, and atop a lofty branch, and were it to have at its disposal all the seeds and water that it requires, then this would constitute its perfect felicity.</p>
<p>But real prosperity for the animal consists in passing from the animal world to the human world, like the microscopic beings that, through the water and air, enter into man and are assimilated, and replace that which has been consumed in his body. This is the great honor and prosperity for the animal world; no greater honor can be conceived for it.</p>	<p>But true felicity for the animal consists in passing from the animal world into the human realm, like the microscopic beings that, through the air and the water, enter into the body of man, are assimilated, and replace that which has been consumed in his body. This is the greatest honour and felicity for the animal world, and no greater honour can be conceived for it.</p>
<p>Therefore, it is evident and clear that this wealth, this comfort and this material abundance form the complete prosperity of minerals, vegetables and animals. No riches, wealth, comfort or ease of the material world is equal to the wealth of a bird; all the areas of these plains and mountains are its dwelling, and all the seeds and harvests are its food and wealth, and all the lands, villages, meadows, pastures, forests and wildernesses are its possessions. Now, which is the richer, this bird, or the most wealthy man? for no matter how many seeds it may take or bestow, its wealth does not decrease.</p>	<p>Therefore, it is clear and evident that such material ease, comfort and abundance are the height of felicity for minerals, plants and animals. And indeed no wealth, prosperity, comfort or ease in our material world can equal the wealth of a bird, for it has all the expanse of the fields and mountains for a dwelling place, all the seeds and harvests for wealth and sustenance, and all the lands, villages, meadows, pastures, forests and wilderness for possessions. Now which is the richer, this bird or the wealthiest of men? For no matter how many seeds that bird may gather up or give away, its wealth does not diminish.</p>
<p>Then it is clear that the honor and exaltation of man must be something more than material riches. Material comforts are only a branch, but the root of the exaltation of man is the good attributes and virtues which are the adornments of his reality. These are the divine appearances, the heavenly bounties, the sublime emotions, the love and knowledge of God; universal wisdom, intellectual perception, scientific discoveries, justice, equity, truthfulness, benevolence, natural courage and innate fortitude; the respect for rights and the keeping of agreements and covenants; rectitude in all circumstances; serving the truth under all conditions; the sacrifice of</p>	<p>Then it is clear that the honour and exaltation of man cannot reside solely in material delights and earthly benefits. This material felicity is wholly secondary, while the exaltation of man resides primarily in such virtues and attainments as are the adornments of the human reality. These consist in divine blessings, heavenly bounties, heartfelt emotions, the love and knowledge of God, the education of the people, the perceptions of the mind, and the discoveries of science. They consist in justice and equity, truthfulness and benevolence, inner courage and innate humanity, safeguarding the rights of others and preserving the sanctity of covenants</p>

<p>one's life for the good of all people; kindness and esteem for all nations; obedience to the teachings of God; service in the Divine Kingdom; the guidance of the people, and the education of the nations and races. This is the prosperity of the human world! This is the exaltation of man in the world! This is eternal life and heavenly honor!</p>	<p>and agreements. They consist in rectitude of conduct under all circumstances, love of truth under all conditions, self-abnegation for the good of all people, kindness and compassion for all nations, obedience to the teachings of God, service to the heavenly Kingdom, guidance for all mankind, and education for all races and nations. This is the felicity of the human world! This is the exaltation of man in the contingent realm! This is eternal life and heavenly honour!</p>
<p>These virtues do not appear from the reality of man except through the power of God and the divine teachings, for they need supernatural power for their manifestation. It may be that in the world of nature a trace of these perfections may appear, but they are unstable and ephemeral; they are like the rays of the sun upon the wall.</p>	<p>These gifts, however, do not manifest themselves in the reality of man save through a celestial and divine power and through the heavenly teachings, for they require a supernatural power. Traces of these perfections may well appear in the world of nature, but they are as fleeting and ephemeral as rays of sunlight upon the wall.</p>
<p>As the compassionate God has placed such a wonderful crown upon the head of man, man should strive that its brilliant jewels may become visible in the world.</p>	<p>As the compassionate Lord has crowned the head of man with such a refulgent diadem, we must strive that its luminous gems may cast their light upon the whole world.</p>
<p>SOME CHRISTIAN SUBJECTS</p>	<p>Some Christian Subjects</p>
<p>OUTWARD FORMS AND SYMBOLS MUST BE USED TO CONVEY INTELLECTUAL CONCEPTIONS</p>	<p>Intelligible Realities and their Expression through Sensible Forms</p>
<p>A subject that is essential for the comprehension of the questions that we have mentioned, and of others of which we are about to speak, so that the essence of the problems may be understood, is this: that human knowledge is of two kinds.</p>	<p>There is a point that is pivotal to grasping the essence of the other questions that we have discussed or will be discussing, namely, that human knowledge is of two kinds.</p>
<p>One is the knowledge of things perceptible to the senses—that is to say, things which the eye, or ear, or smell, or taste, or touch can perceive, which are called objective or sensible. So the sun, because it can be seen, is said to be objective; and in the same way sounds are sensible because the ear hears them; perfumes are sensible because they can be inhaled and the sense of smell perceives them; foods are sensible because the palate perceives their sweetness, sourness or saltiness; heat and cold are sensible because the feelings perceive them. These are said to be sensible realities.</p>	<p>One is the knowledge acquired through the senses. That which the eye, the ear, or the senses of smell, taste, or touch can perceive is called "sensible". For example, the sun is sensible, as it can be seen. Likewise, sounds are sensible, as the ear can hear them; odours, as they can be inhaled and perceived by the sense of smell; foods, as the palate can perceive their sweetness, sourness, bitterness or saltiness; heat and cold, as the sense of touch can perceive them. These are called sensible realities.</p>
<p>The other kind of human knowledge is intellectual—that is to say, it is a reality of the intellect; it has no outward form and no place and is not perceptible to the senses. For example,</p>	<p>The other kind of human knowledge is that of intelligible things, that is, it consists of intelligible realities which have no outward form or place and which are not sensible. For example, the</p>

<p>the power of intellect is not sensible; none of the inner qualities of man is a sensible thing; on the contrary, they are intellectual realities. So love is a mental reality and not sensible; for this reality the ear does not hear, the eye does not see, the smell does not perceive, the taste does not discern, the touch does not feel. Even ethereal matter, the forces of which are said in physics to be heat, light, electricity and magnetism, is an intellectual reality, and is not sensible. In the same way, nature, also, in its essence is an intellectual reality and is not sensible; the human spirit is an intellectual, not sensible reality.</p>	<p>power of the mind is not sensible, nor are any of the human attributes: these are intelligible realities. Love, likewise, is an intelligible and not a sensible reality. For the ear does not hear these realities, the eye does not see them, the smell does not sense them, the taste does not detect them, the touch does not perceive them. Even the ether, the forces of which are said in natural philosophy to be heat, light, electricity and magnetism, is an intelligible and not a sensible reality. Likewise, nature itself is an intelligible and not a sensible reality; the human spirit is an intelligible and not a sensible reality.</p>
<p>In explaining these intellectual realities, one is obliged to express them by sensible figures because in exterior existence there is nothing that is not material. Therefore, to explain the reality of the spirit—its condition, its station—one is obliged to give explanations under the forms of sensible things because in the external world all that exists is sensible. For example, grief and happiness are intellectual things; when you wish to express those spiritual qualities you say: “My heart is oppressed; my heart is dilated,” though the heart of man is neither oppressed nor dilated. This is an intellectual or spiritual state, to explain which you are obliged to have recourse to sensible figures. Another example: you say, “such an individual made great progress,” though he is remaining in the same place; or again, “such a one’s position was exalted,” although, like everyone else, he walks upon the earth. This exaltation and this progress are spiritual states and intellectual realities, but to explain them you are obliged to have recourse to sensible figures because in the exterior world there is nothing that is not sensible.</p>	<p>But when you undertake to express these intelligible realities, you have no recourse but to cast them in the mould of the sensible, for outwardly there is nothing beyond the sensible. Thus, when you wish to express the reality of the spirit and its conditions and degrees you are obliged to describe them in terms of sensible things, since outwardly there exists nothing but the sensible. For example, grief and happiness are intelligible things, but when you wish to express these spiritual conditions you say “my heart became heavy” or “my heart was uplifted,” although one’s heart is not literally made heavy or lifted up. Rather, it is a spiritual or intelligible condition, the expression of which requires the use of sensible terms. Another example is when you say, “so-and-so has greatly advanced,” although he has remained in the same place, or “so-and-so has a high position,” whereas, like everyone else, he continues to walk upon the earth. This elevation and advancement are spiritual conditions and intelligible realities, but to express them you must use sensible terms, since outwardly there is nothing beyond the sensible.</p>
<p>So the symbol of knowledge is light, and of ignorance, darkness; but reflect, is knowledge sensible light, or ignorance sensible darkness? No, they are merely symbols. These are only intellectual states, but when you desire to express them outwardly, you call knowledge light, and ignorance darkness. You say: “My heart was gloomy, and it became enlightened.” Now, that light of knowledge, and that darkness of ignorance, are intellectual realities, not sensible</p>	<p>To cite another example, knowledge is figuratively described as light and ignorance as darkness; but reflect: is knowledge sensible light or ignorance sensible darkness? Certainly not. These are only intelligible conditions; but when you wish to express them outwardly you call knowledge light and ignorance darkness and say, “My heart was dark and it became illumined.” Now, the light of knowledge and the darkness of ignorance are intelligible realities, not sensible</p>

<p>ones; but when we seek for explanations in the external world, we are obliged to give them a sensible form.</p>	<p>ones, but when we seek to express them outwardly we are obliged to give them a sensible form.</p>
<p>Then it is evident that the dove which descended upon Christ was not a material dove, but it was a spiritual state, which, that it might be comprehensible, was expressed by a sensible figure. Thus in the Old Testament it is said that God appeared as a pillar of fire: this does not signify the material form; it is an intellectual reality which is expressed by a sensible image.</p>	<p>Thus it is evident that the dove which descended upon Christ was not a physical dove but a spiritual condition expressed, for the sake of comprehension, in a sensible form. For example, in the Old Testament it is said that God appeared as a pillar of fire. Now, that which is intended is not a sensible form but an intelligible reality that has been expressed in such a form.</p>
<p>Christ says, "The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father." Was Christ within God, or God within Christ? No, in the name of God! On the contrary, this is an intellectual state which is expressed in a sensible figure.</p>	<p>Christ says, "The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father." Now, was Christ within God or was God within Christ? No, by God! This is an intelligible condition which has been expressed in a sensible form.</p>
<p>We come to the explanation of the words of Bahá'u'lláh when He says: "O king! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing." This is the state of manifestation: it is not sensible; it is an intellectual reality, exempt and freed from time, from past, present and future; it is an explanation, a simile, a metaphor and is not to be accepted literally; it is not a state that can be comprehended by man. Sleeping and waking is passing from one state to another. Sleeping is the condition of repose, and wakefulness is the condition of movement. Sleeping is the state of silence; wakefulness is the state of speech. Sleeping is the state of mystery; wakefulness is the state of manifestation.</p>	<p>We come to the explanation of the words of Bahá'u'lláh when He says: "O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing." This is the station of divine revelation. It is not a sensible, but an intelligible reality. It is sanctified from and transcendent above past, present and future. It is a comparison and an analogy, a metaphor and not a literal truth. It is not the condition that is commonly understood by the human mind when it is said that someone was asleep and then awoke, but signifies a passage from one state to another. For example, sleeping is the state of repose and wakefulness is the state of motion. Sleeping is the state of silence and wakefulness is the state of utterance. Sleeping is the state of concealment and wakefulness is that of manifestation.</p>
<p>For example, it is a Persian and Arabic expression to say that the earth was asleep, and the spring came, and it awoke; or the earth was dead, and the spring came, and it revived. These expressions are metaphors, allegories, mystic explanations in the world of signification.</p>	<p>For example, in Persian and Arabic it is said that the earth was asleep, spring came and it awoke; or that the earth was dead, spring came and it found life again. These expressions are comparisons, analogies, similes and figurative interpretations in the realm of inner meaning.</p>
<p>Briefly, the Holy Manifestations have ever been, and ever will be, Luminous Realities; no change or variation takes place in Their essence. Before declaring Their manifestation, They are silent and</p>	<p>Briefly, the Manifestations of God have ever been and will ever be luminous Realities, and no change or alteration ever takes place in their essence. At most, before their revelation they are</p>

quiet like a sleeper, and after Their manifestation, They speak and are illuminated, like one who is awake.	still and silent like one who is asleep, and after their revelation they are eloquent and effulgent, like one who is awake.
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST	The Birth of Christ
Question.—How was Christ born of the Holy Spirit?	Question: How was Christ born of the Holy Spirit?
Answer.—In regard to this question, theologians and materialists disagree. The theologians believe that Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, but the materialists think this is impossible and inadmissible, and that without doubt He had a human father.	Answer: In regard to this question the divine and the material philosophers disagree: The former believe that Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, while the latter deem such a thing to be impossible and untenable, and hold that He must have necessarily had a human father.
In the Qur'án it is said: "And We sent Our Spirit unto her, and He appeared unto her in the shape of a perfect man," meaning that the Holy Spirit took the likeness of the human form, as an image is produced in a mirror, and he addressed Mary.	In the Qur'án it is said: "And We sent Our Spirit to her, and He took before her the form of a perfect man," meaning that the Holy Spirit assumed a human form, as an image appears in a mirror, and conversed with Mary.
The materialists believe that there must be marriage, and say that a living body cannot be created from a lifeless body, and without male and female there cannot be fecundation. And they think that not only with man, but also with animals and plants, it is impossible. For this union of the male and female exists in all living beings and plants. This pairing of things is even shown forth in the Qur'án: "Glory be to Him Who has created all the pairs: of such things as the earth produceth, and of themselves; and of things which they know not" —that is to say, men, animals and plants are all in pairs—"and of everything have We created two kinds"—that is to say, We have created all the beings through pairing.	The material philosophers believe that there must be pairing, and assert that a living body cannot come into being from a lifeless one or materialize without the union of male and female. They believe that, beyond man, this is impossible in the animals, and that, beyond animals, it is impossible even in the plants. For this pairing of male and female exists in all the animals and plants. They even argue that the Qur'án itself affirms this pairing of all things: "Glory be to Him, Who hath created all the pairs of such things as Earth produceth, and of mankind themselves; and of things beyond their ken," that is, man, animals and plants are all found in pairs. "And of everything have We created two kinds," that is, We have created all things in pairs.
Briefly, they say a man without a human father cannot be imagined. In answer, the theologians say: "This thing is not impossible and unachievable, but it has not been seen; and there is a great difference between a thing which is impossible and one which is unknown. For example, in former times the telegraph, which causes the East and the West to communicate, was unknown but not impossible; photography and phonography were unknown but not impossible."	Briefly, they say that a man without a human father cannot be imagined. The divine philosophers, however, reply: "Such a thing is not impossible, although it has not been observed, and there is a difference between that which is impossible and that which has merely not been observed. For example, in the days before the telegraph the instantaneous communication of East and West had not been observed but was not impossible; likewise the photograph and the phonograph had not been observed but were not impossible."

<p>The materialists insist upon this belief, and the theologians reply: “Is this globe eternal or phenomenal?” The materialists answer that, according to science and important discoveries, it is established that it is phenomenal; in the beginning it was a flaming globe, and gradually it became temperate; a crust was formed around it, and upon this crust plants came into existence, then animals, and finally man.</p>	<p>The material philosophers insist upon their belief, and the divine philosophers reply: “Is this terrestrial globe eternal or was it originated?” The material philosophers answer that, according to well-established scientific findings, it is proven to be originated; that in the beginning it was a molten sphere and gradually became temperate; that a crust was formed around it; and that upon this crust plants came into being, then animals, and finally man.</p>
<p>The theologians say: “Then from your statement it has become evident and clear that mankind is phenomenal upon the globe, and not eternal. Then surely the first man had neither father nor mother, for the existence of man is phenomenal. Is not the creation of man without father and mother, even though gradually, more difficult than if he had simply come into existence without a father? As you admit that the first man came into existence without father or mother—whether it be gradually or at once—there can remain no doubt that a man without a human father is also possible and admissible; you cannot consider this impossible; otherwise, you are illogical. For example, if you say that this lamp has once been lighted without wick and oil, and then say that it is impossible to light it without the wick, this is illogical.” Christ had a mother; the first man, as the materialists believe, had neither father nor mother.</p>	<p>The divine philosophers say: “It follows clearly from your statement that the human species upon the terrestrial globe was originated and is not eternal. Then surely the first man had neither father nor mother, for the existence of the human species has an origin in time. Now, which is more problematic: that man should come into being, albeit gradually, with neither father nor mother, or that he should come into being without a father? As you admit that the first man came into being with neither father nor mother, whether it be gradually or in a short period of time, there can remain no doubt that a man without a human father is also possible and logically admissible. One cannot therefore simply reject this as impossible, and to do so would betray a lack of fairness. For example, if you say that this lamp was once lit with neither wick nor oil, and then say that it is impossible for it to be lit without the wick, this betrays a lack of fairness.” Christ had a mother, but the first man, according to the material philosophers, had neither father nor mother.</p>
<p>THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST IS DUE TO HIS PERFECTIONS</p>	<p>The Greatness of Christ</p>
<p>[Question absent in the old translation]</p>	<p>Question: What is the virtue and benefit of being without a father?</p>
<p>A great man is a great man, whether born of a human father or not. If being without a father is a virtue, Adam is greater and more excellent than all the Prophets and Messengers, for He had neither father nor mother. That which causes honor and greatness is the splendor and bounty of the divine perfections. The sun is born from substance and form, which can be compared to father and mother, and it is absolute perfection; but the darkness has neither substance nor form, neither father nor mother, and it is absolute</p>	<p>Answer: A great man is a great man whether or not he is born of a human father. If being without a father were a virtue, Adam would excel and surpass all the Prophets and Messengers, for He had neither father nor mother. That which is conducive to greatness and glory are the splendours and outpourings of the divine perfections. The sun is born of matter and form, which can be likened to father and mother, and still it is absolute perfection; darkness has neither matter nor form, neither father nor mother, and</p>

<p>imperfection. The substance of Adam’s physical life was earth, but the substance of Abraham was pure sperm; it is certain that the pure and chaste sperm is superior to earth.</p>	<p>yet it is sheer imperfection. The matter of Adam’s physical life was dust, but the physical matter of Abraham was a pure seed; and it is certain that a pure and goodly seed is superior to earth and stone.</p>
<p>Furthermore, in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 12 and 13, it is said: “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name:</p> <p>“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”</p> <p>From these verses it is obvious that the being of a disciple also is not created by physical power, but by the spiritual reality. The honor and greatness of Christ is not due to the fact that He did not have a human father, but to His perfections, bounties and divine glory. If the greatness of Christ is His being fatherless, then Adam is greater than Christ, for He had neither father nor mother.</p>	<p>Furthermore, in John 1:12–13 it is said: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” It follows clearly from this verse of John that even the existence of the Apostles proceeds from a spiritual reality rather than from a material power. The honour and greatness of Christ reside not in His being without a father, but rather in His divine perfections, outpourings and splendours. Were the greatness of Christ due to His lacking a father, Adam would be even greater, for He had neither father nor mother.</p>
<p>It is said in the Old Testament, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Observe that it is said that Adam came into existence from the Spirit of life. Moreover, the expression which John uses in regard to the disciples proves that they also are from the Heavenly Father. Hence it is evident that the holy reality, meaning the real existence of every great man, comes from God and owes its being to the breath of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>It is said in the Old Testament, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Observe that Adam is said to have come into being from the spirit of life. Moreover, John’s utterance in regard to the Apostles proves that they also proceeded from the heavenly Father. Hence it is clear and evident that the holy reality — the true existence — of every great man proceeds from God and owes its being to the breath of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>The purport is that, if to be without a father is the greatest human glory, then Adam is greater than all, for He had neither father nor mother. Is it better for a man to be created from a living substance or from earth? Certainly it is better if he be created from a living substance. But Christ was born and came into existence from the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that, if being without a father were the greatest of human attainments, then Adam would surpass everyone, for He had neither father nor mother. Is it better for a man to be created from living matter or from dust? Certainly it is better to be created from living matter. But Christ was born from and came into existence through the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>To conclude: the splendor and honor of the holy souls and the Divine Manifestations come from Their heavenly perfections, bounties and glory, and from nothing else.</p>	<p>In brief, the honour and glory of those sanctified Souls, the Manifestations of God, are due to their heavenly perfections, outpourings and splendours, and to nothing else.</p>
<p>THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST</p>	<p>True Baptism</p>

<p>Question.—It is said in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 3, verses 13, 14, 15: “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him.”</p>	<p>In Matthew 3:13–15, it is said: “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him.”</p>
<p>What is the wisdom of this: since Christ possessed all essential perfection, why did He need baptism?</p>	<p>Question: Given His innate perfection, what need did Christ have of baptism and what was the wisdom thereof?</p>
<p>Answer.—The principle of baptism is purification by repentance. John admonished and exhorted the people, and caused them to repent; then he baptized them. Therefore, it is apparent that this baptism is a symbol of repentance from all sin: its meaning is expressed in these words: “O God! as my body has become purified and cleansed from physical impurities, in the same way purify and sanctify my spirit from the impurities of the world of nature, which are not worthy of the Threshold of Thy Unity!” Repentance is the return from disobedience to obedience. Man, after remoteness and deprivation from God, repents and undergoes purification: and this is a symbol signifying “O God! make my heart good and pure, freed and sanctified from all save Thy love.”</p>	<p>Answer: The essence of baptism is purification by repentance. John admonished and exhorted the people, caused them to repent, and then baptized them. It is evident then that this purification is a symbol of repentance from all sin, as though one were saying: “O God! Just as my body has been cleansed and purified from material defilements, so cleanse and purify my spirit from the defilements of the world of nature, which are unworthy of Thy divine threshold.” Repentance is the return from rebelliousness to obedience. It is after experiencing remoteness and deprivation from God that man repents and purifies himself. Thus, this purification is a symbol saying: “O God! Render my heart goodly and pure, and cleanse and sanctify it from all save Thy love.”</p>
<p>As Christ desired that this institution of John should be used at that time by all, He Himself conformed to it in order to awaken the people and to complete the law of the former religion. Although the ablution of repentance was the institution of John, it was in reality formerly practiced in the religion of God.</p>	<p>As Christ desired that this custom instituted by John be practiced by all at that time, He Himself submitted to it, that souls might be awakened and that the law which had issued from the former religion might be fulfilled. For even though this custom was instituted by John, it represented in reality the purification of repentance which has been practiced in all the divine religions.</p>
<p>Christ was not in need of baptism; but as at that time it was an acceptable and praiseworthy action, and a sign of the glad tidings of the Kingdom, therefore, He confirmed it. However, afterward He said the true baptism is not with material water, but it must be with spirit and with water. In this case water does not signify material water, for elsewhere it is explicitly said baptism is with spirit and with fire, from which it is clear that the reference is not to material fire</p>	<p>It is not that Christ was in need of baptism, but He submitted to it because at that time this action was praiseworthy and acceptable before God and presaged the glad tidings of the Kingdom. However, He later said that true baptism was not with material water but with spirit and with water, and, elsewhere, with spirit and with fire. What is meant here by water is not material water, for elsewhere it is explicitly stated that baptism must be with spirit and with</p>

<p>and material water, for baptism with fire is impossible.</p>	<p>fire, and the latter makes it clear that the intention is not material fire and water, since baptism with fire is impossible.</p>
<p>Therefore, the spirit is the bounty of God, the water is knowledge and life, and the fire is the love of God. For material water does not purify the heart of man; no, it cleanses his body. But the heavenly water and spirit, which are knowledge and life, make the human heart good and pure; the heart which receives a portion of the bounty of the Spirit becomes sanctified, good and pure—that is to say, the reality of man becomes purified and sanctified from the impurities of the world of nature. These natural impurities are evil qualities: anger, lust, worldliness, pride, lying, hypocrisy, fraud, self-love, etc.</p>	<p>Therefore, by spirit is meant divine grace; by water, knowledge and life; and by fire, the love of God. For material water cleanses not the heart of man but his body. Rather, the heavenly water and spirit, which are knowledge and life, cleanse and purify the heart of man. In other words, the heart that partakes of the outpouring grace of the Holy Spirit and becomes sanctified is made goodly and pure. The purpose is that the reality of man be purified and sanctified from the defilements of the world of nature, which are vile attributes such as anger, lust, worldliness, pride, dishonesty, hypocrisy, deceit, self-love, and so on.</p>
<p>Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary, and that it is essential—that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins.</p>	<p>Man cannot free himself from the onslaught of vain and selfish desires save through the confirming grace of the Holy Spirit. That is why it is said that baptism must be with the spirit, with water and with fire, that is, with the spirit of divine grace, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. It is with this spirit, this water and this fire that man must be baptized, that he may partake of everlasting grace. For otherwise, of what avail is it to be baptized with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance and of seeking remission of sins.</p>
<p>But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.</p>	<p>But in the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh this symbol is no longer required, for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and the love of God, has been established and realized.</p>
<p>THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM</p>	<p>Baptism and the Changing Law of God</p>
<p>Question.—Is the ablution of baptism useful and necessary, or is it useless and unnecessary? In the first case, if it is useful, why was it abrogated? And in the second case, if it is useless, why did John practice it?</p>	<p>Question: Is the purification of baptism useful and necessary or is it useless and unnecessary? If the former, why was it abrogated despite its necessity? And if the latter, why did John practice it despite its being unnecessary?</p>
<p>Answer.—The change in conditions, alterations and transformations are necessities of the essence of beings, and essential necessities cannot be separated from the reality of things. So it is absolutely impossible to separate heat from fire, humidity from water, or light from the sun, for they are essential necessities. As the change</p>	<p>Answer: The change and transformation of conditions and the succession and revolution of ages are among the essential requirements of the contingent world, and essential requirements cannot be separated from the reality of things. Thus it is impossible to separate heat from fire, or wetness from water, or the rays from the sun, for</p>

<p>and alteration of conditions are necessities for beings, so laws also are changed and altered in accordance with the changes and alterations of the times. For example, in the time of Moses, His Law was conformed and adapted to the conditions of the time; but in the days of Christ these conditions had changed and altered to such an extent that the Mosaic Law was no longer suited and adapted to the needs of mankind; and it was, therefore, abrogated. Thus it was that Christ broke the Sabbath and forbade divorce. After Christ four disciples, among whom were Peter and Paul, permitted the use of animal food forbidden by the Bible, except the eating of those animals which had been strangled, or which were sacrificed to idols, and of blood. They also forbade fornication. They maintained these four commandments. Afterward, Paul permitted even the eating of strangled animals, those sacrificed to idols, and blood, and only maintained the prohibition of fornication. So in chapter 14, verse 14 of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul writes: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."</p> <p>Also in the Epistle of Paul to Titus, chapter 1, verse 15: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."</p>	<p>these are essential requirements. And since change and transformation are among the requirements of all contingent things, the commandments of God are also changed in accordance with the changing times. For example, in the days of Moses, that which was required by and consonant with the conditions prevailing at that time was the Mosaic Law. However, in the days of Christ, those conditions had so changed as to render the Mosaic Law unsuited and ill-adapted to the needs of mankind, and it was therefore abrogated. Thus Christ broke the Sabbath and forbade divorce. After Him four disciples, Peter and Paul among them, permitted the eating of such animal foods as had been forbidden in the Torah, excepting the consumption of the meat of animals that had been strangled, of sacrifices made to idols, and of blood. They also forbade fornication. Thus they maintained these four commandments. Later, Paul permitted the eating of strangled animals, of those sacrificed to idols, and of blood, but maintained the prohibition of fornication. Thus in Romans 14:14 he writes: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Moreover, in Titus 1:15 it is written: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."</p>
<p>Now this change, these alterations and this abrogation are due to the impossibility of comparing the time of Christ with that of Moses. The conditions and requirements in the later period were entirely changed and altered. The former laws were, therefore, abrogated.</p>	<p>Now, this change, alteration and abrogation was due to the fact that the age of Christ could not be compared to that of Moses. The conditions and requirements had entirely changed and the former commandments were therefore abrogated.</p>
<p>The existence of the world may be compared to that of a man, and the Prophets and Messengers of God to skillful doctors. The human being cannot remain in one condition: different maladies occur which have each a special remedy. The skillful physician does not give the same medicine to cure each disease and each malady, but he changes remedies and medicines according to the different necessities of the diseases and constitutions. One person may have</p>	<p>The body of the world can be compared to that of a man and the Prophets and Messengers of God to able physicians. A human being does not remain always in the same condition: different ailments occur and each calls for a specific remedy. Thus an able physician does not treat all ailments in the same manner, but varies the treatments and remedies in accordance with the requirements of these various ailments and conditions. One person may suffer severely from</p>

<p>a severe illness caused by fever, and the skilled doctor will give him cooling remedies; and when at some other time the condition of this person has changed, and fever is replaced by chills, without doubt the skilled doctor will discard cooling medicine and permit the use of heating drugs. This change and alteration is required by the condition of the patient and is an evident proof of the skill of the physician.</p>	<p>an ailment caused by an excess of heat: the able physician perforce administers cooling medicines. When at another time this person's constitution changes and the heat is supplanted by an excess of cold, the physician of necessity sets aside the cooling medicines and prescribes heating ones. This change and alteration is required by the condition of the patient and is an evident proof of the skill of the physician.</p>
<p>Consider, could the Law of the Old Testament be enforced at this epoch and time? No, in the name of God! it would be impossible and impracticable; therefore, most certainly God abrogated the laws of the Old Testament at the time of Christ. Reflect, also, that baptism in the days of John the Baptist was used to awaken and admonish the people to repent from all sin, and to watch for the appearance of the Kingdom of Christ. But at present in Asia, the Catholics and the Orthodox Church plunge newly born children into water mixed with olive oil, and many of them become ill from the shock; at the time of baptism they struggle and become agitated. In other places, the clergy sprinkle the water of baptism on the forehead. But neither from the first form nor from the second do the children derive any spiritual benefit. Then what result is obtained from this form? Other peoples are amazed and wonder why the infant is plunged into the water, since this is neither the cause of the spiritual awakening of the child, nor of its faith or conversion, but it is only a custom which is followed. In the time of John the Baptist it was not so; no, at first John used to exhort the people, and to guide them to repentance from sin, and to fill them with the desire to await the manifestation of Christ. Whoever received the ablution of baptism, and repented of sins in absolute humility and meekness, would also purify and cleanse his body from outward impurities. With perfect yearning, night and day, he would constantly wait for the manifestation of Christ, and the entrance to the Kingdom of the Spirit of God.</p>	<p>Consider, for example: could the Law of the Torah be enforced in this day and age? No, by God! This would be entirely impossible; and it is for this reason that at the time of Christ the Law of the Torah was perforce abrogated by God. Consider, likewise, that in the days of John the Baptist the purification of baptism served to awaken and admonish the people and to cause them to repent of all sin and to await the advent of the Kingdom of Christ. But today in Asia, the Catholics and the Orthodox plunge infants into a mixture of water and olive oil, in such wise that some fall ill from this ordeal and tremble and struggle at the time of baptism. Elsewhere the priest sprinkles the baptismal water onto the forehead. But in neither case do these children experience any spiritual feelings. What good then can this do? Other peoples wonder and question why this infant is being plunged into the water, since it confers neither spiritual awareness nor faith nor awakening, but is merely a custom that is being followed. In the time of John the Baptist, however, it was not so: John would first admonish the people, lead them to repent of sin, and exhort them to anticipate the advent of Christ. Then, whoever received the purification of baptism would repent of his sins with utmost meekness and humility, cleanse and purify his body likewise from outward defilements, and with perfect yearning await, night and day and from moment to moment, the advent of Christ and admittance into His Kingdom.</p>
<p>To recapitulate: our meaning is that the change and modification of conditions, and the altered requirements of different centuries and times, are the cause of the abrogation of laws. For a</p>	<p>In brief, our meaning is that the change and transformation in the conditions and exigencies of the times is the cause of the abrogation of religious laws, for the time comes when those</p>

<p>time comes when these laws are no longer suitably adapted to conditions. Consider how very different are the requirements of the first centuries, of the Middle Ages, and of modern times. Is it possible that the laws of the first centuries could be enforced at present? It is evident that it would be impossible and impracticable. In the same manner, after the lapse of a few centuries, the requirements of the present time will not be the same as those of the future, and certainly there will be change and alteration.</p>	<p>earlier commandments no longer suit the prevailing conditions. Consider how greatly the exigencies of the modern age differ from those of medieval times! Is it possible that the commandments of former centuries could be enforced in these latter times? It is clear and evident that this would be entirely impossible. Likewise, after the lapse of many centuries, that which is called for at the present time will no longer be suited to the needs of that future age, and change and transformation will be inevitable.</p>
<p>In Europe the laws are unceasingly altered and modified; in bygone years, how many laws existed in the organizations and systems of Europe, which are now abrogated! These changes and alterations are due to the variation and mutation of thought, conditions and customs. If it were not so, the prosperity of the world of humanity would be wrecked.</p>	<p>In Europe the laws are continually being changed and modified. How numerous the laws that once existed in European systems and canons and that have since been annulled! These changes are due to the transformation of thoughts, customs and conditions, and without them the well-being of the human world would be disrupted.</p>
<p>For example, there is in the Pentateuch a law that if anyone break the Sabbath, he shall be put to death. Moreover, there are ten sentences of death in the Pentateuch. Would it be possible to keep these laws in our time? It is clear that it would be absolutely impossible. Consequently, there are changes and modifications in the laws, and these are a sufficient proof of the supreme wisdom of God.</p>	<p>For example, the Torah prescribes the sentence of death for whoever breaks the Sabbath. There are indeed ten such death sentences in the Torah. Could these commandments be carried out in our time? It is evident that it would be utterly impossible. Thus they have been changed and transformed, and this change and transformation in the laws constitutes in itself a sufficient proof of the consummate wisdom of God.</p>
<p>This subject needs deep thought. Then the cause of these changes will be evident and apparent.</p> <p>Blessed are those who reflect!</p>	<p>This subject requires deep consideration, and the reason is clear and evident. Well is it with them that reflect!</p>
<p>THE SYMBOLISM OF THE BREAD AND THE WINE</p>	<p>The Bread and the Wine</p>
<p>Question.—The Christ said: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.” What is the meaning of this utterance?</p>	<p>Question: Christ said: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.” What is the meaning of this utterance?</p>
<p>Answer.—This bread signifies the heavenly food and divine perfections. So, “if any man eateth of this bread” means if any man acquires heavenly bounty, receives the divine light, or partakes of Christ’s perfections, he thereby gains everlasting life. The blood also signifies the spirit of life and the divine perfections, the lordly splendor and eternal bounty. For all the members of the body</p>	<p>Answer: By this bread is meant the heavenly sustenance of divine perfections. In other words, whoso partakes of this sustenance, that is, whoso acquires the outpouring grace of God, draws illumination from His light, and obtains his portion of the perfections of Christ, will attain everlasting life. What is meant by blood, likewise, is the spirit of life, which consists in divine</p>

<p>gain vital substance from the circulation of the blood.</p>	<p>perfections, heavenly splendours and eternal grace. For all the parts of the body acquire the substance of life from the circulation of the blood.</p>
<p>In the Gospel of St. John, chapter 6, verse 26, it is written: “Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”</p> <p>It is evident that the bread of which the disciples ate and were filled was the heavenly bounty; for in verse 33 of the same chapter it is said: “For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” It is clear that the body of Christ did not descend from heaven, but it came from the womb of Mary; and that which descended from the heaven of God was the spirit of Christ. As the Jews thought that Christ spoke of His body, they made objections, for it is said in the 42nd verse of the same chapter: “And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?”</p>	<p>In John 6:26 it is said: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” It is evident that the loaves of which the disciples ate and with which they were filled were the heavenly grace; for in verse thirty-three of the same chapter it is said: “For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” It is evident that the body of Christ did not descend from heaven but came from the womb of Mary: what descended from the heaven of God was the spirit of Christ. The Jews, presuming that Christ was speaking of His body, objected, as is recorded in verse forty-two of the same chapter: “And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?”</p>
<p>Reflect how clear it is that what Christ meant by the heavenly bread was His spirit, His bounties, His perfections and His teachings; for it is said in the 63rd verse: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.”</p>	<p>Consider how evident it is that what Christ intended by the heavenly bread was His spirit, His manifold grace, His perfections and His teachings; for in verse sixty-three of the aforementioned chapter it is said: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.”</p>
<p>Therefore, it is evident that the spirit of Christ is a heavenly grace which descends from heaven; whosoever receives light from that spirit in abundance—that is to say, the heavenly teachings—finds everlasting life. That is why it is said in the 35th verse: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.”</p>	<p>It has therefore been made evident that the spirit of Christ was a celestial bounty which descended from heaven, and that whosoever receives the outpourings of this spirit — that is, embraces its heavenly teachings — will attain everlasting life. Thus it is said in verse thirty-five: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”</p>
<p>Notice that “coming to Him” He expresses as eating, and “belief in Him” as drinking. Then it is evident and established that the celestial food is the divine bounties, the spiritual splendours, the heavenly teachings, the universal meaning of Christ. To eat is to draw near to Him, and to drink is to believe in Him. For Christ had an elemental body and a celestial form. The elemental body was crucified, but the heavenly form is living and</p>	<p>Observe that He expresses “coming to Him” as eating and “believing in Him” as drinking. It is therefore clearly established that the heavenly sustenance consists in the divine bounties, spiritual splendours, heavenly teachings, and all-embracing truths of Christ, and that to eat means to draw nigh unto Him and to drink means to believe in Him. For Christ had both an elemental and a heavenly body. The elemental body was</p>

<p>eternal, and the cause of everlasting life; the first was the human nature, and the second is the divine nature. It is thought by some that the Eucharist is the reality of Christ, and that the Divinity and the Holy Spirit descend into and exist in it. Now when once the Eucharist is taken, after a few moments it is simply disintegrated and entirely transformed. Therefore, how can such a thought be conceived? God forbid! Certainly it is an absolute fantasy.</p>	<p>crucified, but the heavenly one is alive, eternal, and the source of everlasting life. The elemental body was His human nature and the heavenly body His divine nature. Gracious God! Some imagine that the bread of the Eucharist is the reality of Christ, and that the Divinity and the Holy Spirit have descended into it and are present therein, whereas when once the Eucharist is taken, in a few minutes it is wholly disintegrated and entirely transformed. How then can such an error be conceived? I beg the forgiveness of God for such a grave delusion!</p>
<p>To conclude: through the manifestation of Christ, the divine teachings, which are an eternal bounty, were spread abroad, the light of guidance shone forth, and the spirit of life was conferred on man. Whoever found guidance became living; whoever remained lost was seized by enduring death. This bread which came down from heaven was the divine body of Christ, His spiritual elements, which the disciples ate, and through which they gained eternal life.</p>	<p>The purport of these words is that, through the manifestation of Christ, the sacred teachings, which are everlasting grace, were spread abroad, the lights of guidance shone forth, and the spirit of life was conferred upon human realities. Whosoever was guided aright found life, and whosoever remained astray was overtaken by everlasting death. That bread which came down from heaven was the celestial body of Christ and His spiritual elements, of which the disciples ate and through which they attained everlasting life.</p>
<p>The disciples had taken many meals from the hand of Christ; why was the last supper distinguished from the others? It is evident that the heavenly bread did not signify this material bread, but rather the divine nourishment of the spiritual body of Christ, the divine graces and heavenly perfections of which His disciples partook, and with which they became filled.</p>	<p>The disciples had taken many meals from the hand of Christ; why then did the last supper come to be distinguished? It is thus evident that by the heavenly bread is meant not this material bread but the divine sustenance of the spiritual body of Christ, that is, the divine grace and the heavenly perfections of which His disciples partook and with which they were filled.</p>
<p>In the same way, reflect that when Christ blessed the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is My body," and gave grace to them, He was with them in person, in presence, and form. He was not transformed into bread and wine; if He had been turned into bread and wine, He could not have remained with the disciples in body, in person and in presence.</p>	<p>Consider likewise that when Christ blessed the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is My body," He was visibly and distinctly present with them in person and in body, and was not transformed into bread and wine. Had He become the bread and wine itself He could not have remained distinctly present before them in body and in person.</p>
<p>Then it is clear that the bread and wine were symbols which signified: I have given you My bounties and perfections, and when you have received this bounty, you have gained eternal life and have partaken of your share and your portion of the heavenly nourishment.</p>	<p>It is therefore clear that the bread and wine were symbols, meaning: My grace and My perfections have been given you, and since you have partaken of this manifold grace, you have attained everlasting life and received your share and portion of the heavenly sustenance.</p>
<p>MIRACLES</p>	<p>The Miracles of Christ</p>

<p>Question.—It is recorded that miracles were performed by Christ. Are the reports of these miracles really to be accepted literally, or have they another meaning? It has been proved by exact science that the essence of things does not change, and that all beings are under one universal law and organization from which they cannot deviate; and, therefore, that which is contrary to universal law is impossible.</p>	<p>Question: Certain miracles have been attributed to Christ. Should these accounts be taken literally or do they have other meanings? For it has been established through sound investigation that the inherent nature of each thing does not change, that all created things are subject to a universal law and organization from which they cannot deviate, and that hence nothing can possibly violate that universal law.</p>
<p>Answer.—The Holy Manifestations are the sources of miracles and the originators of wonderful signs. For Them, any difficult and impracticable thing is possible and easy. For through a supernatural power wonders appear from Them; and by this power, which is beyond nature, They influence the world of nature. From all the Manifestations marvelous things have appeared.</p>	<p>Answer: The Manifestations of God are sources of miraculous deeds and marvellous signs. Any difficult or impossible matter is to them possible and permitted. For they show forth extraordinary feats through an extraordinary power, and they influence the world of nature through a power that transcends nature. From each one of them marvellous things have appeared.</p>
<p>But in the Holy Books an especial terminology is employed, and for the Manifestations these miracles and wonderful signs have no importance. They do not even wish to mention them. For if we consider miracles a great proof, they are still only proofs and arguments for those who are present when they are performed, and not for those who are absent.</p>	<p>But in the sacred scriptures a special terminology is used, and in the sight of the Manifestations of God these marvels and miracles are of no importance, so much so that they do not even wish them to be mentioned. For even if these miracles were considered the greatest of proofs, they would constitute a clear evidence only for those who were present when they took place, not for those who were absent.</p>
<p>For example, if we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvelous signs, he will deny them and will say: “Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma.” He will also say: “How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth, and that the Brahmans tell a lie? For both are generally admitted traditions, which are collected in books, and may be supposed to be true or false.” The same may be said of other religions: if one is true, all are true; if one is accepted, all must be accepted. Therefore, miracles are not a proof. For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.</p>	<p>For example, were a non-believing seeker to be told of the miracles of Moses and Christ, he would deny them and say: “Miracles have also long been ascribed to certain idols by the testimony of a multitude and recorded in books. Thus the Brahmans have compiled an entire book regarding the miracles of Brahma.” The seeker would then ask: “How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth and that the Brahmans lie? For both are traditions, both are widely attested, and both have been recorded in a book. Each can be viewed as plausible or implausible, as with every other account: if one is true, both must be true; if one is accepted, both must be accepted.” Therefore, miracles cannot be a conclusive proof, for even if they are valid proofs for those who were present, they fail to convince those who were not.</p>
<p>But in the day of the Manifestation the people with insight see that all the conditions of the Manifestation are miracles, for They are superior</p>	<p>However, in the day of God’s Manifestation, they that are endued with insight will find all things pertaining to Him to be miraculous. For these</p>

<p>to all others, and this alone is an absolute miracle. Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.</p>	<p>things are distinguished above all else, and this distinction is in itself an absolute miracle. Consider how Christ, alone and single-handedly, with no helper or protector, with no legions or armies, and with the utmost meekness, raised aloft the banner of God before all the peoples of the world; how He withstood them; and how at last He subdued them all, even though outwardly He was crucified. Now, this is an absolute miracle which can in no wise be denied. Indeed, the truth of Christ stands in no need of further proof.</p>
<p>The outward miracles have no importance for the people of Reality. If a blind man receives sight, for example, he will finally again become sightless, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and powers. Therefore, causing the blind man to see is comparatively of little importance, for this faculty of sight will at last disappear. If the body of a dead person be resuscitated, of what use is it since the body will die again? But it is important to give perception and eternal life—that is, the spiritual and divine life. For this physical life is not immortal, and its existence is equivalent to nonexistence. So it is that Christ said to one of His disciples: “Let the dead bury their dead;” for “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”</p>	<p>These outward miracles are of no importance to the followers of truth. For example, if a blind man is made to see, in the end he will again lose his sight, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and faculties. Thus, causing the blind to see is of no lasting importance, since the faculty of sight is bound to be lost again in the end. And if a dead body be revived, what is gained thereby, since it must die again? What is important is to bestow true insight and everlasting life, that is, a spiritual and divine life, for this material life will not endure and its existence is tantamount to non-existence. Even as Christ said in reply to one of His disciples: “Let the dead bury their dead;” for “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”</p>
<p>Observe: those who in appearance were physically alive, Christ considered dead; for life is the eternal life, and existence is the real existence. Wherever in the Holy Books they speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that the dead were blessed by eternal life; where it is said that the blind received sight, the signification is that he obtained the true perception; where it is said a deaf man received hearing, the meaning is that he acquired spiritual and heavenly hearing. This is ascertained from the text of the Gospel where Christ said: “These are like those of whom Isaiah said, They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not; and I healed them.”</p>	<p>Consider that Christ reckoned as dead those who were nonetheless outwardly and physically alive, for true life is life eternal and true existence is spiritual existence. Thus if the sacred scriptures speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that they attained everlasting life; if they say that one who was blind was made to see, the meaning of this seeing is true insight; if they say that one who was deaf was made to hear, the meaning is that he acquired an inner ear and attained spiritual hearing. This is established by the very text of the Gospel where Christ says that they are like those of whom Isaiah once said, They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not; and I heal them.</p>
<p>The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power. But for Them inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things. Consequently, whenever it is recorded in</p>	<p>Our meaning is not that the Manifestations of God are unable to perform miracles, for this indeed lies within their power. But that which is of import and consequence in their eyes is inner sight, spiritual hearing and eternal life. Thus,</p>

<p>the Holy Books that such a one was blind and recovered his sight, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind, and that he obtained spiritual vision, or that he was ignorant and became wise, or that he was negligent and became heedful, or that he was worldly and became heavenly.</p>	<p>wherever it is recorded in the sacred scriptures that such a one was blind and was made to see, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind and gained spiritual insight, or that he was ignorant and found knowledge, or was heedless and became aware, or was earthly and became heavenly.</p>
<p>As this inner sight, hearing, life and healing are eternal, they are of importance. What, comparatively, is the importance, the value and the worth of this animal life with its powers? In a few days it will cease like fleeting thoughts. For example, if one relights an extinguished lamp, it will again become extinguished; but the light of the sun is always luminous. This is of importance.</p>	<p>As this inner sight, hearing, life and healing are eternal, so are they truly important. Otherwise, what importance, worth, and value can mere animal life and powers possess? Even as an idle fancy, in a few days it will pass. For instance, if an unlit lamp is lighted, it will be extinguished again, but the light of the sun always shines resplendent, and this is what is important.</p>
<p>THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST</p>	<p>The Resurrection of Christ</p>
<p>Question.—What is the meaning of Christ’s resurrection after three days?</p>	<p>Question: What is the meaning of Christ’s resurrection after three days?</p>
<p>Answer.—The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, Their acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and divine signification, and have no connection with material things.</p>	<p>Answer: The resurrection of the Manifestations of God is not of the body. All that pertains to them, all their states and conditions, all that they do, found, teach, interpret, illustrate and instruct, is of a mystical and spiritual character and does not belong to the realm of materiality.</p>
<p>For example, there is the subject of Christ’s coming from heaven: it is clearly stated in many places in the Gospel that the Son of man came from heaven, He is in heaven, and He will go to heaven. So in chapter 6, verse 38, of the Gospel of John it is written: “For I came down from heaven”; and also in verse 42 we find: “And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” Also in John, chapter 3, verse 13: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”</p>	<p>Such is the case of Christ’s coming from heaven. It has been explicitly stated in numerous passages of the Gospel that the Son of man came down from heaven, or is in heaven, or will go up to heaven. Thus in John 6:38 it is said: “For I came down from heaven”, and in John 6:42 it is recorded: “And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?”, and in John 3:13 it is stated: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”</p>
<p>Observe that it is said, “The Son of man is in heaven,” while at that time Christ was on earth. Notice also that it is said that Christ came from heaven, though He came from the womb of Mary, and His body was born of Mary. It is clear, then, that when it is said that the Son of man is come from heaven, this has not an outward but an inward signification; it is a spiritual, not a</p>	<p>Consider how it is said that the Son of man is in heaven, even though at that time Christ was dwelling upon the earth. Consider likewise that it explicitly says that Christ came from heaven, although He came from the womb of Mary and His body was born of her. It is therefore clear that the assertion that the Son of man came down from heaven has a mystical rather than a literal</p>

<p>material, fact. The meaning is that though, apparently, Christ was born from the womb of Mary, in reality He came from heaven, from the center of the Sun of Reality, from the Divine World, and the Spiritual Kingdom. And as it has become evident that Christ came from the spiritual heaven of the Divine Kingdom, therefore, His disappearance under the earth for three days has an inner signification and is not an outward fact. In the same way, His resurrection from the interior of the earth is also symbolical; it is a spiritual and divine fact, and not material; and likewise His ascension to heaven is a spiritual and not material ascension.</p>	<p>meaning, and is a spiritual rather than a material event. The meaning is that though in appearance Christ was born of the womb of Mary, yet in reality He came from heaven, the seat of the Sun of Truth that shines in the divine realm of the supernal Kingdom. And since it is established that Christ came from the spiritual heaven of the divine Kingdom, His disappearance into the earth for three days must also have a mystical rather than a literal meaning. In the same manner, His resurrection from the bosom of the earth is a mystical matter and expresses a spiritual rather than a material condition. And His ascension to heaven, likewise, is spiritual and not material in nature.</p>
<p>Beside these explanations, it has been established and proved by science that the visible heaven is a limitless area, void and empty, where innumerable stars and planets revolve.</p>	<p>Aside from this, it has been established by science that the material heaven is a limitless space, void and empty, wherein countless stars and planets move.</p>
<p>Therefore, we say that the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.</p>	<p>We explain, therefore, the meaning of Christ's resurrection in the following way: After the martyrdom of Christ the Apostles were perplexed and dismayed. The reality of Christ, which consists in His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and had no outward appearance or manifestation — indeed, it was as though it were entirely lost. For those who truly believed were few in number and even those few were perplexed and dismayed. The Cause of Christ was thus as a lifeless body. After three days the Apostles became firm and steadfast, arose to aid the Cause of Christ, resolved to promote the divine teachings and practice their Lord's admonitions, and endeavoured to serve Him. Then did the reality of Christ become resplendent, His grace shine forth, His religion find new life, and His teachings and admonitions become manifest and visible. In other words the Cause of Christ, which was like unto a lifeless body, was quickened to life and surrounded by the grace of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection. But as the clergy have neither understood the meaning of the Gospels nor comprehended the symbols, therefore, it has been said that religion is in</p>	<p>Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection. But as the clergy did not grasp the meaning of the Gospels and did not comprehend this mystery, it has been claimed that religion is opposed to science, for</p>

<p>contradiction to science, and science in opposition to religion, as, for example, this subject of the ascension of Christ with an elemental body to the visible heaven is contrary to the science of mathematics. But when the truth of this subject becomes clear, and the symbol is explained, science in no way contradicts it; but, on the contrary, science and the intelligence affirm it.</p>	<p>among other things the ascension of Christ in a physical body to the material heavens is contrary to the mathematical sciences. But when the truth of this matter is clarified and this symbol is explained, it is in no way contradicted by science but rather affirmed by both science and reason.</p>
<p>THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON THE APOSTLES</p>	<p>The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles</p>
<p>Question.—What is the manner, and what is the meaning, of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as described in the Gospel?</p>	<p>Question: It is recorded in the Gospels that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. What was the manner and meaning of this descent?</p>
<p>Answer.—The descent of the Holy Spirit is not like the entrance of air into man; it is an expression and a simile, rather than an exact or a literal image. No, rather it is like the entrance of the image of the sun into the mirror—that is to say, its splendor becomes apparent in it.</p>	<p>Answer: The descent of the Holy Spirit is not like the entrance of air into the human body. It is a metaphor and an analogy rather than a literal image or account. That which is intended is like the descent of the sun into a mirror, that is, when its splendour is reflected therein.</p>
<p>After the death of Christ the disciples were troubled, and their ideas and thoughts were discordant and contradictory; later they became firm and united, and at the feast of Pentecost they gathered together and detached themselves from the things of this world. Disregarding themselves, they renounced their comfort and worldly happiness, sacrificing their body and soul to the Beloved, abandoning their houses, and becoming wanderers and homeless, even forgetting their own existence. Then they received the help of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit became manifested; the spirituality of Christ triumphed, and the love of God reigned. They were given help at that time and dispersed in different directions, teaching the Cause of God, and giving forth proofs and evidences.</p>	<p>After the death of Christ the Apostles were troubled and diverged in their thoughts and opinions; later they became steadfast and united. At Pentecost they gathered together, detached themselves from the world, forsook their own desires, renounced all earthly comfort and happiness, sacrificed body and soul to their Beloved, left their homes, took leave of all their cares and belongings, and even forgot their own existence. Then was divine assistance vouchsafed and the power of the Holy Spirit manifested. The spirituality of Christ triumphed and the love of God took hold. On that day they received divine confirmations, and each departed in a different direction to teach the Cause of God and unloosed his tongue to set forth the proofs and testimonies.</p>
<p>So the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles means their attraction by the Christ Spirit, whereby they acquired stability and firmness. Through the spirit of the love of God they gained a new life, and they saw Christ living, helping and protecting them. They were like drops, and they became seas; they were like feeble insects, and they became majestic eagles; they were weak and became powerful. They</p>	<p>Thus the descent of the Holy Spirit means that the Apostles were attracted by the messianic Spirit, attained constancy and steadfastness, found a new life through the spirit of God's love, and saw Christ to be their ever-living helper and protector. They were mere drops and became the ocean; they were feeble gnats and became soaring eagles; they were all weakness and became endowed with strength. They were like mirrors that are turned toward the sun: it is</p>

<p>were like mirrors facing the sun; verily, some of the light became manifest in them.</p>	<p>certain that the rays and the effulgence of the sun will be reflected therein.</p>
<p>THE HOLY SPIRIT</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit</p>
<p>Question.—What is the Holy Spirit?</p>	<p>Question: What is meant by the Holy Spirit?</p>
<p>Answer.—The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God and the luminous rays which emanate from the Manifestations; for the focus of the rays of the Sun of Reality was Christ, and from this glorious focus, which is the Reality of Christ, the Bounty of God reflected upon the other mirrors which were the reality of the Apostles.</p>	<p>Answer: By the Holy Spirit is meant the outpouring grace of God and the effulgent rays that emanate from His Manifestation. Thus Christ was the focal centre of the rays of the Sun of Truth, and from this mighty centre — the reality of Christ — the grace of God shone upon the other mirrors which were the realities of the Apostles.</p>
<p>The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles signifies that the glorious divine bounties reflected and appeared in their reality. Moreover, entrance and exit, descent and ascent, are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits—that is to say, sensible realities enter and come forth, but intellectual subtleties and mental realities, such as intelligence, love, knowledge, imagination and thought, do not enter, nor come forth, nor descend, but rather they have direct connection.</p>	<p>The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles means that that glorious and divine grace cast its light and splendour upon their realities. For otherwise, egress and regress, descent and inherence are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits — that is, egress and inherence pertain only to sensible realities, not to intelligible subtleties; and intelligible realities, such as reason, love, knowledge, imagination and thought, do not enter, exit or inhere, but rather denote relationships.</p>
<p>For example, knowledge, which is a state attained to by the intelligence, is an intellectual condition; and entering and coming out of the mind are imaginary conditions; but the mind is connected with the acquisition of knowledge, like images reflected in a mirror.</p>	<p>For example, knowledge, which is a form acquired by the mind, is an intelligible thing, and to speak of entering into the mind or exiting from it is absurd. Rather, it is a relationship of acquisition, even as images are reflected in a mirror.</p>
<p>Therefore, as it is evident and clear that the intellectual realities do not enter and descend, and it is absolutely impossible that the Holy Spirit should ascend and descend, enter, come out or penetrate, it can only be that the Holy Spirit appears in splendor, as the sun appears in the mirror.</p>	<p>Thus, as it is evident and established that intelligible realities do not enter or inhere, it follows that it is in no wise possible for the Holy Spirit to ascend, descend, enter, exit, commingle or inhere. At most it appears as the sun appears in a mirror.</p>
<p>In some passages in the Holy Books the Spirit is spoken of, signifying a certain person, as it is currently said in speech and conversation that such a person is an embodied spirit, or he is a personification of mercy and generosity. In this case, it is the light we look at, and not the glass.</p>	<p>Moreover, in certain passages of the sacred scriptures where allusion is made to the Spirit, a specific person is intended, as it is conventionally said in speech and conversation that such and such a person is spirit personified or is the embodiment of mercy and generosity. In this case the focus is not upon the lamp but upon the light.</p>
<p>In the Gospel of John, in speaking of the Promised One Who was to come after Christ, it is said in chapter 16, verses 12, 13: “I have yet</p>	<p>For instance, in reference to the Promised One that must come after Christ, it is said in John 16:12: “I have yet many things to say unto you,</p>

<p>many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.”</p>	<p>but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.”</p>
<p>Now consider carefully that from these words, “for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,” it is clear that the Spirit of truth is embodied in a Man Who has individuality, Who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak. In the same way the name “Spirit of God” is used in relation to Christ, as you speak of a light, meaning both the light and the lamp.</p>	<p>Now consider carefully that the words: “for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,” clearly imply that the Spirit of truth is embodied in a Man Who has a soul, Who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak. Likewise Christ is called the “Spirit of God”, in the same way that we speak of the light and yet mean both the light and the lamp.</p>
<p>THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE DAY OF JUDGMENT</p>	<p>The Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgement</p>
<p>It is said in the Holy Books that Christ will come again, and that His coming depends upon the fulfillment of certain signs: when He comes, it will be with these signs. For example, “The sun will be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.... And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Bahá’u’lláh has explained these verses in the Kitáb-i-Íqán. There is no need of repetition; refer to it, and you will understand these sayings.</p>	<p>It is recorded in the sacred scriptures that Christ will return and that His return is conditioned upon the fulfillment of certain signs: whensoever He returns, He will be attended by those signs. Among them: “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” At that time “all the tribes of the earth” shall “mourn” and lament, and “the sign of the Son of man” shall appear “in heaven”, “and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Bahá’u’lláh has provided a detailed interpretation of these verses in the Book of Certitude, and it need not be repeated here. Refer to it and you will grasp their meaning.</p>
<p>But I have something further to say upon this subject. At His first coming Christ also came from heaven, as it is explicitly stated in the Gospel. Christ Himself says: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” It is clear to all that Christ came from heaven, although apparently He came from the womb of Mary.</p>	<p>Now, I would like in turn to say a further word on this subject, which is the following. The first coming of Christ was also from heaven, as has been explicitly stated in the Gospel. Even Christ Himself says that the Son of man came down from heaven, and the Son of man is in heaven; and no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven. Thus it is admitted by all that Christ came down from heaven, whereas to outward seeming He came from the womb of Mary.</p>
<p>At the first coming He came from heaven, though apparently from the womb; in the same way, also, at His second coming He will come from heaven, though apparently from the womb. The</p>	<p>Now, just as He came the first time in appearance from the womb but in reality from heaven, so will He come the second time in appearance from the womb but in reality from heaven. The conditions</p>

<p>conditions that are indicated in the Gospel for the second coming of Christ are the same as those that were mentioned for the first coming, as we said before.</p>	<p>that have been recorded in the Gospel for the second coming of Christ are indeed the same as had been specified for His first coming, as was explained before.</p>
<p>The Book of Isaiah announces that the Messiah will conquer the East and the West, and all nations of the world will come under His shadow, that His Kingdom will be established, that He will come from an unknown place, that the sinners will be judged, and that justice will prevail to such a degree that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the sucking child and the asp, shall all gather at one spring, and in one meadow, and one dwelling. The first coming was also under these conditions, though outwardly none of them came to pass. Therefore, the Jews rejected Christ, and, God forbid! called the Messiah masikh, considered Him to be the destroyer of the edifice of God, regarded Him as the breaker of the Sabbath and the Law, and sentenced Him to death. Nevertheless, each one of these conditions had a signification that the Jews did not understand; therefore, they were debarred from perceiving the truth of Christ.</p>	<p>The Book of Isaiah announces that the Messiah will conquer the East and the West, that all the nations of the earth will gather under His shadow, that His kingdom will be established, that He will come from an unknown place, that the sinners will be judged, and that justice will prevail to such a degree that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the sucking child and the asp, will all gather at one spring, in one meadow and one abode. The first coming was also subject to these conditions, although none of them came to pass outwardly. Thus the Jews cavilled at Christ, and — God forbid! — called Him a monster, regarded Him as the destroyer of the edifice of God and the breaker of the Sabbath and the Law, and sentenced Him to death. Now, each and every one of these conditions had an inner meaning, but the Jews failed to understand and were therefore veiled from recognizing Him.</p>
<p>The second coming of Christ also will be in like manner: the signs and conditions which have been spoken of all have meanings, and are not to be taken literally. Among other things it is said that the stars will fall upon the earth. The stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have established and proved scientifically that the globe of the sun is estimated to be about one million and a half times greater than the earth, and each of the fixed stars to be a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could they find place there? It would be as though a thousand million of Himalaya mountains were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. According to reason and science this thing is quite impossible. What is even more strange is that Christ said: "Perhaps I shall come when you are yet asleep, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief." Perhaps the thief will be in the house, and the owner will not know it.</p>	<p>The second coming of Christ follows a similar pattern. All the signs and conditions that have been indicated have inner meanings and are not to be taken literally. For otherwise it is said, among other things, that the stars will fall upon the earth. Yet the stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have established and proven that the mass of the sun is approximately one and a half million times greater than that of the earth, and that each one of the fixed stars is a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could there be room for them? It would be as though a thousand million mountains as mighty as the Himalayas were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. Such a thing is by reason and by science, and indeed as a matter of simple common sense, utterly impossible. And yet even more astonishing is that Christ said: Perchance I shall come when you are sleeping, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief. Perhaps the thief will be in the house and the owner will be unaware.</p>

<p>It is clear and evident that these signs have symbolic signification, and that they are not literal. They are fully explained in the Kitáb-i-Íqán. Refer to it.</p>	<p>It is therefore clear and evident that these signs have inner meanings and should not be taken literally. These meanings have been fully explained in the Book of Certitude: Refer to it.</p>
<p>THE TRINITY</p>	<p>The Trinity</p>
<p>Question.—What is the meaning of the Trinity, of the Three Persons in One?</p>	<p>Question: What is the meaning of the Trinity and of its three Persons?</p>
<p>Answer.—The Divine Reality, which is purified and sanctified from the understanding of human beings and which can never be imagined by the people of wisdom and of intelligence, is exempt from all conception. That Lordly Reality admits of no division; for division and multiplicity are properties of creatures which are contingent existences, and not accidents which happen to the self-existent.</p>	<p>Answer: The reality of the Divinity is sanctified and exalted beyond the comprehension of all created things, can in no wise be imagined by mortal mind and understanding, and transcends all human conception. That reality admits of no division, for division and multiplicity are among the characteristics of created and hence contingent things, and not accidents impinging upon the Necessary Being.</p>
<p>The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality. The descent of that Lordly Reality into conditions and degrees would be equivalent to imperfection and contrary to perfection, and is, therefore, absolutely impossible. It perpetually has been, and is, in the exaltation of holiness and sanctity. All that is mentioned of the Manifestations and Dawning-places of God signifies the divine reflection, and not a descent into the conditions of existence.</p>	<p>The reality of the Divinity is sanctified above singleness, then how much more above plurality. For that divine reality to descend into stations and degrees would be tantamount to deficiency, contrary to perfection, and utterly impossible. It has ever been, and will ever remain, in the loftiest heights of sanctity and purity. All that is mentioned regarding the manifestation and revelation of God pertains to the effulgence of His light and not to a descent into the degrees of existence.</p>
<p>God is pure perfection, and creatures are but imperfections. For God to descend into the conditions of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; on the contrary, His manifestation, His appearance, His rising are like the reflection of the sun in a clear, pure, polished mirror.</p>	<p>God is pure perfection and the creation is absolute imperfection. For God to descend into the degrees of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; rather, His manifestation, dawning and effulgence are even as the appearance of the sun in a clear, bright and polished mirror.</p>
<p>All the creatures are evident signs of God, like the earthly beings upon all of which the rays of the sun shine. But upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror</p>	<p>All created things are resplendent signs of God. For instance, the rays of the sun shine upon all earthly things, yet the light that falls upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits is only in such measure as to make them visible, to ensure their growth and to cause them to attain the object of their existence. The Perfect Man, however, is even as a clear mirror in which the Sun of Truth is revealed and manifested in the fullness of its attributes and perfections. Thus the reality of Christ was a bright and polished mirror of the greatest purity and clarity. The Sun of Truth, the Essence of the Divinity, appeared in</p>

<p>and manifested its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.</p>	<p>that mirror and manifested its light and heat therein, yet it did not descend from the heights of holiness and the heaven of sanctity to reside within it. No, it continues to abide in its loftiness and sublimity, but has been revealed and manifested in the mirror in all its beauty and perfection.</p>
<p>Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors—one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit—that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.</p>	<p>Now, if we were to say that we have beheld the Sun in two mirrors — one Christ and the other the Holy Spirit — or, in other words, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and two upon the earth, we would be speaking the truth. And if we were to say that there is only one Sun, that it is absolute singleness, and that it has no peer or partner, we would again be speaking the truth.</p>
<p>The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality—that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes—became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied—for the Sun is one—but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, “The Father is in the Son,” meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.</p>	<p>The purport of our words is that the reality of Christ was a clear mirror wherein the Sun of Truth — that is, the divine Essence — appeared and shone forth with infinite perfections and attributes. It is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, was ever divided or multiplied, for it remains one, but it became manifest in the mirror. That is why Christ said, “The Father is in the Son,” meaning that that Sun is manifest and visible in this mirror.</p>
<p>The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit is the outpouring grace of God which was revealed and manifested in the reality of Christ. Prophethood is the station of the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of His spirit. It is thus evident and established that the Essence of the Divinity is absolute oneness and has no peer, equal or likeness.</p>
<p>This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.</p>	<p>This is the true meaning of the three Persons of the Trinity. Otherwise, the foundations of the religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which no mind could ever conceive, and how could the mind be required to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? Such a thing could not be grasped by human reason, how much less be clothed in an intelligible form, but would remain sheer fancy.</p>
<p>It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved.</p>	<p>Now, this explanation clarifies the meaning of the three Persons of the Trinity and establishes at the same time the oneness of God.</p>
<p>EXPLANATION OF VERSE FIVE, CHAPTER SEVENTEEN, OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN</p>	<p>The Pre-existence of Christ</p>

<p>“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”</p>	<p>Question: What is the meaning of the verse in the Gospel of John: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”</p>
<p>There are two kinds of priorities: one is essential and is not preceded by a cause, but its existence is in itself, as, for example, the sun has light in itself, for its shining is not dependent on the light of other stars. This is called an essential light. But the light of the moon is received from the sun, for the moon is dependent on the sun for its light; therefore, the sun, with regard to light, is the cause, and the moon becomes the effect. The former is the ancient, the precedent, the antecedent, while the latter is the preceded and the last.</p>	<p>Answer: Pre-existence is of two kinds. One is essential pre-existence, which is not preceded by a cause but which exists in itself. For example, the sun shines in itself and does not depend on the radiance of the other stars for its light. This is called essential light. But the light of the moon is derived from the sun, for the moon is in need of the sun for its radiance. Thus, with respect to light, the sun is the cause and the moon the effect. The former is ancient, antecedent and prior, while the latter is preceded by something else.</p>
<p>The second sort of preexistence is the preexistence of time, and that has no beginning. The Word of God is sanctified from time. The past, the present, the future, all, in relation to God, are equal. Yesterday, today, tomorrow do not exist in the sun.</p>	<p>The second kind of pre-existence is temporal pre-existence, which has no beginning. The transcendent Word of God is sanctified beyond time. The past, the present and the future are all equal in relation to God. Yesterday, today and tomorrow do not exist in the sun.</p>
<p>In the same way there is a priority with regard to glory—that is to say, the most glorious precedes the glorious. Therefore, the Reality of Christ, Who is the Word of God, with regard to essence, attributes and glory, certainly precedes the creatures. Before appearing in the human form, the Word of God was in the utmost sanctity and glory, existing in perfect beauty and splendor in the height of its magnificence. When through the wisdom of God the Most High it shone from the heights of glory in the world of the body, the Word of God, through this body, became oppressed, so that it fell into the hands of the Jews, and became the captive of the tyrannical and ignorant, and at last was crucified. That is why He addressed God, saying: “Free Me from the bonds of the world of the body, and liberate Me from this cage, so that I may ascend to the heights of honor and glory, and attain unto the former grandeur and might which existed before the bodily world, that I may rejoice in the eternal world and may ascend to the original abode, the placeless world, the invisible kingdom.”</p>	<p>There is likewise precedence with regard to honour and distinction, that is, the most distinctive precedes the distinctive. Thus the reality of Christ, Who is the Word of God, undoubtedly precedes all created things in essence, in attributes and in distinction. Before appearing in human form, the Word of God was in a state of utmost sanctity and glory, abiding in perfect beauty and splendour in the height of its majesty. When, through the wisdom of the Most High, that Word shed its light from the pinnacle of glory upon the corporeal world, it was assaulted through the flesh. Thus it fell into the hands of the Jews, became the captive of the ignorant and the unjust, and was at last crucified. That is why He called upon God, saying: Release Me from the bondage of the corporeal realm and deliver Me from this cage, that I may ascend to the heights of greatness and majesty, regain the former sanctity and glory which I enjoyed before inhabiting the world of the flesh, rejoice in the everlasting dominion, and wing My flight to My true abode, the placeless realm of the unseen Kingdom.</p>
<p>It is thus that you see even in the kingdom of this world—that is to say, in the realm of souls and</p>	<p>As you have observed, after His ascension the greatness and glory of Christ was established</p>

<p>countries—that the glory and the grandeur of Christ appeared in this earth after His ascension. When in the world of the body He was subject to the contempt and jeers of the weakest nation of the world, the Jews, who thought it fitting to set a crown of thorns upon His sacred head. But after His ascension the bejeweled crowns of all the kings were humbled and bowed before the crown of thorns.</p>	<p>both in the realm of the hearts and across the reaches of the earth, even unto the very dust itself. So long as He dwelt in the corporeal world He was despised and reviled by the weakest nation on the earth, the Jews, who saw it fit that a crown of thorns be placed upon His blessed brow. But after His ascension the gem-studded crowns of all the kings became humble and submissive before that crown of thorns.</p>
<p>Behold the glory that the Word of God attained even in this world!</p>	<p>Behold the glory that the Word of God attained even in this world!</p>
<p>EXPLANATION OF VERSE TWENTY-TWO, CHAPTER FIFTEEN, OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS</p>	<p>Sin and Atonement</p>
<p>Question.—In verse 22 of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians it is written: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” What is the meaning of these words?</p>	<p>Question: In 1 Corinthians 15:22 it is written: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” What is the meaning of these words?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that there are two natures in man: the physical nature and the spiritual nature. The physical nature is inherited from Adam, and the spiritual nature is inherited from the Reality of the Word of God, which is the spirituality of Christ. The physical nature is born of Adam, but the spiritual nature is born from the bounty of the Holy Spirit. The first is the source of all imperfection; the second is the source of all perfection.</p>	<p>Answer: Know that there are two natures in man: the material and the spiritual. The material nature is inherited from Adam, while the spiritual nature is inherited from the reality of the Word of God, which is the spirituality of Christ. The material nature is born of Adam, but the spiritual nature is born of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The material nature is the source of every imperfection and the spiritual nature is the source of all perfection.</p>
<p>The Christ sacrificed Himself so that men might be freed from the imperfections of the physical nature and might become possessed of the virtues of the spiritual nature. This spiritual nature, which came into existence through the bounty of the Divine Reality, is the union of all perfections and appears through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is the divine perfections; it is light, spirituality, guidance, exaltation, high aspiration, justice, love, grace, kindness to all, philanthropy, the essence of life. It is the reflection of the splendor of the Sun of Reality.</p>	<p>Christ sacrificed Himself so that mankind might be freed from the imperfections of the material nature and endowed with the virtues of the spiritual nature. This spiritual nature, which has come to exist through the grace of the divine Reality, is the sum of all perfections and proceeds from the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is the divine perfections; it is light, spirituality, guidance, exaltation, high-mindedness, justice, love, generosity, kindness to all, and charitable deeds: it is life upon life. This spiritual nature is an effulgence of the splendours of the Sun of Truth.</p>
<p>The Christ is the central point of the Holy Spirit: He is born of the Holy Spirit; He is raised up by the Holy Spirit; He is the descendant of the Holy Spirit—that is to say, that the Reality of Christ does not descend from Adam; no, it is born of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this verse in Corinthians, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be</p>	<p>Christ is the focal centre of the Holy Spirit; He is born of the Holy Spirit; He has been raised up by the Holy Spirit; He descends from the Holy Spirit — that is, His Reality does not proceed from the lineage of Adam but is born of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of 1 Corinthians 15:22 where it says: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made</p>

<p>made alive,” means, according to this terminology, that Adam is the father of man—that is to say, He is the cause of the physical life of mankind; His was the physical fatherhood. He is a living soul, but He is not the giver of spiritual life, whereas Christ is the cause of the spiritual life of man, and with regard to the spirit, His was the spiritual fatherhood. Adam is a living soul; Christ is a quickening spirit.</p>	<p>alive,” is therefore as follows: Adam is commonly referred to as the “father of man,” that is, He is the cause of the material life of mankind, and holds the position of material fatherhood. He is a living, though not a life-giving, soul; whereas Christ is the cause of the spiritual life of man, and with regard to the spirit He holds the position of spiritual fatherhood. Adam is a living soul; Christ is a life-giving spirit.</p>
<p>This physical world of man is subject to the power of the lusts, and sin is the consequence of this power of the lusts, for it is not subject to the laws of justice and holiness. The body of man is a captive of nature; it will act in accordance with whatever nature orders. It is, therefore, certain that sins such as anger, jealousy, dispute, covetousness, avarice, ignorance, prejudice, hatred, pride and tyranny exist in the physical world. All these brutal qualities exist in the nature of man. A man who has not had a spiritual education is a brute. Like the savages of Africa, whose actions, habits and morals are purely sensual, they act according to the demands of nature to such a degree that they rend and eat one another. Thus it is evident that the physical world of man is a world of sin. In this physical world man is not distinguished from the animal.</p>	<p>In this material world man is subject to the force of instinctual desires, of which sin is the inevitable consequence, for these desires are not bound by the laws of justice and righteousness. The body of man is a prisoner of nature and will act in accordance with whatsoever nature dictates. It follows that sins — such as wrathfulness, envy, contentiousness, greed, avarice, ignorance, rancour, corruption, pride and cruelty — must exist in the material world. All these bestial attributes exist in the nature of man. A man who has been deprived of spiritual education is even as an animal, like those inhabitants of Africa whose actions, manners and morals are purely instinctual and who act according to the dictates of nature, to the point of rending and eating one another. Thus it becomes evident that the material world of man is a world of sin, and that on this plane man is indistinguishable from the animal.</p>
<p>All sin comes from the demands of nature, and these demands, which arise from the physical qualities, are not sins with respect to the animals, while for man they are sin. The animal is the source of imperfections, such as anger, sensuality, jealousy, avarice, cruelty, pride: all these defects are found in animals but do not constitute sins. But in man they are sins.</p>	<p>All sin is prompted by the dictates of nature. These dictates of nature, which are among the hallmarks of corporeal existence, are not sins with respect to the animal but are sins with regard to man. The animal is the source of imperfections such as anger, lust, envy, greed, cruelty, and pride. All these blameworthy qualities are found in the nature of the animal, and do not constitute sins with regard to the animal, whereas they are sins with regard to man.</p>
<p>Adam is the cause of man’s physical life; but the Reality of Christ—that is to say, the Word of God—is the cause of spiritual life. It is “a quickening spirit,” meaning that all the imperfections which come from the requirements of the physical life of man are transformed into human perfections by the teachings and education of that spirit. Therefore,</p>	<p>Adam is the cause of man’s material life, but the reality of Christ, that is, the Word of God, is the cause of his spiritual life. It is a life-giving spirit, meaning that all the imperfections imposed by the material life of man are, through the instruction and guidance of that Essence of detachment, transmuted into human perfections.</p>

<p>Christ was a quickening spirit, and the cause of life in all mankind.</p>	<p>Therefore, Christ was a life-giving spirit and the cause of the spiritual life of all mankind.</p>
<p>Adam was the cause of physical life, and as the physical world of man is the world of imperfections, and imperfections are the equivalent of death, Paul compared the physical imperfections to death.</p>	<p>Adam was the cause of material life, and since the material world of man is the realm of imperfections, and since imperfection is tantamount to death, Paul compared the former to the latter.</p>
<p>But the mass of the Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among His descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God, without committing any sin or fault, but simply because they are the posterity of Adam, have become without reason guilty sinners, and until the day of the sacrifice of Christ were held captive in hell in painful torment. This is far from the justice of God. If Adam was a sinner, what is the sin of Abraham? What is the fault of Isaac, or of Joseph? Of what is Moses guilty?</p>	<p>But the majority of the Christians believe that Adam sinned and transgressed by eating from the forbidden tree, that the dire and disastrous consequences of this transgression were inherited for all time by His descendants, and that Adam has thus become the cause of the death of man. This explanation is irrational and clearly mistaken, for it implies that all men, even the Prophets and Messengers of God, through no fault or sin of their own, and for no other reason than their descent from Adam, became guilty sinners and suffered the torments of hell until the day of Christ's sacrifice. This would be far from the justice of God. If Adam was a sinner, what was the sin of Abraham? What was the fault of Isaac and of Joseph? What was the transgression of Moses?</p>
<p>But Christ, Who is the Word of God, sacrificed Himself. This has two meanings, an apparent and an esoteric meaning. The outward meaning is this: Christ's intention was to represent and promote a Cause which was to educate the human world, to quicken the children of Adam, and to enlighten all mankind; and since to represent such a great Cause—a Cause which was antagonistic to all the people of the world and all the nations and kingdoms—meant that He would be killed and crucified, so Christ in proclaiming His mission sacrificed His life. He regarded the cross as a throne, the wound as a balm, the poison as honey and sugar. He arose to teach and educate men, and so He sacrificed Himself to give the spirit of life. He perished in body so as to quicken others by the spirit.</p>	<p>But Christ, Who was the Word of God, sacrificed Himself. This has two meanings, an outward meaning and a true meaning. The outward meaning is this: Since Christ intended to promote a Cause that entailed the education of the human race, the quickening of the children of men, and the enlightenment of all humanity, and since promoting such a mighty Cause — a Cause that would antagonize all the peoples of the earth and withstand the opposition of every nation and government — was bound to bring about the spilling of His blood and to lead to His crucifixion and death, therefore at the moment He revealed His mission He offered up His life, welcomed the cross as His throne, regarded every wound as a balm and every poison as sweetest honey, and arose to instruct and guide the people. That is, He sacrificed Himself that He might bestow the spirit of life, and perished in body that He might quicken others in spirit.</p>
<p>The second meaning of sacrifice is this: Christ was like a seed, and this seed sacrificed its own form so that the tree might grow and develop.</p>	<p>However, the second meaning of sacrifice is this: Christ was like a seed, and this seed sacrificed its form so that the tree might grow and develop.</p>

<p>Although the form of the seed was destroyed, its reality became apparent in perfect majesty and beauty in the form of a tree.</p>	<p>Although the form of the seed was destroyed, its reality manifested itself, in perfect majesty and beauty, in the outward form of the tree.</p>
<p>The position of Christ was that of absolute perfection; He made His divine perfections shine like the sun upon all believing souls, and the bounties of the light shone and radiated in the reality of men. This is why He says: "I am the bread which descended from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread will not die" —that is to say, that whosoever shall partake of this divine food will attain unto eternal life: that is, every one who partakes of this bounty and receives these perfections will find eternal life, will obtain preexistent favors, will be freed from the darkness of error, and will be illuminated by the light of His guidance.</p>	<p>The station of Christ was that of absolute perfection. Those divine perfections shone even as the sun upon all believing souls, and the outpourings of that light became manifest and resplendent in their realities. That is why He says: "I am the bread which came down from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread will not die," that is, whosoever partakes of this divine sustenance will gain eternal life. Thus, whoever partook of this grace and acquired a share of these perfections found eternal life, and whoever sought illumination from His ancient grace was delivered from the darkness of error and illumined by the light of guidance.</p>
<p>The form of the seed was sacrificed for the tree, but its perfections, because of this sacrifice, became evident and apparent—the tree, the branches, the leaves and the blossoms being concealed in the seed. When the form of the seed was sacrificed, its perfections appeared in the perfect form of leaves, blossoms and fruits.</p>	<p>The form of the seed was sacrificed for the tree, but its perfections were revealed and manifested by virtue of this sacrifice: for the tree, its branches, its leaves and its blossoms were latent and hidden within the seed, but when the form of the seed was sacrificed its perfections were fully manifested in the leaves, blossoms and fruits.</p>
<p>ADAM AND EVE</p>	<p>Adam and Eve</p>
<p>Question.—What is the truth of the story of Adam, and His eating of the fruit of the tree?</p>	<p>Question: What is the truth of the story of Adam and His eating from the tree?</p>
<p>Answer.—In the Bible it is written that God put Adam in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and take care of it, and said to Him: "Eat of every tree of the garden except the tree of good and evil, for if You eat of that, You will die." Then it is said that God caused Adam to sleep, and He took one of His ribs and created woman in order that she might be His companion. After that it is said the serpent induced the woman to eat of the tree, saying: "God has forbidden you to eat of the tree in order that your eyes may not be opened, and that you may not know good from evil." Then Eve ate from the tree and gave unto Adam, Who also ate; their eyes were opened, they found themselves naked, and they hid their bodies with leaves. In consequence of this act they received the reproaches of God. God said to Adam: "Hast Thou eaten of the forbidden tree?" Adam answered: "Eve tempted Me, and I did eat." God</p>	<p>Answer: It is recorded in the Torah that God placed Adam in the garden of Eden to work and tend it, and said to Him: "Eat freely of every tree of the garden, save for the tree of good and evil, for if thou wert to eat thereof thou wouldst surely die." Then it is said that God caused Adam to sleep, took a bone from His ribs, and created a woman to be His companion. Further on it is said that the serpent tempted the woman to eat of the tree, saying: "God has forbidden you to eat from the tree, that your eyes may not be opened and that you may not discern good from evil." Then Eve ate from the tree and gave unto Adam, who also ate. Whereupon their eyes were opened, they found themselves naked, and they covered their nakedness with leaves. God then reproached them, saying to Adam: "Hast Thou eaten of the forbidden tree?" Adam answered: "Eve tempted Me." God then reprovved Eve, who</p>

<p>then reproved Eve; Eve said: “The serpent tempted me, and I did eat.” For this the serpent was cursed, and enmity was put between the serpent and Eve, and between their descendants. And God said: “The man is become like unto Us, knowing good and evil, and perhaps He will eat of the tree of life and live forever.” So God guarded the tree of life.</p>	<p>said: “The serpent tempted me.” For this the serpent was cursed, and enmity was established between the serpent and Eve and between their descendants. And God said: “The man is become like unto Us, knowing good and evil. Perhaps He will eat of the tree of life and live forever.” So God guarded the tree of life.</p>
<p>If we take this story in its apparent meaning, according to the interpretation of the masses, it is indeed extraordinary. The intelligence cannot accept it, affirm it, or imagine it; for such arrangements, such details, such speeches and reproaches are far from being those of an intelligent man, how much less of the Divinity—that Divinity Who has organized this infinite universe in the most perfect form, and its innumerable inhabitants with absolute system, strength and perfection.</p>	<p>If we were to take this account according to the literal meaning of the words, as indicated by their common usage, it would indeed be exceedingly strange, and human minds would be excused from accepting, affirming, or imagining it. For such elaborate arrangements and details, such statements and reproaches, would be implausible even coming from an intelligent person, let alone from the Divinity Himself, Who has arranged this infinite universe in the most perfect form and arrayed its countless beings in the utmost order, soundness, and perfection.</p>
<p>We must reflect a little: if the literal meaning of this story were attributed to a wise man, certainly all would logically deny that this arrangement, this invention, could have emanated from an intelligent being. Therefore, this story of Adam and Eve who ate from the tree, and their expulsion from Paradise, must be thought of simply as a symbol. It contains divine mysteries and universal meanings, and it is capable of marvelous explanations. Only those who are initiated into mysteries, and those who are near the Court of the All-Powerful, are aware of these secrets.</p>	<p>One must pause awhile to reflect: If the outward meaning of this account were to be attributed to a wise man, all men of wisdom would assuredly deny it, arguing that such a scheme and arrangement could not possibly have proceeded from such a person. The account of Adam and Eve, their eating from the tree, and their expulsion from Paradise, are therefore symbols and divine mysteries. They have all-embracing meanings and marvellous interpretations; but only the intimates of the divine mysteries and the well-favoured of the all-sufficing Lord are aware of the true significance of these symbols.</p>
<p>Hence these verses of the Bible have numerous meanings.</p> <p>We will explain one of them, and we will say: Adam signifies the heavenly spirit of Adam, and Eve His human soul. For in some passages in the Holy Books where women are mentioned, they represent the soul of man. The tree of good and evil signifies the human world; for the spiritual and divine world is purely good and absolutely luminous, but in the human world light and darkness, good and evil, exist as opposite conditions.</p>	<p>These verses of the Torah have therefore numerous meanings. We will explain one of them and will say that by Adam is meant the spirit of Adam and by Eve is meant His self. For in certain passages of the sacred scriptures where women are mentioned, the intended meaning is the human self. By the tree of good and evil is meant the material world, for the heavenly realm of the spirit is pure goodness and absolute radiance, but in the material world light and darkness, good and evil, and all manner of opposing realities are to be found.</p>
<p>The meaning of the serpent is attachment to the human world. This attachment of the spirit to the</p>	<p>The meaning of the serpent is attachment to the material world. This attachment of the spirit to</p>

<p>human world led the soul and spirit of Adam from the world of freedom to the world of bondage and caused Him to turn from the Kingdom of Unity to the human world. When the soul and spirit of Adam entered the human world, He came out from the paradise of freedom and fell into the world of bondage. From the height of purity and absolute goodness, He entered into the world of good and evil.</p>	<p>the material world led to the banishment of the self and spirit of Adam from the realm of freedom to the world of bondage and caused Him to turn from the kingdom of Divine Unity to the world of human existence. When once the self and spirit of Adam entered the material world, He departed from the paradise of freedom and descended into the realm of bondage. He had abided in the heights of sanctity and absolute goodness, and set foot thereafter in the world of good and evil.</p>
<p>The tree of life is the highest degree of the world of existence: the position of the Word of God, and the supreme Manifestation. Therefore, that position has been preserved; and, at the appearance of the most noble supreme Manifestation, it became apparent and clear. For the position of Adam, with regard to the appearance and manifestation of the divine perfections, was in the embryonic condition; the position of Christ was the condition of maturity and the age of reason; and the rising of the Greatest Luminary was the condition of the perfection of the essence and of the qualities. This is why in the supreme Paradise the tree of life is the expression for the center of absolutely pure sanctity—that is to say, of the divine supreme Manifestation. From the days of Adam until the days of Christ, They spoke little of eternal life and the heavenly universal perfections. This tree of life was the position of the Reality of Christ; through His manifestation it was planted and adorned with everlasting fruits.</p>	<p>By the tree of life is meant the highest degree of the world of existence, that is, the station of the Word of God and His universal Manifestation. That station was indeed well-guarded, until it appeared and shone forth in the supreme revelation of His universal Manifestation. For the station of Adam, with regard to the appearance and manifestation of the divine perfections, was that of the embryo; the station of Christ was that of coming of age and maturation; and the dawning of the Most Great Luminary was the station of the perfection of the essence and the attributes. That is why in the all-highest Paradise the tree of life alludes to the focal centre of absolute sanctity and purity, that is, the universal Manifestation of God. For from the days of Adam until the time of Christ there was little mention of life eternal and of the all-embracing perfections of the kingdom on high. This tree of life alludes to the station of the reality of Christ: it was planted in His Dispensation and adorned with everlasting fruits.</p>
<p>Now consider how far this meaning conforms to the reality. For the spirit and the soul of Adam, when they were attached to the human world, passed from the world of freedom into the world of bondage, and His descendants continued in bondage. This attachment of the soul and spirit to the human world, which is sin, was inherited by the descendants of Adam, and is the serpent which is always in the midst of, and at enmity with, the spirits and the descendants of Adam. That enmity continues and endures. For attachment to the world has become the cause of the bondage of spirits, and this bondage is identical with sin, which has been transmitted from Adam to His posterity. It is because of this</p>	<p>Now consider how closely this interpretation conforms to reality: For when the spirit and the self of Adam became attached to the material world, they passed from the realm of freedom into the realm of bondage, this condition was perpetuated with each succeeding generation, and this attachment of spirit and self to the material world, which is sin, was inherited by His descendants. This attachment is the serpent which will forever be in the midst of, and at enmity with, the spirits of the descendants of Adam, for attachment to the world has become the cause of the bondage of the spirits. This bondage is that sin which has been transmitted from Adam to His descendants, for it has</p>

<p>attachment that men have been deprived of essential spirituality and exalted position.</p>	<p>deprived men of recognizing their essential spirituality and attaining to exalted stations.</p>
<p>When the sanctified breezes of Christ and the holy light of the Greatest Luminary were spread abroad, the human realities—that is to say, those who turned toward the Word of God and received the profusion of His bounties—were saved from this attachment and sin, obtained everlasting life, were delivered from the chains of bondage, and attained to the world of liberty. They were freed from the vices of the human world, and were blessed by the virtues of the Kingdom. This is the meaning of the words of Christ, “I gave My blood for the life of the world” —that is to say, I have chosen all these troubles, these sufferings, calamities, and even the greatest martyrdom, to attain this object, the remission of sins (that is, the detachment of spirits from the human world, and their attraction to the divine world) in order that souls may arise who will be the very essence of the guidance of mankind, and the manifestations of the perfections of the Supreme Kingdom.</p>	<p>When the holy breaths of Christ and the sanctified lights of the Most Great Luminary were spread abroad, human realities, that is, those souls who turned toward the Word of God and partook of His manifold grace were saved from this attachment and sin, were granted eternal life, were delivered from the chains of bondage and entered the realm of freedom. They were purged of earthly vices and endowed with heavenly virtues. This is the meaning of Christ’s words that I gave My blood for the life of the world. That is, I chose to bear all these trials, afflictions and calamities, even the most great martyrdom, to attain this ultimate objective and to ensure the remission of sins — that is, the detachment of spirits from the material world and their attraction to the divine realm — that souls may arise who will be the very essence of guidance and the manifestations of the perfections of the Kingdom on high.</p>
<p>Observe that if, according to the suppositions of the People of the Book, the meaning were taken in its exoteric sense, it would be absolute injustice and complete predestination. If Adam sinned by going near the forbidden tree, what was the sin of the glorious Abraham, and what was the error of Moses the Interlocutor? What was the crime of Noah the Prophet? What was the transgression of Joseph the Truthful? What was the iniquity of the Prophets of God, and what was the trespass of John the Chaste? Would the justice of God have allowed these enlightened Manifestations, on account of the sin of Adam, to find torment in hell until Christ came and by the sacrifice of Himself saved them from excruciating tortures? Such an idea is beyond every law and rule and cannot be accepted by any intelligent person.</p>	<p>Note that if these words were taken literally, as imagined by the people of the Book, it would be sheer injustice and absolute predestination. If Adam sinned in approaching the forbidden tree, what then was the sin of glorious Abraham, the Friend of God, and the error of Moses, Who conversed with God? What was the offence of Noah the Prophet and the transgression of truth-speaking Joseph? What was the fault of the Prophets of God and the failure of John the Chaste? Would divine justice have suffered these luminous Manifestations to endure, by reason of Adam’s sin, the torment of hell until such time as Christ should come and by His sacrifice rescue them from the nethermost fire? Such a notion is beyond the pale of every rule and principle and no rational person can ever accept it.</p>
<p>No; it means what has already been said: Adam is the spirit of Adam, and Eve is His soul; the tree is the human world, and the serpent is that attachment to this world which constitutes sin, and which has infected the descendants of Adam. Christ by His holy breezes saved men from this attachment and freed them from this sin.</p>	<p>Rather, the meaning is that which was already mentioned: Adam is the spirit of Adam and Eve His self; the tree is the material world and the serpent is attachment to it. This attachment, which is sin, has been transmitted to the descendants of Adam. Through the breaths of</p>

	holiness Christ rescued souls from this attachment and delivered them from this sin.
The sin in Adam is relative to His position. Although from this attachment there proceed results, nevertheless, attachment to the earthly world, in relation to attachment to the spiritual world, is considered as a sin. The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of the Near Ones. This is established. So bodily power is not only defective in relation to spiritual power; it is weakness in comparison. In the same way, physical life, in comparison with eternal life in the Kingdom, is considered as death. So Christ called the physical life death, and said: "Let the dead bury their dead." Though those souls possessed physical life, yet in His eyes that life was death.	This sin in Adam, moreover, is relative to His station: Although this worldly attachment produced substantial results, yet in relation to attachment to the spiritual realm it is nonetheless regarded as a sin, and the truth of the saying "The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of the near ones" is established. Again, it is like the power of the body, which is imperfect in relation to the power of the spirit — indeed, it is sheer weakness in comparison. Likewise, material life, compared to eternal existence and the life of the Kingdom, is regarded as death. Thus Christ referred to this material life as death and said, "Let the dead bury their dead." Although those souls enjoyed material life, yet in His eyes that life was even as death.
This is one of the meanings of the biblical story of Adam. Reflect until you discover the others. Salutations be upon you.	This is but one of the meanings of the biblical account of Adam. Reflect, that you may discover the others. Salutations!
EXPLANATION OF BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT	Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
Question.—"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—(Matt. 12:31–32)	Question: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."
Answer.—The holy realities of the Manifestations of God have two spiritual positions. One is the place of manifestation, which can be compared to the position of the globe of the sun, and the other is the resplendency of the manifestation, which is like its light and radiance; these are the perfections of God—in other words, the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is the divine bounties and lordly perfections, and these divine perfections are as the rays and heat of the sun. The brilliant rays of the sun constitute its being, and without them it would not be the sun. If the manifestation and the reflection of the divine perfections were not in Christ, Jesus would not	Answer: The sanctified realities of the Manifestations of God have two spiritual stations: one is that of the state of divine manifestation, which can be compared to the orb of the sun, and the other is that of radiance and revelation, which may be likened to the divine light and perfections — the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is the manifold grace and perfections of God, and these divine perfections are even as the rays and heat of the sun. Now, the sun is the sun by virtue of its effulgent rays — without these rays it would not be the sun. If the perfections of God were not revealed and manifested in Jesus, he would not be Christ. He is

<p>be the Messiah. He is a Manifestation because He reflects in Himself the divine perfections. The Prophets of God are manifestations for the lordly perfections—that is, the Holy Spirit is apparent in Them.</p>	<p>a Manifestation of God precisely because the divine perfections are revealed in Him. The Prophets of God are Manifestations, and the divine perfections — that is, the Holy Spirit — are that which is manifested in them.</p>
<p>If a soul remains far from the manifestation, he may yet be awakened; for he did not recognize the manifestation of the divine perfections. But if he loathe the divine perfections themselves—in other words, the Holy Spirit—it is evident that he is like a bat which hates the light.</p>	<p>If a soul distances himself from the Manifestation, he may yet be awakened, for he may have failed to know Him and to recognize Him as the Embodiment of the divine perfections. But if he loathes the divine perfections themselves, which are the Holy Spirit, this shows that, bat-like, he is a hater of the light.</p>
<p>This detestation of the light has no remedy and cannot be forgiven—that is to say, it is impossible for him to come near unto God. This lamp is a lamp because of its light; without the light it would not be a lamp. Now if a soul has an aversion for the light of the lamp, he is, as it were, blind, and cannot comprehend the light; and blindness is the cause of everlasting banishment from God.</p>	<p>This hatred of the light itself is irremediable and unforgivable, that is, it is impossible for such a soul to draw near to God. This lamp here is a lamp because of its light; without the light it would not be a lamp. A soul that abhors the light of the lamp is, as it were, blind and cannot perceive the light, and this blindness is the cause of eternal deprivation.</p>
<p>It is evident that the souls receive grace from the bounty of the Holy Spirit which appears in the Manifestations of God, and not from the personality of the Manifestation. Therefore, if a soul does not receive grace from the bounties of the Holy Spirit, he remains deprived of the divine gift, and the banishment itself puts the soul beyond the reach of pardon.</p>	<p>It is evident that souls receive grace from the outpourings of the Holy Spirit which are apparent in the Manifestations of God, and not from the individual personality of the Manifestation. It follows that if a soul fails to partake of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, it remains deprived of God’s grace, and this deprivation itself is equivalent to the denial of divine forgiveness.</p>
<p>This is why many people who were the enemies of the Manifestations, and who did not recognize Them, when once they had known Them became Their friends. So enmity toward the Manifestation did not become the cause of perpetual banishment, for they who indulged in it were the enemies of the light-holders, not knowing that They were the shining lights of God. They were not the enemies of the light, and when once they understood that the light-holder was the place of manifestation of the light, they became sincere friends of it.</p>	<p>That is why there have been many souls who opposed the Manifestations of God, not realizing that they were Manifestations, but who became their friends once they had recognized them. Thus, enmity toward the Manifestation of God was not the cause of eternal deprivation, for they were enemies of the candle holder and knew not that it was the seat of God’s effulgent light. They were not the enemies of the light itself, and once they understood that the candle holder was the seat of the light, they became true friends.</p>
<p>The meaning is this: to remain far from the light-holder does not entail everlasting banishment, for one may become awakened and vigilant; but enmity toward the light is the cause of</p>	<p>Our meaning is that remoteness from the candle holder is not the cause of eternal deprivation, for one may yet be awakened and guided aright, but that enmity toward the light itself is the cause of eternal deprivation and has no remedy.</p>

<p>everlasting banishment, and for this there is no remedy.</p>	
<p>EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE “FOR MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN”</p>	<p>“Many Are Called, but Few Are Chosen”</p>
<p>Question.—In the Gospel Christ said: “Many are called, but few are chosen,” and in the Qur’án it is written: “He will confer particular mercy on whom He pleaseth.” What is the wisdom of this?</p>	<p>Question: Christ says in the Gospel: “Many are called, but few are chosen,” and in the Qur’án it is written: “He singleth out for His favour whomsoever He pleaseth.” What is the wisdom of this?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that the order and the perfection of the whole universe require that existence should appear in numberless forms. For existing beings could not be embodied in only one degree, one station, one kind, one species and one class; undoubtedly, the difference of degrees and distinction of forms, and the variety of genus and species, are necessary—that is to say, the degree of mineral, vegetable, animal substances, and of man, are inevitable; for the world could not be arranged, adorned, organized and perfected with man alone. In the same way, with only animals, only plants or only minerals, this world could not show forth beautiful scenery, exact organization and exquisite adornment. Without doubt it is because of the varieties of degrees, stations, species and classes that existence becomes resplendent with utmost perfection.</p>	<p>Answer: Know that the order and perfection of the universe require that existence should appear in countless forms. Created things cannot therefore be realized in a single degree, station, manner, kind, or species: differences of degree, distinctions in form, and a multiplicity of kinds and species are inevitable. So there must necessarily be mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, for through man alone the world of existence could not be adequately arranged, adorned, organized and perfected. By the same token, with the animals, plants or minerals alone, this world would not possess such a wondrous appearance, sound arrangement and subtle adornment: there must be differences of degrees and stations, of kinds and species, for existence to shine forth with the utmost perfection.</p>
<p>For example, if this tree were entirely fruit, the vegetable perfections could not be attained; for leaves, blossoms and fruits are all necessary so that the tree may be adorned with utmost beauty and perfection.</p>	<p>For example, if this tree were to become entirely fruit, the perfections of the vegetable kingdom could not be attained, for leaves, blossoms and fruits are all needed for the tree to appear in the utmost beauty and perfection.</p>
<p>In the same way consider the body of man. It must be composed of different organs, parts and members. Human beauty and perfection require the existence of the ear, the eye, the brain and even that of the nails and hair; if man were all brain, eyes or ears, it would be equivalent to imperfection. So the absence of hair, eyelashes, teeth and nails would be an absolute defect, though in comparison with the eye they are without feeling, and in this resemble the mineral and plant; but their absence in the body of man is necessarily faulty and displeasing.</p>	<p>Consider likewise the body of man, which must of necessity be composed of different parts, limbs and organs. The beauty and perfection of the human body require the existence of the ear, the eye, the brain and even the nails and hair: if man were all brain, eyes or ears, this would be tantamount to imperfection. So the absence of hair, eyelashes, teeth and nails is imperfection itself, for even though in comparison with the eyes the latter are insentient and resemble the mineral and the plant, yet their absence in the body of man is most disagreeable and displeasing.</p>

<p>As the degrees of existence are different and various, some beings are higher in the scale than others. Therefore, it is by the will and wish of God that some creatures are chosen for the highest degree, as man, and some others are placed in the middle degree, as the vegetable, and some are left in the lowest degree, like the mineral.</p> <p>It is from the bounty of God that man is selected for the highest degree; and the differences which exist between men in regard to spiritual progress and heavenly perfections are also due to the choice of the Compassionate One. For faith, which is life eternal, is the sign of bounty, and not the result of justice. 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."</p>	<p>Now, so long as the degrees of created things are different, some will naturally rank above the others. Thus, since the election of certain creatures for the highest degree, such as man, the maintenance of others in the middle degree, such as plants, and the relegation of yet others to the lowest degree, such as minerals, are each and all due to the divine will and purpose, it follows that the singling out of man for the highest degree is through the grace of God, and that the differences among men with regard to spiritual attainments and heavenly perfections are likewise due to the choice of the All-Merciful. For faith, which is life eternal, is a token of grace and not the result of justice. The flame of the fire of love, in this world of earth and water, burns by the power of attraction and not through human effort and striving, although through the latter one may indeed acquire knowledge, learning and other perfections. It is the light of the divine Beauty, then, that must stir up and move the spirit through its attractive power. Wherefore is it said: "Many are called, but few are chosen."</p>
<p>But the material beings are not despised, judged and held responsible for their own degree and station. For example, mineral, vegetable and animal in their various degrees are acceptable; but if in their own degree they remain imperfect, they are blamable, the degree itself being purely perfect.</p>	<p>As for material beings, they are not to be blamed, judged or held accountable for their own degrees and stations. Thus the mineral, the plant and the animal are each acceptable in their own degree, but if they were to remain deficient in that degree they would be blameworthy, the degree itself being wholly perfect.</p>
<p>The differences among mankind are of two sorts: one is a difference of station, and this difference is not blameworthy. The other is a difference of faith and assurance; the loss of these is blameworthy, for then the soul is overwhelmed by his desires and passions, which deprive him of these blessings and prevent him from feeling the power of attraction of the love of God. Though that man is praiseworthy and acceptable in his station, yet as he is deprived of the perfections of that degree, he will become a source of imperfections, for which he is held responsible.</p>	<p>Now, the differences among mankind are twofold: One is a difference of degree, and this difference is not blameworthy. The other is a difference with respect to faith and certitude, the absence of which is blameworthy, for the soul must have fallen prey to its own lusts and passions to have been deprived of this bounty and bereft of the attractive power of the love of God. However praiseworthy and acceptable it may be in its human degree, yet, as it is deprived of the perfections of that degree, it has become a source of deficiency and is held accountable for that reason.</p>
<p>THE "RETURN" SPOKEN OF BY THE PROPHETS</p>	<p>The Return of the Prophets</p>
<p>Question.—Will you explain the subject of Return?</p>	<p>Question: Will you explain the subject of Return?</p>

<p>Answer.—Bahá'u'lláh has explained this question fully and clearly in the Íqán. Read it, and the truth of this subject will become apparent. But since you have asked about it, I will explain it briefly.</p>	<p>Answer: Bahá'u'lláh has set forth a lengthy and detailed explanation of this matter in the Book of Certitude. Read it, and the truth of this matter will become clear and manifest. But since you have raised the question, a brief explanation will also be provided here.</p>
<p>We will begin to elucidate it from the Gospel, for there it is plainly said that when John, the son of Zacharias, appeared and gave to men the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, they asked him, “Who art thou? Art thou the promised Messiah?” He replied, “I am not the Messiah.” Then they asked him, “Art thou Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” These words prove and show that John, the son of Zacharias, was not the promised Elias.</p>	<p>We will preface our remarks with the text of the Gospel. It is recorded therein that when John the son of Zacharias appeared and announced unto the people the advent of the Kingdom of God, they asked him, “Who art thou? Art thou the promised Messiah?” He replied, “I am not the Messiah.” They then asked him, “Art thou Elias?” He replied, “I am not.” These words clearly establish that John the son of Zacharias was not the promised Elias.</p>
<p>But on the day of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor Christ said plainly that John, the son of Zacharias, was the promised Elias.</p> <p>In chapter 9, verses 11–13, of the Gospel of Mark, it is said: “And they asked Him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.”</p> <p>In chapter 17, verse 13, of Matthew, it is said: “Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.”</p>	<p>But on the day of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor Christ explicitly said that John the son of Zacharias was the promised Elias. In Mark 9:11 it is said: “And they asked Him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.” And in Matthew 17:13 it is said: “Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.”</p>
<p>They asked John the Baptist, “Are you Elias?” He answered, “No, I am not,” although it is said in the Gospel that John was the promised Elias, and Christ also said so clearly. Then if John was Elias, why did he say, “I am not”? And if he was not Elias, why did Christ say that he was?</p>	<p>Now, they asked John the Baptist, “Art thou Elias?” and he answered, “I am not,” whereas it is said in the Gospel that John was the promised Elias himself, and Christ clearly stated this as well. If John was Elias, why did he say he was not, and if he was not Elias, why did Christ say he was?</p>
<p>The explanation is this: not the personality, but the reality of the perfections, is meant—that is to say, the same perfections that were in Elias existed in John the Baptist and were exactly realized in him. Therefore, John the Baptist was the promised Elias. In this case not the essence, but the qualities, are regarded.</p>	<p>The reason is that we consider here not the individuality of the person but the reality of his perfections — that is to say, the very same perfections that Elias possessed were realized in John the Baptist as well. Thus John the Baptist was the promised Elias. What is being considered here is not the essence but the attributes.</p>

For example, there was a flower last year, and this year there is also a flower; I say the flower of last year has returned. Now, I do not mean that same flower in its exact individuality has come back; but as this flower has the same qualities as that of last year—as it has the same perfume, delicacy, color and form—I say the flower of last year has returned, and this flower is the former flower. When spring comes, we say last year’s spring has come back because all that was found in last year’s spring exists in this spring. That is why Christ said, “You will see all that happened in the days of the former Prophets.”

For example, last year there was a flower, and this year there has also appeared a flower. When I say that the flower of last year has returned, I do not mean that the same flower has returned with the selfsame identity. But since this flower is endowed with the same attributes as last year’s flower — as it possesses the same fragrance, delicacy, colour and form — it is said that last year’s flower has returned, and that this is that same flower. Likewise, when spring comes we say that last year’s spring has returned, since all that was found in the former is to be found again in the latter. This is why Christ said, “Ye will witness all that came to pass in the days of the former Prophets.”

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

Let us give another illustration: Last year’s seed was sown, branches and leaves appeared, blossoms and fruits came forth, and in the end a new seed was produced. When this second seed is planted it will grow into a tree, and once more those leaves, blossoms, branches and fruits will return, and the former tree will once again appear. As the beginning was a seed and the end likewise a seed, we say that the seed has returned. When we consider the material substance of the tree it is different, but when we consider the blossoms, leaves and fruits, the same fragrance, taste and delicacy are produced. Hence the perfection of the tree has returned anew.

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

In the same way, if we consider the individual, it is a different one, but if we consider the attributes and perfections, the same have returned. Thus when Christ said, “This is Elias,” He meant: This person is a manifestation of the grace, the perfections, the qualities, the attributes and the virtues of Elias. And when John the Baptist said, “I am not Elias,” he meant, “I am not the same person as Elias.” Christ considered their attributes, perfections, qualities and virtues, and John referred to his own substance and individuality. It is like this lamp: it was here last night, tonight it is lit again, and tomorrow night it will shine as well. When we say that tonight’s lamp is the same as last night’s and that it has returned, we mean the light and not the oil, the wick or the holder.

<p>This subject is fully and clearly explained in the Kitáb-i-Íqán.</p>	<p>These considerations have been explained at length in the Book of Certitude.</p>
<p>PETER'S CONFESSION OF FAITH</p>	<p>Peter and the Papacy</p>
<p>Question.—In the Gospel of St. Matthew it is said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." What is the meaning of this verse?</p>	<p>Question: In the Gospel of Matthew Christ says to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." What is the meaning of this verse?</p>
<p>Answer.—This utterance of Christ is a confirmation of the statement of Peter, when Christ asked: Whom do you believe Me to be? and Peter answered: I believe that "Thou art the Son of the living God." Then Christ said to him: "Thou art Peter" —for Cephas in Aramaic means rock—"and upon this rock I will build My church." For the others in answer to Christ said that He was Elias, and some said John the Baptist, and some others Jeremias or one of the Prophets.</p>	<p>Answer: This utterance of Christ is an affirmation of Peter's reply, when Christ asked: "Whom do ye believe me to be?" and Peter answered: "I believe that Thou art the Son of the living God." Then Christ said to him: "Thou art Peter" — since "Cephas" in Aramaic means "rock" — "and upon this rock I will build my church." For others in answer to Christ had said that He was Elias, or John the Baptist, or Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets.</p>
<p>Christ wished by suggestion, or an allusion, to confirm the words of Peter; so on account of the suitability of his name, Peter, He said: "and upon this rock I will build My church," meaning, thy belief that Christ is the Son of the living God will be the foundation of the Religion of God, and upon this belief the foundation of the church of God—which is the Law of God—shall be established.</p>	<p>Christ meant, through metaphor and allusion, to affirm the words of Peter. And so, since the latter's name meant "rock," He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." That is, thy belief that Christ is the Son of the living God will become the foundation of the religion of God, and upon this belief the foundation of the church of God — which is the Law of God — shall be established.</p>
<p>The existence of the tomb of Peter in Rome is doubtful; it is not authenticated. Some say it is in Antioch.</p>	<p>As to the existence of Peter's tomb in Rome, it is doubtful and disputed; some say that it is in Antioch.</p>
<p>Moreover, let us compare the lives of some of the Popes with the religion of Christ. Christ, hungry and without shelter, ate herbs in the wilderness, and was unwilling to hurt the feelings of anyone. The Pope sits in a carriage covered with gold and passes his time in the utmost splendor, amidst such pleasures and luxuries, such riches and adoration, as kings have never had.</p>	<p>Moreover, let us measure the deeds of certain Popes against the religion of Christ. Christ, hungry and destitute, subsisted on the herbs of the wilderness and would not consent to see any heart saddened. The Pope rides in a gilded carriage and passes his days in the utmost majesty, occupied with such pleasures and pursuits as to surpass the opulence and self-indulgence of all the kings of the earth.</p>
<p>Christ hurt no one, but some of the Popes killed innocent people: refer to history. How much blood the Popes have shed merely to retain temporal power! For mere differences of opinion they arrested, imprisoned and slew thousands of the servants of the world of humanity and learned men who had discovered the secrets of nature. To what a degree they opposed the truth!</p>	<p>Christ did not harm anyone, but certain Popes put many innocent souls to death. Refer to the history books. How much blood have the Popes spilled merely to secure their temporal authority! How many thousands of servants of humanity, among them learned men who had discovered the mysteries of the universe, have they tortured, imprisoned and slain, all for mere differences of</p>

	opinion! How vehemently have they opposed the truth!
<p>Reflect upon the instructions of Christ, and investigate the habits and customs of the Popes. Consider: is there any resemblance between the instructions of Christ and the manner of government of the Popes? We do not like to criticize, but the history of the Vatican is very extraordinary. The purport of our argument is this, that the instructions of Christ are one thing, and the manner of the Papal government is quite another; they do not agree. See how many Protestants have been killed by the order of the Popes, how many tyrannies and oppressions have been countenanced, and how many punishments and tortures have been inflicted! Can any of the sweet fragrances of Christ be detected in these actions? No! in the name of God! These people did not obey Christ, while Saint Barbara, whose picture is before us, did obey Christ, and followed in His footsteps, and put His commands into practice.</p>	<p>Consider the admonitions of Christ and investigate the customs and conduct of the Popes: is there any resemblance between the admonitions of the former and the administration of the latter? We do not like to find fault, but the pages of the history of the Vatican are indeed astounding. Our meaning is that the instructions of Christ are one thing and the conduct of the papal government is quite another: they do not agree in the slightest. See how many Protestants have been slain by order of the Popes, what wrongs and cruelties have been countenanced, what tortures and punishments have been inflicted! Can the sweet fragrances of Christ be at all inhaled from these actions? No, by the righteousness of God! Such people did not obey Christ; while Saint Barbara, whose portrait is before us, obeyed Him, walked in His path, and acted upon His admonitions.</p>
<p>Among the Popes there are also some blessed souls who followed in the footsteps of Christ, particularly in the first centuries of the Christian era when temporal things were lacking and the tests of God were severe. But when they came into possession of governmental power, and worldly honor and prosperity were gained, the Papal government entirely forgot Christ and was occupied with temporal power, grandeur, comfort and luxuries. It killed people, opposed the diffusion of learning, tormented the men of science, obstructed the light of knowledge, and gave the order to slay and to pillage. Thousands of souls, men of science and learning, and sinless ones, perished in the prisons of Rome. With all these proceedings and actions, how can the Vicarship of Christ be believed in?</p>	<p>Among the Popes there have indeed been some blessed souls who followed in the footsteps of Christ, particularly in the early centuries of the Christian era when earthly means were lacking and heaven-sent trials were severe. But when the means of temporal sovereignty were secured, and worldly honour and prosperity were obtained, the papal government entirely forgot Christ and occupied itself with earthly dominion and grandeur, with material comforts and luxuries. It put people to death, opposed the diffusion of learning, persecuted men of science, obstructed the light of knowledge, and gave the order to slay and to pillage. Thousands of people, men of science and learning and innocent souls, perished in the prisons of Rome. With such ways and deeds, how can the claim of the vicarship of Christ be accepted?</p>
<p>The Papal See has constantly opposed knowledge; even in Europe it is admitted that religion is the opponent of science, and that science is the destroyer of the foundations of religion. While the religion of God is the promoter of truth, the founder of science and knowledge, it is full of goodwill for learned men; it is the civilizer of mankind, the discoverer of the</p>	<p>The Holy See has consistently opposed the expansion of knowledge, to such a degree that in Europe it has come to be held that religion is the enemy of science and that science is the destroyer of the foundations of religion. Whereas the religion of God is the promoter of truth, the establisher of science and learning, the supporter of knowledge, the civilizer of the human race, the</p>

<p>secrets of nature, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world. Consequently, how can it be said to oppose knowledge? God forbid! Nay, for God, knowledge is the most glorious gift of man and the most noble of human perfections. To oppose knowledge is ignorant, and he who detests knowledge and science is not a man, but rather an animal without intelligence. For knowledge is light, life, felicity, perfection, beauty and the means of approaching the Threshold of Unity. It is the honor and glory of the world of humanity, and the greatest bounty of God. Knowledge is identical with guidance, and ignorance is real error.</p>	<p>discoverer of the secrets of existence, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world. How then could it oppose knowledge? God forbid! On the contrary, in the sight of God knowledge is the greatest human virtue and the noblest human perfection. To oppose knowledge is pure ignorance, and he who abhors knowledge and learning is not a human being but a mindless animal. For knowledge is light, life, felicity, perfection and beauty, and causes the soul to draw nigh to the divine threshold. It is the honour and glory of the human realm and the greatest of God's bounties. Knowledge is identical to guidance and ignorance is the essence of error.</p>
<p>Happy are those who spend their days in gaining knowledge, in discovering the secrets of nature, and in penetrating the subtleties of pure truth! Woe to those who are contented with ignorance, whose hearts are gladdened by thoughtless imitation, who have fallen into the lowest depths of ignorance and foolishness, and who have wasted their lives!</p>	<p>Happy are those who spend their days in the pursuit of knowledge, in the discovery of the secrets of the universe, and in the meticulous investigation of truth! And woe to those who content themselves with ignorance, who delight in thoughtless imitation, who have fallen into the abyss of ignorance and unawareness, and who have thus wasted their lives!</p>
<p>PREDESTINATION</p>	<p>Free Will and Predestination</p>
<p>Question.—If God has knowledge of an action which will be performed by someone, and it has been written on the Tablet of Fate, is it possible to resist it?</p>	<p>Question: When an action which someone will perform becomes the object of God's knowledge and is recorded in the "Guarded Tablet" of destiny, is it possible to resist it?</p>
<p>Answer.—The foreknowledge of a thing is not the cause of its realization; for the essential knowledge of God surrounds, in the same way, the realities of things, before as well as after their existence, and it does not become the cause of their existence. It is a perfection of God.</p>	<p>Answer: The knowledge of a thing is not the cause of its occurrence; for the essential knowledge of God encompasses the realities of all things both before and after they come to exist, but it is not the cause of their existence. This is an expression of the perfection of God.</p>
<p>But that which was prophesied by the inspiration of God through the tongues of the Prophets, concerning the appearance of the Promised One of the Bible, was not the cause of the manifestation of Christ.</p> <p>The hidden secrets of the future were revealed to the Prophets, and They thus became acquainted with the future events which They announced. This knowledge and these prophecies were not the cause of the occurrences. For example, tonight everyone knows that after seven hours the sun will rise, but this general foreknowledge</p>	<p>As to the pronouncements which, through divine revelation, have issued from the Prophets regarding the advent of the Promised One of the Torah, these likewise were not the cause of Christ's appearance. But the hidden mysteries of the days to come were revealed to the Prophets, who thus became acquainted with future events and who proclaimed them in turn. This knowledge and proclamation were not the cause of the occurrence of these events. For instance, tonight everyone knows that in seven hours the sun will rise, but this common knowledge does not cause the appearance and rising of the sun.</p>

<p>does not cause the rising and appearance of the sun.</p>	
<p>Therefore, the knowledge of God in the realm of contingency does not produce the forms of the things. On the contrary, it is purified from the past, present and future. It is identical with the reality of the things; it is not the cause of their occurrence.</p>	<p>Likewise, God’s knowledge in the contingent world does not produce the forms of things. Rather, that knowledge is freed from the distinctions of past, present and future, and is identical with the realization of all things without being the cause of that realization.</p>
<p>In the same way, the record and the mention of a thing in the Book does not become the cause of its existence. The Prophets, through the divine inspiration, knew what would come to pass. For instance, through the divine inspiration They knew that Christ would be martyred, and They announced it. Now, was Their knowledge and information the cause of the martyrdom of Christ? No; this knowledge is a perfection of the Prophets and did not cause the martyrdom.</p>	<p>In the same way, the record and mention of a thing in the scriptures is not the cause of its existence. The Prophets of God were informed through divine revelation that certain events would come to pass. For instance, through divine revelation they came to know that Christ would be martyred, which they in turn proclaimed. Now, did their knowledge and awareness cause the martyrdom of Christ? No: This knowledge is a sign of their perfection and not the cause of His martyrdom.</p>
<p>The mathematicians by astronomical calculations know that at a certain time an eclipse of the moon or the sun will occur. Surely this discovery does not cause the eclipse to take place. This is, of course, only an analogy and not an exact image.</p>	<p>Through astronomical calculations the mathematicians determine that at a certain time a solar or lunar eclipse will occur. Surely this prediction is not the cause of the eclipse. This of course is merely an analogy and not an exact image.</p>
<p>ON THE POWERS AND CONDITIONS OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD</p>	<p>On the Powers and Conditions of the Manifestations of God</p>
<p>THE FIVE ASPECTS OF SPIRIT</p>	<p>The Five Kinds of Spirit</p>
<p>Know that, speaking generally, there are five divisions of the spirit. First the vegetable spirit: this is a power which results from the combination of elements and the mingling of substances by the decree of the Supreme God, and from the influence, the effect and connection of other existences. When these substances and elements are separated from each other, the power of growth also ceases to exist. So, to use another figure, electricity results from the combination of elements, and when these elements are separated, the electric force is dispersed and lost. Such is the vegetable spirit.</p>	<p>Know that in general there are five kinds of spirit. First is the vegetable spirit, which is the power that results from the composition and combination of the elements according to the wisdom and decree of the Most High, and from their mutual arrangement, their influence upon and their interconnection with other created things. When these parts and elements are separated, the associated power of growth likewise ceases to exist. So, to give an analogy, electricity results from the composition of certain constituent parts, and as soon as these parts are separated the electrical force is immediately dissipated and lost. Such is the vegetable spirit.</p>
<p>After this is the animal spirit, which also results from the mingling and combination of elements. But this combination is more complete, and through the decree of the Almighty Lord a perfect mingling is obtained, and the animal spirit—in</p>	<p>After this is the animal spirit, which also results from the combination of elements that are brought together in a single composition. But this composition is more complete, and when by the decree of the almighty Lord it reaches a fuller</p>

<p>other words, the power of the senses—is produced. It will perceive the reality of things from that which is seen and visible, audible, edible, tangible, and that which can be smelled. After the dissociation and decomposition of the combined elements this spirit also will naturally disappear. It is like this lamp which you see: when the oil and wick and fire are brought together, light is the result; but when the oil is finished and the wick consumed, the light will also vanish and be lost.</p>	<p>degree of combination, the animal spirit, which consists in the power of the senses, comes to exist. This power perceives sensible realities — that which can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled or touched. After the separation and dissolution of these composed elements, this spirit will also naturally cease to exist. It is like this lamp before you: When oil, wick and flame are brought together, light is produced; but when the oil is exhausted, the wick consumed, and the constituent parts separated, the light will also be extinguished and lost.</p>
<p>The human spirit may be likened to the bounty of the sun shining on a mirror. The body of man, which is composed from the elements, is combined and mingled in the most perfect form; it is the most solid construction, the noblest combination, the most perfect existence. It grows and develops through the animal spirit. This perfected body can be compared to a mirror, and the human spirit to the sun. Nevertheless, if the mirror breaks, the bounty of the sun continues; and if the mirror is destroyed or ceases to exist, no harm will happen to the bounty of the sun, which is everlasting.</p>	<p>As to the human spirit, its likeness is that of a glass and the bounty of the sun. That is, the body of man, which is composed of the elements, is the most perfect form of composition and combination, the soundest arrangement, the noblest composition, and the most perfect of all existing things. It grows and develops through the animal spirit. This perfect body can be compared to a mirror and the human spirit to the sun: If the glass is shattered or the mirror destroyed, no harm befalls the outpouring grace of the sun, which continues unabated.</p>
<p>This spirit has the power of discovery; it encompasses all things. All these wonderful signs, these scientific discoveries, great enterprises and important historical events which you know are due to it. From the realm of the invisible and hidden, through spiritual power, it brought them to the plane of the visible. So man is upon the earth, yet he makes discoveries in the heavens. From known realities—that is to say, from the things which are known and visible—he discovers unknown things. For example, man is in this hemisphere; but, like Columbus, through the power of his reason he discovers another hemisphere—that is, America—which was until then unknown. His body is heavy, but through the help of vehicles which he invents, he is able to fly. He is slow of movement, but by vehicles which he invents he travels to the East and West with extreme rapidity. Briefly, this power embraces all things.</p>	<p>This spirit is the discovering power that encompasses all things. All the wondrous signs, all the crafts and discoveries, all the mighty undertakings and momentous historical events of which you are aware have been discovered by this spirit and brought forth from the invisible realm into the visible plane through its spiritual power. Thus it abides upon the earth and yet makes discoveries in the heavens, and deduces that which is unknown from known and visible realities. For example, man is in this hemisphere, but through the power of reason he discovers, as Columbus did, another one — the Americas — which until then was unknown. His body is heavy, but he flies through the air by means of vehicles of his own devising. His movement is slow, but he journeys rapidly through East and West by the aid of the devices which he has fashioned. In short, this power encompasses all things.</p>
<p>But the spirit of man has two aspects: one divine, one satanic—that is to say, it is capable of the utmost perfection, or it is capable of the utmost</p>	<p>But this human spirit has two aspects: one divine and one satanic — that is, it is capable of both the greatest perfection and the greatest</p>

<p>imperfection. If it acquires virtues, it is the most noble of the existing beings; and if it acquires vices, it becomes the most degraded existence.</p>	<p>deficiency. Should it acquire virtues it is the noblest of all things and should it acquire vices it becomes the most vile.</p>
<p>The fourth degree of spirit is the heavenly spirit; it is the spirit of faith and the bounty of God; it comes from the breath of the Holy Spirit, and by the divine power it becomes the cause of eternal life. It is the power which makes the earthly man heavenly, and the imperfect man perfect. It makes the impure to be pure, the silent eloquent; it purifies and sanctifies those made captive by carnal desires; it makes the ignorant wise.</p>	<p>As to the fourth degree of spirit, it is the heavenly spirit, which is the spirit of faith and the outpouring grace of the All-Merciful. This spirit proceeds from the breath of the Holy Spirit, and through a power born of God it becomes the cause of everlasting life. It is that power which makes the earthly soul heavenly and the imperfect man perfect. It cleanses the impure, unlooses the tongue of the silent, sanctifies the bondslaves of passion and desire, and confers knowledge upon the ignorant.</p>
<p>The fifth spirit is the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit is the mediator between God and His creatures. It is like a mirror facing the sun. As the pure mirror receives light from the sun and transmits this bounty to others, so the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the Holy Light from the Sun of Reality, which it gives to the sanctified realities. It is adorned with all the divine perfections. Every time it appears, the world is renewed, and a new cycle is founded. The body of the world of humanity puts on a new garment. It can be compared to the spring; whenever it comes, the world passes from one condition to another. Through the advent of the season of spring the black earth and the fields and wildernesses will become verdant and blooming, and all sorts of flowers and sweet-scented herbs will grow; the trees will have new life, and new fruits will appear, and a new cycle is founded.</p>	<p>The fifth degree of spirit is the Holy Spirit, which is the mediator between God and His creation. It is like a mirror facing the sun: Just as a spotless mirror receives the rays of the sun and reflects its bounty to others, so too is the Holy Spirit the mediator of the light of holiness, which it conveys from the Sun of Truth to sanctified souls. This Spirit is adorned with all the divine perfections. Whensoever it appears the world is revived, a new cycle is ushered in, and the body of humanity is clothed in a fresh attire. It is like the spring: when it arrives it transports the world from one condition to another. For at the advent of springtide the black earth, the fields and the meadows become green and verdant, flowers and sweet-scented herbs of every kind spring forth, trees are endowed with a new life, wondrous fruits are produced, and a new cycle is inaugurated.</p>
<p>The appearance of the Holy Spirit is like this. Whenever it appears, it renews the world of humanity and gives a new spirit to the human realities: it arrays the world of existence in a praiseworthy garment, dispels the darkness of ignorance, and causes the radiation of the light of perfections. Christ with this power has renewed this cycle; the heavenly spring with the utmost freshness and sweetness spread its tent in the world of humanity, and the life-giving breeze perfumed the nostrils of the enlightened ones.</p>	<p>It is the same with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit: Whensoever it appears it invests the world of humanity with a new life and endows human realities with a new spirit. It clothes all existence with a glorious attire, disperses the darkness of ignorance, and causes the light of human perfections to shine resplendent. It is with such a power that Christ renewed this cycle — whereupon the divine springtide pitched its tent, with utmost vitality and grace, in the realm of humanity, and perfumed the senses of the enlightened souls with its life-giving breezes.</p>
<p>In the same way, the appearance of Bahá' u'lláh was like a new springtime which appeared with holy breezes, with the hosts of everlasting life,</p>	<p>In the same way, the manifestation of Bahá' u'lláh was a new springtide which appeared with the sweet savours of holiness, with the hosts of</p>

<p>and with heavenly power. It established the Throne of the Divine Kingdom in the center of the world and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, revived souls and established a new cycle.</p>	<p>everlasting life, and with a power born of the celestial kingdom. He established the throne of God's sovereignty in the midmost heart of the world, and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, revived the souls and ushered in a new cycle.</p>
<p>THE DIVINITY CAN ONLY BE COMPREHENDED THROUGH THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>The Connection between God and His Manifestations</p>
<p>Question.—What connection has the Reality of Divinity with the Lordly Rising-places and the Divine Dawning-points?</p>	<p>Question: What is the reality of the Divinity and its connection to the Daysprings of Lordly splendour and the Dawning-Places of the light of the All-Merciful?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that the Reality of Divinity or the substance of the Essence of Oneness is pure sanctity and absolute holiness—that is to say, it is sanctified and exempt from all praise. The whole of the supreme attributes of the degrees of existence, in reference to this plane, are only imaginations. It is invisible, incomprehensible, inaccessible, a pure essence which cannot be described, for the Divine Essence surrounds all things. Verily, that which surrounds is greater than the surrounded, and the surrounded cannot contain that by which it is surrounded, nor comprehend its reality. However far mind may progress, though it may reach to the final degree of comprehension, the limit of understanding, it beholds the divine signs and attributes in the world of creation and not in the world of God. For the essence and the attributes of the Lord of Unity are in the heights of sanctity, and for the minds and understandings there is no way to approach that position. "The way is closed, and seeking is forbidden."</p>	<p>Answer: Know that the reality of the Divinity and the nature of the divine Essence is ineffable sanctity and absolute holiness, that is, it is exalted above and sanctified beyond every praise. All the attributes ascribed to the highest degrees of existence are, with regard to this station, mere imagination. The Invisible and Inaccessible can never be known; the absolute Essence can never be described. For the divine Essence is an all-encompassing reality, and all created things are encompassed. The all-encompassing must assuredly be greater than that which is encompassed, and thus the latter can in no wise discover the former or comprehend its reality. No matter how far human minds may advance, even attaining the highest degree of human comprehension, the uttermost limit of this comprehension is to behold the signs and attributes of God in the world of creation and not in the realm of Divinity. For the essence and the attributes of the all-glorious Lord are enshrined in the inaccessible heights of sanctity, and human minds and understandings will never find a path to that station. "The way is barred, and all seeking rejected."</p>
<p>It is evident that the human understanding is a quality of the existence of man, and that man is a sign of God: how can the quality of the sign surround the creator of the sign?—that is to say, how can the understanding, which is a quality of the existence of man, comprehend God? Therefore, the Reality of the Divinity is hidden from all comprehension, and concealed from the minds of all men. It is absolutely impossible to ascend to that plane.</p>	<p>It is evident that whatsoever man understands is a consequence of his existence, and that man is a sign of the All-Merciful: How then can the consequence of the sign encompass the Creator of the sign? That is, how can human understanding, which is a consequence of man's existence, comprehend God? Thus the reality of the Divinity lies hidden from all understanding and is concealed from the minds of all men, and to ascend to that station is in no wise possible.</p>

We see that everything which is lower is powerless to comprehend the reality of that which is higher. So the stone, the earth, the tree, however much they may evolve, cannot comprehend the reality of man and cannot imagine the powers of sight, of hearing, and of the other senses, although they are all alike created. Therefore, how can man, the created, understand the reality of the pure Essence of the Creator? This plane is unapproachable by the understanding; no explanation is sufficient for its comprehension, and there is no power to indicate it. What has an atom of dust to do with the pure world, and what relation is there between the limited mind and the infinite world? Minds are powerless to comprehend God, and the souls become bewildered in explaining Him. "The eyes see Him not, but He seeth the eyes. He is the Omniscient, the Knower."

We observe that every lower thing is incapable of comprehending the reality of that which is higher. Thus, no matter how far they may evolve, the stone, the earth and the tree can never comprehend the reality of man or imagine the powers of sight, hearing, or the other senses, even though the former and the latter alike are created things. How then can man, a mere creature, comprehend the reality of the sanctified Essence of the Creator? No human understanding can approach this station, no utterance can unfold its truth and no allusion can intimate its mystery. What has the speck of dust to do with the world of sanctity, and what relationship can ever hold between the limited mind and the expanse of the limitless realm? Minds are powerless to comprehend Him and souls are bewildered as they attempt to describe His reality. "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision, and He is the Subtle, the All-Informed!"

Consequently, with reference to this plane of existence, every statement and elucidation is defective, all praise and all description are unworthy, every conception is vain, and every meditation is futile. But for this Essence of the essences, this Truth of truths, this Mystery of mysteries, there are reflections, auroras, appearances and resplendencies in the world of existence. The dawning-place of these splendors, the place of these reflections, and the appearance of these manifestations are the Holy Dawning-places, the Universal Realities and the Divine Beings, Who are the true mirrors of the sanctified Essence of God. All the perfections, the bounties, the splendors which come from God are visible and evident in the Reality of the Holy Manifestations, like the sun which is resplendent in a clear polished mirror with all its perfections and bounties. If it be said that the mirrors are the manifestations of the sun and the dawning-places of the rising star, this does not mean that the sun has descended from the height of its sanctity and become incorporated in the mirror, nor that the Unlimited Reality is limited to this place of appearance. God forbid! This is the belief of the adherents of anthropomorphism. No; all the praises, the descriptions and exaltations refer to

Thus, in this connection, every statement and explanation is deficient, every description and characterization is unworthy, every conception is unfounded, and every attempt to contemplate its depths is futile. Yet for that Essence of essences, that Truth of truths, that Mystery of mysteries, there are splendours, effulgences, manifestations and appearances in the world of existence. The daysprings of those effulgences, the dawning-places of those revelations, and the sources of those manifestations are those Exponents of holiness, those universal Realities and divine Beings who are the true mirrors of the sanctified Essence of the Divinity. All the perfections, bounties and splendours of the one true God are plainly visible in the realities of His Holy Manifestations, even as the light of the sun is fully reflected with all its perfections and bounties in a clear and spotless mirror. And if it be said that the mirrors are the manifestations of the sun and the dawning-places of the daystar of the world, this is not meant to imply that the sun has descended from the heights of its sanctity or has become embodied in the mirror, or that that limitless Reality has been confined to this visible plane. God forbid! This is the belief of the anthropomorphists. No, all these descriptions, all

<p>the Holy Manifestations—that is to say, all the descriptions, the qualities, the names and the attributes which we mention return to the Divine Manifestations; but as no one has attained to the reality of the Essence of Divinity, so no one is able to describe, explain, praise or glorify it. Therefore, all that the human reality knows, discovers and understands of the names, the attributes and the perfections of God refer to these Holy Manifestations. There is no access to anything else: “the way is closed, and seeking is forbidden.”</p>	<p>these expressions of praise and glory refer to these holy Manifestations: that is, every description, praise, name or attribute of God that we mention applies to them. But no soul has ever fathomed the reality of the Essence of the Divinity so as to be able to intimate, describe, praise or glorify it. Thus all that the human reality knows, discovers and understands of the names, attributes and perfections of God refers to these holy Manifestations and leads nowhere else: “The way is cut off, and all seeking rejected.”</p>
<p>Nevertheless, we speak of the names and attributes of the Divine Reality, and we praise Him by attributing to Him sight, hearing, power, life and knowledge. We affirm these names and attributes, not to prove the perfections of God, but to deny that He is capable of imperfections.</p>	<p>Yet we ascribe certain names and attributes to the reality of the Divinity and praise Him for His sight, His hearing, His power, His life and knowledge. We affirm these names and attributes not to affirm the perfections of God but to deny that He has any imperfections.</p>
<p>When we look at the existing world, we see that ignorance is imperfection and knowledge is perfection; therefore, we say that the sanctified Essence of God is wisdom. Weakness is imperfection, and power is perfection; consequently, we say that the sanctified Essence of God is the acme of power. It is not that we can comprehend His knowledge, His sight, His power and life, for it is beyond our comprehension; for the essential names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence, and His Essence is above all comprehension. If the attributes are not identical with the Essence, there must also be a multiplicity of preexistences, and differences between the attributes and the Essence must also exist; and as Preexistence is necessary, therefore, the sequence of preexistences would become infinite. This is an evident error.</p>	<p>When we observe the contingent world we see that ignorance is imperfection and knowledge is perfection, and thus we say that the sanctified Essence of the Divinity is all-knowing. Weakness is imperfection and power is perfection, and thus we say that that sanctified and divine Essence is all-powerful. It is not that we can understand His knowledge, His sight, His hearing, His power or His life as they are in themselves: This is assuredly beyond our comprehension, for the essential names and attributes of God are identical with His Essence, and His Essence is sanctified above all understanding. If the essential attributes were not identical with the Essence, then there would be a multiplicity of pre-existences and the distinction between the Essence and the attributes would therefore also be firmly established and pre-existent. But this would imply an infinite chain of pre-existences, which is an evident error.</p>
<p>Accordingly all these attributes, names, praises and eulogies apply to the Places of Manifestation; and all that we imagine and suppose beside them is mere imagination, for we have no means of comprehending that which is invisible and inaccessible. This is why it is said: “All that you have distinguished through the illusion of your imagination in your subtle mental images is but a creation like unto yourself, and returns to you.”</p>	<p>It follows that all these names, attributes, laudations and praises apply to the Manifestations of God themselves; and that all that we may construe or conceive besides them is sheer delusion, for we can never find a path to the Invisible and Inaccessible. Thus it is said: “All that ye vainly believe to have discerned and expressed in your subtlest terms is but a creature like unto you and returneth unto your own selves.”</p>

<p>It is clear that if we wish to imagine the Reality of Divinity, this imagination is the surrounded, and we are the surrounding one; and it is sure that the one who surrounds is greater than the surrounded. From this it is certain and evident that if we imagine a Divine Reality outside of the Holy Manifestations, it is pure imagination, for there is no way to approach the Reality of Divinity which is not cut off to us, and all that we imagine is mere supposition.</p>	<p>It is evident that if we attempt to conceive the reality of the Divinity, that conception would be encompassed and our mind would be that which encompasses it — and assuredly that which encompasses is greater than that which is encompassed! Thus it follows that any reality that we might conceive for the Divinity besides that of the holy Manifestations would be mere delusion, as there is no means of approach to that divine Reality which is entirely beyond the reach of the mind. And all that we might conceive is pure imagination.</p>
<p>Therefore, reflect that different peoples of the world are revolving around imaginations and are worshipers of the idols of thoughts and conjectures. They are not aware of this; they consider their imaginations to be the Reality which is withdrawn from all comprehension and purified from all descriptions. They regard themselves as the people of Unity, and the others as worshipers of idols; but idols at least have a mineral existence, while the idols of thoughts and the imaginations of man are but fancies; they have not even mineral existence. “Take heed ye who are endued with discernment.”</p>	<p>Consider then how the peoples of the world are circling round their own vain imaginings and worshipping the idols of their own thoughts and fancies, without the least awareness of doing so. They regard these vain imaginings as that Reality which is sanctified above all understanding and exalted beyond every allusion. They consider themselves to be the proponents of the Divine Unity and all others as worshipers of idols, even though idols at least enjoy a mineral existence, whereas the idols of human thoughts and imaginations are sheer illusion and have not even the existence of stones. “Take ye good heed, O people of insight!”</p>
<p>Know that the attributes of perfection, the splendor of the divine bounties, and the lights of inspiration are visible and evident in all the Holy Manifestations; but the glorious Word of God, Christ, and the Greatest Name, Bahá’u’lláh, are manifestations and evidences which are beyond imagination, for They possess all the perfections of the former Manifestations; and more than that, They possess some perfections which make the other Manifestations dependent upon Them. So all the Prophets of Israel were centers of inspiration; Christ also was a receiver of inspiration, but what a difference between the inspiration of the Word of God and the revelations of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Elijah!</p>	<p>Know that the attributes of perfection, the outpourings of divine grace, and the effulgences of divine revelation shine resplendent in all the Manifestations of God, but that the all-encompassing Word of God — Christ — and His Most Great Name — Bahá’u’lláh — have appeared with a revelation beyond all conception. For not only do they possess all the perfections of the former Manifestations, but they also evince beyond those such perfections as to make all others even as their followers. Thus the Prophets of Israel were all recipients of divine revelation, and so too was Christ, but what a difference between the revelation of Him Who was the Word of God and the inspiration of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah or an Elijah!</p>
<p>Reflect that light is the expression of the vibrations of the etheric matter: the nerves of the eye are affected by these vibrations, and sight is produced. The light of the lamp exists through the vibration of the etheric matter; so also does that of the sun, but what a difference between</p>	<p>Consider that light consists in the vibrations of the ether, whereby the nerves of the eye are stimulated and vision is produced. Now, though the vibrations of the ether exist both in the lamp and in the sun, yet what a difference there is</p>

<p>the light of the sun and that of the stars or the lamp!</p>	<p>between the light of the sun and that of the stars or of the lamp!</p>
<p>The spirit of man appears and is manifest in the embryonic condition, and also in that of childhood and of maturity, and it is resplendent and evident in the condition of perfection. The spirit is one, but in the embryonic condition the power of sight and of hearing is lacking. In the state of maturity and perfection it appears in the utmost splendor and brilliance. In the same way the seed in the beginning becomes leaves and is the place where the vegetable spirit appears; in the condition of fruit it manifests the same spirit—that is to say, the power of growth appears in the utmost perfection; but what a difference between the condition of the leaves and that of the fruit! For from the fruit a hundred thousand leaves appear, though they all grow and develop through the same vegetable spirit. Notice the difference between the virtues and perfections of Christ, the splendors and brilliance of Bahá'ú'lláh, and the virtues of the Prophets of Israel, such as Ezekiel or Samuel. All were the manifestations of inspiration, but between them there is an infinite difference. Salutations!</p>	<p>The human spirit has certain signs and manifestations in the stage of the embryo and yet other splendours and expressions in the stages of childhood, adolescence, and maturity. The spirit is one, and yet in the embryonic stage it lacks the powers of sight and hearing, whereas in the stages of adolescence and maturity it appears with the utmost splendour and radiance. In the same way, the seed at the beginning of its growth appears only as a leaf, which is the place of appearance of the vegetable spirit; and in the stage of fruition that same spirit, that is, the power of growth, becomes manifest in the plenitude of its perfection — yet how far is the station of the leaf from that of the fruit! For from the fruit a hundred thousand leaves will in time appear, even though they all grow and develop through the same vegetable spirit. Pause then to reflect upon the difference between the virtues and perfections of Christ and the splendours and effulgences of Bahá'ú'lláh on the one hand, and the virtues of the Prophets of House of Israel, such as Ezekiel or Samuel, on the other. All were the recipients of divine revelation, but between them there is an immeasurable distance. Salutations!</p>
<p>THE THREE STATIONS OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>The Three Stations of the Divine Manifestations</p>
<p>Know that the Holy Manifestations, though They have the degrees of endless perfections, yet, speaking generally, have only three stations. The first station is the physical; the second station is the human, which is that of the rational soul; the third is that of the divine appearance and the heavenly splendor.</p>	<p>Know that, while the Manifestations of God possess infinite virtues and perfections, they occupy only three stations: The first is the material station; the second is the human station, which is that of the rational soul; and the third is that of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour.</p>
<p>The physical station is phenomenal; it is composed of elements, and necessarily everything that is composed is subject to decomposition. It is not possible that a composition should not be disintegrated.</p>	<p>As for the material station, it has an origin in time; for it is composed of the elements, and every composition must ultimately be decomposed. It is indeed impossible for composition not to be followed by disintegration.</p>
<p>The second is the station of the rational soul, which is the human reality. This also is phenomenal, and the Holy Manifestations share it with all mankind.</p>	<p>The second station is that of the rational soul, which is the human reality. This also has a beginning, and the Manifestations of God share it in common with all humanity.</p>

<p>The third station is that of the divine appearance and heavenly splendor: it is the Word of God, the Eternal Bounty, the Holy Spirit. It has neither beginning nor end, for these things are related to the world of contingencies and not to the divine world. For God the end is the same thing as the beginning. So the reckoning of days, weeks, months and years, of yesterday and today, is connected with the terrestrial globe; but in the sun there is no such thing—there is neither yesterday, today nor tomorrow, neither months nor years: all are equal. In the same way the Word of God is purified from all these conditions and is exempt from the boundaries, the laws and the limits of the world of contingency.</p>	<p>The third station is that of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour, which is the Word of God, the everlasting Grace, and the Holy Spirit. This station has neither beginning nor end, for firstness and lastness pertain to the contingent world and not to the world of God. For God the beginning and the end are one and the same. Similarly, the reckoning of days, weeks, months and years, of yesterday and today, is made with respect to the earth; but in the sun such things are unknown: there is neither yesterday, nor today, nor tomorrow, neither months nor years — all are equal. Likewise, the Word of God is sanctified above all these conditions and exalted beyond every law, constraint or limitation that may exist in the contingent world.</p>
<p>Know that, although the human soul has existed on the earth for prolonged times and ages, yet it is phenomenal. As it is a divine sign, when once it has come into existence, it is eternal. The spirit of man has a beginning, but it has no end; it continues eternally. In the same way the species existing on this earth are phenomenal, for it is established that there was a time when these species did not exist on the surface of the earth. Moreover, the earth has not always existed, but the world of existence has always been, for the universe is not limited to this terrestrial globe.</p>	<p>Know that, although human souls have existed upon the earth for a myriad ages and cycles, the human soul is nonetheless originated. And since it is a sign of God, once it has come into being it is everlasting. The human spirit has a beginning but no end: it endures forever. Likewise, the various species found upon the earth have an origin in time, for it is acknowledged by all that there was a time when these species existed nowhere on the face of the earth, and indeed a time when the earth itself did not exist. But the world of existence has always been, for it is not confined to this terrestrial globe.</p>
<p>The meaning of this is that, although human souls are phenomenal, they are nevertheless immortal, everlasting and perpetual; for the world of things is the world of imperfection in comparison with that of man, and the world of man is the world of perfection in comparison with that of things. When imperfections reach the station of perfection, they become eternal. This is an example of which you must comprehend the meaning.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that, although human souls are originated, they are nevertheless immortal, enduring and everlasting. For the world of things is a world of imperfection in relation to that of man, and the world of man is a world of perfection in relation to that of things. When imperfect things reach the stage of perfection, they become everlasting. This is meant as an example: Seek to grasp the true intent.</p>
<p>Therefore, the reality of prophethood, which is the Word of God and the perfect state of manifestation, did not have any beginning and will not have any end; its rising is different from all others and is like that of the sun. For example, its dawning in the sign of Christ was with the utmost splendor and radiance, and this is eternal and everlasting. See how many conquering kings there have been, how many statesmen and</p>	<p>Now, the reality of prophethood, which is the Word of God and the state of perfect divine manifestation, has neither beginning nor end, but its radiance varies like that of the sun. For example, it dawned above the sign of Christ with the utmost splendour and radiance, and this is eternal and everlasting. See how many world-conquering kings, how many wise ministers and rulers have come and gone, each and all fading</p>

<p>princes, powerful organizers, all of whom have disappeared, whereas the breezes of Christ are still blowing; His light is still shining; His melody is still resounding; His standard is still waving; His armies are still fighting; His heavenly voice is still sweetly melodious; His clouds are still showering gems; His lightning is still flashing; His reflection is still clear and brilliant; His splendor is still radiating and luminous; and it is the same with those souls who are under His protection and are shining with His light.</p>	<p>into oblivion — whereas even now the breezes of Christ still waft, His light still shines, His call is still upraised, His banner is still unfurled, His armies still do battle, His voice still rings sweetly, His clouds still rain down life-giving showers, His lightning still streaks forth, His glory is still clear and indisputable, His splendour is still radiant and luminous; and the same holds true of every soul that abides beneath His shade and partakes of His light.</p>
<p>Then it is evident that the Manifestations possess three conditions: the physical condition, the condition of the rational soul, and the condition of the divine appearance and heavenly splendor. The physical condition will certainly become decomposed, but the condition of the rational soul, though it has a beginning, has no end: nay, it is endowed with everlasting life. But the Holy Reality, of which Christ says, “The Father is in the Son,” has neither beginning nor end. When beginning is spoken of, it signifies the state of manifesting; and, symbolically, the condition of silence is compared to sleep. For example, a man is sleeping—when he begins to speak, he is awake—but it is always the same individual, whether he be asleep or awake; no difference has occurred in his station, his elevation, his glory, his reality or his nature. The state of silence is compared to sleep, and that of manifestation to wakefulness. A man sleeping or waking is the same man; sleep is one state, and wakefulness is another. The time of silence is compared to sleep, and manifestation and guidance are compared to wakefulness.</p>	<p>It is therefore evident that the Manifestations of God have three stations: the physical station, the station of the rational soul, and the station of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour. The corporeal station will inevitably perish. As to the station of the rational soul, despite having a beginning, it has no end and is endowed with everlasting life. But as to that holy Reality of which Christ says “The Father is in the Son,” it has neither beginning nor end: Its “beginning” refers merely to His revelation of His own station. Thus by way of analogy He likens His silence to sleep: A man who is silent is like one who is asleep, and when he speaks it is as though he has awakened. And yet the sleeping and the wakeful man are one and the same person: no change has taken place in his station, his loftiness, sublimity, inner reality or innate nature. It is merely that the condition of silence has been likened to sleep and that of manifestation to wakefulness. A man whether sleeping or awake is the same man: sleep is simply one possible state and wakefulness another. And so it is that the period of silence is compared to sleep and the period of manifestation and guidance to wakefulness.</p>
<p>In the Gospel it is said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” Then it is evident and clear that Christ did not reach to the station of Messiahship and its perfections at the time of baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the likeness of a dove. Nay, the Word of God from all eternity has always been, and will be, in the exaltation of sanctification.</p>	<p>In the Gospel it is said: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” It follows then that Christ did not attain His Messianic station and His perfections at the moment of His baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. Rather, the Word of God has always been, and will ever remain, in the loftiest heights of sanctity. Salutations!</p>
<p>THE HUMAN CONDITION AND THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>The Human and the Divine Stations of the Manifestations</p>
<p>We said that the Manifestations have three planes. First, the physical reality, which depends</p>	<p>We stated before that the Manifestations of God have three stations: first, the material reality,</p>

<p>upon the body; second, the individual reality, that is to say, the rational soul; third, the divine appearance, which is the divine perfections, the cause of the life of existence, of the education of souls, of the guidance of people, and of the enlightenment of the contingent world.</p>	<p>which pertains to the human body; second, the individual reality, that is, the rational soul; and third, the heavenly manifestation, which consists in the divine perfections and is the source of the life of the world, the education of the souls, the guidance of the people, and the enlightenment of all creation.</p>
<p>The physical state is the human state which perishes because it is composed of elements, and all that is composed of elements will necessarily be decomposed and dispersed.</p>	<p>The corporeal station is human in nature and is subject to disintegration, for it is an elemental composition and that which is composed of elements must of necessity be decomposed and dispersed.</p>
<p>But the individual reality of the Manifestations of God is a holy reality, and for that reason it is sanctified and, in that which concerns its nature and quality, is distinguished from all other things. It is like the sun, which by its essential nature produces light and cannot be compared to the moon, just as the particles that compose the globe of the sun cannot be compared with those which compose the moon. The particles and organization of the former produce rays, but the particles of which the moon is composed do not produce rays but need to borrow light. So other human realities are those souls who, like the moon, take light from the sun; but that Holy Reality is luminous in Himself.</p>	<p>But the individual reality of the Manifestations of the All-Merciful is a sanctified reality, and it is so because it surpasses in essence and in attributes all created things. It is like the sun which, by virtue of its inherent disposition, must inevitably produce light and cannot be compared to any satellite. For instance, the constituent parts of the sun can in no wise be compared to those of the moon. The composition and arrangement of the former necessarily produces rays, whereas the constituent parts of the latter require the acquisition rather than the production of light. So the other human realities are souls which, like the moon, acquire their light from the sun, but that sanctified Reality is luminous in and of itself.</p>
<p>The third plane of that Being is the Divine Bounty, the splendor of the Preexistent Beauty, and the radiance of the light of the Almighty. The individual realities of the Divine Manifestations have no separation from the Bounty of God and the Lordly Splendor. In the same way, the orb of the sun has no separation from the light. Therefore, it may be said that the ascension of the Holy Manifestation is simply the leaving of this elemental form. For example, if a lamp illumines this niche, and if its light ceases to illuminate it because the niche is destroyed, the bounty of the lamp is not cut off. Briefly, in the Holy Manifestations the Preexistent Bounty is like the light, the individuality is represented by the glass globe, and the human body is like the niche: if the niche is destroyed, the lamp continues to burn. The Divine Manifestations are so many different mirrors because They have a special individuality, but that which is reflected in the</p>	<p>The third station is that of divine grace, the revelation of the beauty of the Ancient of Days, and the effulgence of the lights of the ever-living and omnipotent Lord. The individual realities of the holy Manifestations cannot be separated from divine grace and revelation, any more than the corporeal mass of the sun can be separated from its light. Thus the ascension of the holy Manifestations is simply the abandonment of their elemental bodies. For example, consider the lamp that lights this niche. Its rays may cease to fall upon the niche if the latter is destroyed, but there is no interruption in the bounty of the lamp itself. The pre-existent grace of the holy Manifestations is even as the light, their individual realities as the glass globe, and their human temples as the niche: if the niche is destroyed the lamp continues to burn. The Manifestations of God are like so many different mirrors as they each have their own distinct individuality, but that which is reflected in these</p>

<p>mirrors is one sun. It is clear that the reality of Christ is different from that of Moses.</p>	<p>mirrors is one and the same sun. Thus, it is evident that the reality of Christ is different from that of Moses.</p>
<p>Verily, from the beginning that Holy Reality is conscious of the secret of existence, and from the age of childhood signs of greatness appear and are visible in Him. Therefore, how can it be that with all these bounties and perfections He should have no consciousness?</p>	<p>From the beginning that sanctified Reality is undoubtedly aware of the secret of existence, and from childhood the signs of greatness are clearly manifested in Him. How then could He fail, in spite of such bounties and perfections, to be conscious of His own station?</p>
<p>We have mentioned that the Holy Manifestations have three planes. The physical condition, the individual reality, and the center of the appearance of perfection: it is like the sun, its heat and its light. Other individuals have the physical plane, the plane of the rational soul—the spirit and mind. So the saying, “I was asleep, and the divine breezes passed over Me, and I awoke,” is like Christ’s saying, “The body is sad, and the spirit is happy,” or again, “I am afflicted,” or “I am at ease,” or “I am troubled”—these refer to the physical condition and have no reference to the individual reality nor to the manifestation of the Divine Reality. Thus consider what thousands of vicissitudes can happen to the body of man, but the spirit is not affected by them; it may even be that some members of the body are entirely crippled, but the essence of the mind remains and is everlasting. A thousand accidents may happen to a garment, but for the wearer of it there is no danger. These words which Bahá’u’lláh said, “I was asleep, and the breeze passed over Me, and awakened Me,” refer to the body.</p>	<p>We mentioned the three stations of the Manifestations of God: that of corporeal existence, of individual reality, and of perfect divine manifestation, which can be likened to the sun, its heat and its light. Other individuals also share the corporeal station and the rational soul — the spirit and mind. Thus the passages that state, “I lay asleep when the breeze of God wafted over Me and roused Me from My slumber,” are akin to Christ’s saying, “The flesh is full of sorrow but the spirit is rejoiced,” or again, “I am afflicted,” or “I am at ease,” or “I am troubled”: all these refer to the corporeal station and have no bearing on the individual reality or on the state of manifestation of the divine Reality. Consider, for example, that thousands of vicissitudes may occur to the body of man of which the spirit remains wholly unaware. It is even possible for certain members of the body to be completely impaired and for the essence of the mind to remain unaffected. A garment may sustain a myriad rents and tears and the wearer may yet remain unharmed. Thus, the words of Bahá’u’lláh, “I lay asleep when a breeze wafted over Me and roused Me from My slumber,” refer to the body.</p>
<p>In the world of God there is no past, no future and no present; all are one. So when Christ said, “In the beginning was the Word” —that means it was, is and shall be; for in the world of God there is no time. Time has sway over creatures but not over God. For example, in the prayer He says, “Hallowed be Thy name”; the meaning is that Thy name was, is and shall be hallowed. Morning, noon and evening are related to this earth, but in the sun there is neither morning, noon nor evening.</p>	<p>In the world of God there is no past, present or future: all of these are one. So when Christ said, “In the beginning was the Word,” He meant that it was, is and shall be; for in the world of God there is no time. Time holds sway over the creatures but not over God. So in the prayer where Christ says, “Hallowed be Thy name,” the meaning is that Thy name was, is and shall be hallowed. Again, morning, noon and evening exist in relation to the earth, but in the sun there is neither morning, nor noon, nor evening.</p>
<p>THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>The Knowledge of the Divine Manifestations</p>

<p>Question.—One of the powers possessed by the Divine Manifestations is knowledge. To what extent is it limited?</p>	<p>Question: What are the limitations imposed upon the powers of the Manifestations of God and, in particular, upon their knowledge?</p>
<p>Answer.—Knowledge is of two kinds. One is subjective and the other objective knowledge—that is to say, an intuitive knowledge and a knowledge derived from perception.</p>	<p>Answer: Knowledge is of two kinds: existential knowledge and formal knowledge — that is, intuitive knowledge and conceptual knowledge.</p>
<p>The knowledge of things which men universally have is gained by reflection or by evidence—that is to say, either by the power of the mind the conception of an object is formed, or from beholding an object the form is produced in the mirror of the heart. The circle of this knowledge is very limited because it depends upon effort and attainment.</p>	<p>The knowledge that people generally have of things consists in conceptualization and observation, that is, either the object is conceived through the rational faculty, or through its observation a form is produced in the mirror of the heart. The scope of this knowledge is quite limited, as it is conditioned upon acquisition and attainment.</p>
<p>But the second sort of knowledge, which is the knowledge of being, is intuitive; it is like the cognizance and consciousness that man has of himself.</p>	<p>The other kind of knowledge, however, which is existential or intuitive knowledge, is like man’s knowledge and awareness of his own self.</p>
<p>For example, the mind and the spirit of man are cognizant of the conditions and states of the members and component parts of the body, and are aware of all the physical sensations; in the same way, they are aware of their power, of their feelings, and of their spiritual conditions. This is the knowledge of being which man realizes and perceives, for the spirit surrounds the body and is aware of its sensations and powers. This knowledge is not the outcome of effort and study. It is an existing thing; it is an absolute gift.</p>	<p>For example, the mind and the spirit of man are aware of all his states and conditions, of all the parts and members of his body, and of all his physical sensations, as well as of his spiritual powers, perceptions and conditions. This is an existential knowledge through which man realizes his own condition. He both senses and comprehends it, for the spirit encompasses the body and is aware of its sensations and powers. This knowledge is not the result of effort and acquisition: It is an existential matter; it is pure bounty.</p>
<p>Since the Sanctified Realities, the supreme Manifestations of God, surround the essence and qualities of the creatures, transcend and contain existing realities and understand all things, therefore, Their knowledge is divine knowledge, and not acquired—that is to say, it is a holy bounty; it is a divine revelation.</p>	<p>Since those sanctified realities, the universal Manifestations of God, encompass all created things both in their essence and in their attributes, since they transcend and discover all existing realities, and since they are cognizant of all things, it follows that their knowledge is divine and not acquired — that is, it is a heavenly grace and a divine discovery.</p>
<p>We will mention an example expressly for the purpose of comprehending this subject. The most noble being on the earth is man. He embraces the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms—that is to say, these conditions are contained in him to such an extent that he is the possessor of these conditions and states; he is aware of their</p>	<p>Let us provide an example merely to illustrate the point. The noblest of all earthly beings is man. In him are realized the animal, the vegetable and the mineral kingdoms, that is, all these degrees are contained in him in such wise that he is endowed with them all. And, being endowed with all these degrees and stations, he is informed of their mysteries and aware of the</p>

<p>mysteries and of the secrets of their existence. This is simply an example and not an analogy.</p>	<p>secrets of their existence. This is only an example and not an exact analogy.</p>
<p>Briefly, the supreme Manifestations of God are aware of the reality of the mysteries of beings. Therefore, They establish laws which are suitable and adapted to the state of the world of man, for religion is the essential connection which proceeds from the realities of things. The Manifestation—that is, the Holy Lawgiver—unless He is aware of the realities of beings, will not comprehend the essential connection which proceeds from the realities of things, and He will certainly not be able to establish a religion conformable to the facts and suited to the conditions. The Prophets of God, the supreme Manifestations, are like skilled physicians, and the contingent world is like the body of man: the divine laws are the remedy and treatment. Consequently, the doctor must be aware of, and know, all the members and parts, as well as the constitution and state of the patient, so that he can prescribe a medicine which will be beneficial against the violent poison of the disease. In reality the doctor deduces from the disease itself the treatment which is suited to the patient, for he diagnoses the malady, and afterward prescribes the remedy for the illness. Until the malady be discovered, how can the remedy and treatment be prescribed? The doctor then must have a thorough knowledge of the constitution, members, organs and state of the patient, and be acquainted with all diseases and all remedies, in order to prescribe a fitting medicine.</p>	<p>Briefly, the universal Manifestations of God are aware of the truths underlying the mysteries of all created things, and thus they found a religion that is based upon and consonant with the prevailing condition of humanity. For religion consists in the necessary relationships deriving from the realities of things. If the Manifestation of God — the divine Lawgiver — were not informed of the realities of things, if He did not understand the necessary relationships deriving from these realities, He would assuredly be incapable of establishing a religion consonant with the needs and conditions of the time. The Prophets of God, the universal Manifestations, are even as skilled physicians; the world of being is as the body of man; and the divine religions are as the treatment and remedy. The physician must be fully aware and informed of all the parts and organs, the constitution and condition of the patient, in order to prescribe an effective remedy. Indeed, it is from the disease itself that the physician deduces the remedy, for he first diagnoses the ailment and then treats its underlying cause. Until the ailment is properly diagnosed, how can any treatment or remedy be prescribed? The physician must therefore have a thorough knowledge of the constitution, the parts, organs and condition of the patient, and be likewise well acquainted with every disease and every remedy, in order to prescribe the appropriate cure.</p>
<p>Religion, then, is the necessary connection which emanates from the reality of things; and as the supreme Manifestations of God are aware of the mysteries of beings, therefore, They understand this essential connection, and by this knowledge establish the Law of God.</p>	<p>Religion, then, consists in the necessary relationships deriving from the reality of things. The universal Manifestations of God, being aware of the mysteries of creation, are fully informed of these necessary relationships and establish them as the religion of God.</p>
<p>THE UNIVERSAL CYCLES</p>	<p>Universal Cycles</p>
<p>Question.—What is the real explanation of the cycles which occur in the world of existence?</p>	<p>Question: Mention has been made of universal cycles which occur in the world of existence. Please explain the truth of this matter.</p>
<p>Answer.—Each one of the luminous bodies in this limitless firmament has a cycle of revolution which is of a different duration, and every one revolves in its own orbit, and again begins a new</p>	<p>Answer: Each of the luminous bodies of this limitless firmament has its cycle of revolution, that period wherein it completes the full circuit of its orbit before beginning a new one. The earth,</p>

<p>cycle. So the earth, every three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes and a fraction, completes a revolution; and then it begins a new cycle—that is to say, the first cycle is again renewed. In the same way, for the whole universe, whether for the heavens or for men, there are cycles of great events, of important facts and occurrences.</p>	<p>for example, completes a revolution every three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes and a fraction, and then begins anew along the same orbit. In the same way, the entire universe, whether with respect to the realm of nature or the realm of man, proceeds through cycles of major events and occurrences.</p>
<p>When a cycle is ended, a new cycle begins; and the old one, on account of the great events which take place, is completely forgotten, and not a trace or record of it will remain. As you see, we have no records of twenty thousand years ago, although we have before proved by argument that life on this earth is very ancient. It is not one hundred thousand, or two hundred thousand, or one million or two million years old; it is very ancient, and the ancient records and traces are entirely obliterated.</p>	<p>When a cycle comes to a close a new one is inaugurated, and the previous cycle, on account of the momentous events which transpire, vanishes so entirely from memory as to leave behind no record or trace. Thus, as you are aware, we have no record of twenty thousand years ago, even though we established before through rational arguments that life on this earth is very ancient — not one or two hundred thousand, or even one or two million years old: it is ancient indeed, and the records and traces of ancient times have been entirely obliterated.</p>
<p>Each of the Divine Manifestations has likewise a cycle, and during the cycle His laws and commandments prevail and are performed. When His cycle is completed by the appearance of a new Manifestation, a new cycle begins. In this way cycles begin, end and are renewed, until a universal cycle is completed in the world, when important events and great occurrences will take place which entirely efface every trace and every record of the past; then a new universal cycle begins in the world, for this universe has no beginning. We have before stated proofs and evidences concerning this subject; there is no need of repetition.</p>	<p>Each of the Manifestations of God has likewise a cycle wherein His religion and His law are in full force and effect. When His cycle is ended through the advent of a new Manifestation, a new cycle begins. Thus, cycles are inaugurated, concluded, and renewed, until a universal cycle is completed in the world of existence and momentous events transpire which efface every record and trace of the past; then a new universal cycle begins in the world, for the realm of existence has no beginning. We have previously presented proofs and arguments concerning this subject and there is no need for repetition.</p>
<p>Briefly, we say a universal cycle in the world of existence signifies a long duration of time, and innumerable and incalculable periods and epochs. In such a cycle the Manifestations appear with splendor in the realm of the visible until a great and supreme Manifestation makes the world the center of His radiance. His appearance causes the world to attain to maturity, and the extension of His cycle is very great. Afterward, other Manifestations will arise under His shadow, Who according to the needs of the time will renew certain commandments relating to material questions and affairs, while remaining under His shadow.</p>	<p>Briefly, our claim is that a universal cycle in the world of existence comprises a vast span of time and countless ages and epochs. In such a cycle the Manifestations of God shine forth in the visible realm until a universal and supreme Manifestation makes the world the focal centre of divine splendours and, through His revelation, brings it to the stage of maturity. The duration of the cycle He ushers in is very long indeed. Other Manifestations will arise in the course of that cycle under His shadow and will renew, according to the needs of the time, certain laws pertaining to material affairs and transactions, but they will remain under His shadow. We are in the cycle</p>

<p>We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its supreme Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh.</p>	<p>which began with Adam and whose universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh.</p>
<p>THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>The Power and Perfections of the Divine Manifestations</p>
<p>Question.—What is the degree of the power and the perfections of the Thrones of Reality, the Manifestations of God, and what is the limit of Their influence?</p>	<p>Question: How far do the powers and the perfections of those Thrones of truth, the Manifestations of God, extend, and what are the limits of their influence?</p>
<p>Answer.—Consider the world of existence—that is to say, the world of material things. The solar system is dark and obscure, and in it the sun is the center of light, and all the planets of the system revolve around its might and are partakers of its bounty. The sun is the cause of life and illumination, and the means of the growth and development of all the beings of the solar system; for without the bounty of the sun no living being could exist: all would be dark and destroyed. Therefore, it is evident and clear that the sun is the center of light and the cause of the life of the beings of the solar system.</p>	<p>Answer: Consider the world of existence, that is, the material creation. The solar system is wrapped in darkness. Within its circumference the sun is the centre of all light, and all the associated planets revolve around it and are illumined by the outpourings of its bounty. The sun is the source of life and light and is the cause of the growth and development of all things within the solar system. Were the bounty of the sun to cease, no living thing could continue to exist therein: all things would grow dark and be reduced to naught. It is therefore clear and evident that the sun is the centre of all light and the source of the life of all things in the solar system.</p>
<p>In like manner, the Holy Manifestations of God are the centers of the light of reality, of the source of mysteries, and of the bounties of love. They are resplendent in the world of hearts and thoughts, and shower eternal graces upon the world of spirits; They give spiritual life and are shining with the light of realities and meanings. The enlightenment of the world of thought comes from these centers of light and sources of mysteries. Without the bounty of the splendor and the instructions of these Holy Beings the world of souls and thoughts would be opaque darkness. Without the irrefutable teachings of those sources of mysteries the human world would become the pasture of animal appetites and qualities, the existence of everything would be unreal, and there would be no true life. That is why it is said in the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word," meaning that it became the cause of all life.</p>	<p>In like manner the holy Manifestations of God are the focal Centres of the light of truth, the Wellsprings of the hidden mysteries, and the Source of the effusions of divine love. They cast their effulgence upon the realm of hearts and minds and bestow grace everlasting upon the world of the spirits. They confer spiritual life and shine with the splendour of inner truths and meanings. The enlightenment of the realm of thought proceeds from those Centres of light and Exponents of mysteries. Were it not for the grace of the revelation and instruction of those sanctified Beings, the world of souls and the realm of thought would become darkness upon darkness. Were it not for the sound and true teachings of those Exponents of mysteries, the human world would become the arena of animal characteristics and qualities, all existence would become a vanishing illusion, and true life would be lost. That is why it is said in the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word," that is, it was the source of all life.</p>

<p>Now consider the influence of the sun upon the earthly beings, what signs and results become evident and clear from its nearness and remoteness, from its rising or its setting. At one time it is autumn, at another time spring; or again it is summer or winter. When the sun passes the line of the equator, the life-giving spring will become manifest in splendor, and when it is in the summer solstice, the fruits will attain to the acme of perfection, grains and plants will yield their produce, and earthly beings will attain their most complete development and growth.</p>	<p>Now consider the pervasive influence of the sun upon all earthly beings, and behold what visible effects and outcomes result from its proximity or remoteness, its rising or setting. At one time it is autumn, at another it is spring. At one time it is summer, at another it is winter. When the sun crosses the equinox, the life-giving spring appears in all its splendour, and when it reaches the summer solstice, the fruits attain their full maturity, grains and plants yield their produce, and earthly things attain the plenitude of their growth and development.</p>
<p>In like manner, when the Holy Manifestation of God, Who is the sun of the world of His creation, shines upon the worlds of spirits, of thoughts and of hearts, then the spiritual spring and new life appear, the power of the wonderful springtime becomes visible, and marvelous benefits are apparent. As you have observed, at the time of the appearance of each Manifestation of God extraordinary progress has occurred in the world of minds, thoughts and spirits. For example, in this divine age see what development has been attained in the world of minds and thoughts, and it is now only the beginning of its dawn. Before long you will see that new bounties and divine teachings will illuminate this dark world and will transform these sad regions into the paradise of Eden.</p>	<p>In like manner, when the holy Manifestation of God, who is the Sun of the world of creation, casts His splendour upon the world of hearts, minds and spirits, a spiritual springtime is ushered in and a new life is unveiled. The power of the matchless springtide appears and its marvellous gifts are beheld. Thus you observe that with the advent of each of the Manifestations of God astonishing progress was attained in the realm of human minds, thoughts and spirits. Consider for example the progress that has been achieved in this divine age in the world of minds and thoughts — and this is only the beginning of the dawn! Ere long you will witness how these renewed bounties and heavenly teachings have flooded this darksome world with their light and transformed this sorrow-laden realm into the all-highest paradise.</p>
<p>If we were to explain the signs and bounties of each of the Holy Manifestations, it would take too long. Think and reflect upon it yourself, and then you will attain to the truth of this subject.</p>	<p>Were we to fully explain the influence and bounties of each of the Manifestations of God it would take a very long time. Ponder and reflect upon it yourself in order to grasp the truth of the matter.</p>
<p>THE TWO CLASSES OF PROPHETS</p>	<p>The Two Kinds of Prophets</p>
<p>Question.—How many kinds of Prophets are there?</p>	<p>Question: How many kinds of Prophets are there in general?</p>
<p>Answer.—Universally, the Prophets are of two kinds. One are the independent Prophets Who are followed; the other kind are not independent and are themselves followers.</p>	<p>Answer: Prophets are in general of two kinds. Some are independent Prophets Who are followed, while others are not independent and are themselves followers.</p>
<p>The independent Prophets are the lawgivers and the founders of a new cycle. Through Their appearance the world puts on a new garment, the foundations of religion are established, and a new book is revealed. Without an intermediary</p>	<p>The independent Prophets are each the Author of a divine religion and the Founder of a new Dispensation. At their advent the world is clothed in a new attire, a new religion is established and a new Book revealed. These Prophets acquire the</p>

<p>They receive bounty from the Reality of the Divinity, and Their illumination is an essential illumination. They are like the sun which is luminous in itself: the light is its essential necessity; it does not receive light from any other star. These Dawning-places of the morn of Unity are the sources of bounty and the mirrors of the Essence of Reality.</p>	<p>outpouring grace of the divine Reality without an intermediary. Their radiance is an essential radiance, like that of the sun which is luminous in and of itself and whose luminosity is an essential requirement rather than being acquired from another star: they are like the sun and not the moon. These Daysprings of the morn of Divine Unity are the fountainheads of divine grace and the mirrors of the Essence of Reality.</p>
<p>The other Prophets are followers and promoters, for they are branches and not independent; they receive the bounty of the independent Prophets, and they profit by the light of the Guidance of the universal Prophets. They are like the moon, which is not luminous and radiant in itself, but receives its light from the sun.</p>	<p>The other kind of Prophets are followers and promulgators, for their station is contingent rather than independent. They acquire divine grace from the independent Prophets and seek the light of guidance from the reality of universal prophethood. They are like the moon, which is not luminous and radiant in and of itself but which receives its light from the sun.</p>
<p>[not present in the old translation]</p>	<p>The universal Prophets who have appeared independently include Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muḥammad, the Báḅ and Bahá'ú'lláh. The second kind, which consists of followers and promulgators, includes Solomon, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For the independent Prophets are founders, that is, they establish a new religion, recreate the souls, regenerate the morals of society, and promulgate a new way of life and a new standard of conduct. Through them a new Dispensation appears and a new religion is inaugurated. Their advent is even as the springtime, when all earthly things don a new garment and find a new life.</p>
<p>With regard to the second sort of Prophets who are followers, these also promote the Law of God, make known the Religion of God, and proclaim His word. Of themselves they have no power and might, except what they receive from the independent Prophets.</p>	<p>As to the second kind of Prophets, who are followers, they promulgate the religion of God, spread his Faith, and proclaim His Word. They have no power or authority of their own, but derive theirs from the independent Prophets.</p>
<p>Question.—To which category do Buddha and Confucius belong?</p>	<p>Question: To which category do Buddha and Confucius belong?</p>
<p>Answer.—Buddha also established a new religion, and Confucius renewed morals and ancient virtues, but their institutions have been entirely destroyed. The beliefs and rites of the Buddhists and Confucianists have not continued in accordance with their fundamental teachings. The founder of Buddhism was a wonderful soul. He established the Oneness of God, but later the</p>	<p>Answer: Buddha also established a new religion and Confucius renewed the ancient conduct and morals, but the original precepts have been entirely changed and their followers no longer adhere to the original pattern of belief and worship. The founder of Buddhism was a precious Being who established the oneness of God, but later His original precepts were</p>

<p>original principles of His doctrines gradually disappeared, and ignorant customs and ceremonials arose and increased until they finally ended in the worship of statues and images.</p>	<p>gradually forgotten and displaced by primitive customs and rituals, until in the end it led to the worship of statues and images.</p>
<p>Now, consider: Christ frequently repeated that the Ten Commandments in the Pentateuch were to be followed, and He insisted that they should be maintained. Among the Ten Commandments is one which says: "Do not worship any picture or image." At present in some of the Christian churches many pictures and images exist. It is, therefore, clear and evident that the Religion of God does not maintain its original principles among the people, but that it has gradually changed and altered until it has been entirely destroyed and annihilated. Because of this the manifestation is renewed, and a new religion established. But if religions did not change and alter, there would be no need of renewal.</p>	<p>Consider, for example, that Christ admonished the people time and again to heed the Ten Commandments of the Torah and insisted upon their strict observance. Now, one of the Ten Commandments forbids the worship of images and statues. Yet today there are a myriad images and statues in the churches of certain Christian denominations. It is clear and evident then that the religion of God does not preserve its original precepts among the people, but that it is gradually changed and altered to the point of being entirely effaced; and thus a new Manifestation appears and a new religion is established. For if the former religion had not been changed and altered there would be no need for renewal.</p>
<p>In the beginning the tree was in all its beauty, and full of blossoms and fruits, but at last it became old and entirely fruitless, and it withered and decayed. This is why the True Gardener plants again an incomparable young tree of the same kind and species, which grows and develops day by day, and spreads a wide shadow in the divine garden, and yields admirable fruit. So it is with religions; through the passing of time they change from their original foundation, the truth of the Religion of God entirely departs, and the spirit of it does not stay; heresies appear, and it becomes a body without a soul. That is why it is renewed.</p>	<p>In the beginning, this tree was full of vitality and laden with blossoms and fruits, but gradually it grew old, spent, and barren, until it entirely withered and decayed. That is why the True Gardener will again plant a tender sapling of the same stock, that it may grow and develop day by day, extend its sheltering shade in this heavenly garden, and yield its prized fruit. So it is with the divine religions: With the passage of time their original precepts are altered, their underlying truth entirely vanishes, their spirit departs, doctrinal innovations spring up, and they become a body without a soul. That is why they are renewed.</p>
<p>The meaning is that the Buddhists and Confucianists now worship images and statues. They are entirely heedless of the Oneness of God and believe in imaginary gods like the ancient Greeks. But in the beginning it was not so; there were different principles and other ordinances.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that the followers of Buddha and Confucius now worship images and statues and have become entirely unaware of the oneness of God, believing instead in imaginary gods as did the ancient Greeks. But such were not their original precepts; indeed their original precepts and conduct were entirely different.</p>
<p>Again, consider how much the principles of the religion of Christ have been forgotten, and how many heresies have appeared. For example, Christ forbade revenge and transgression; furthermore, He commanded benevolence and mercy in return for injury and evil. Now reflect: among the Christian nations themselves how</p>	<p>Again, consider to what an extent the original precepts of the Christian religion have been forgotten and how many doctrinal innovations have sprung up. For example, Christ forbade violence and revenge and enjoined instead that evil and injury be met with benevolence and loving-kindness. But observe how many bloody</p>

<p>many sanguinary wars have taken place, and how much oppression, cruelty, rapacity and bloodthirstiness have occurred! Many of these wars were carried on by command of the Popes. It is then clear and evident that in the passage of time religions become entirely changed and altered. Therefore, they are renewed.</p>	<p>wars have taken place among the Christian nations themselves and how much oppression, cruelty, rapacity and bloodthirstiness have resulted therefrom! Indeed, many of these wars were carried out at the behest of the Popes. It is therefore abundantly clear that with the passage of time religions are entirely changed and altered, and hence they are renewed.</p>
<p>EXPLANATION OF THE REBUKES ADDRESSED BY GOD TO THE PROPHETS</p>	<p>The Rebukes Addressed by God to the Prophets</p>
<p>Question.—In the Holy Books there are some addresses of reproach and rebuke directed to the Prophets. Who is addressed, and for whom is the rebuke?</p>	<p>Question: Certain words of rebuke have been addressed to the Prophets of God in the sacred scriptures. To whom are they addressed and to whom do they ultimately refer?</p>
<p>Answer.—All the divine discourses containing reproof, though apparently addressed to the Prophets, in reality are directed to the people, through a wisdom which is absolute mercy, in order that the people may not be discouraged and disheartened. They, therefore, appear to be addressed to the Prophets; but though outwardly for the Prophets, they are in truth for the people and not for the Prophets.</p>	<p>Answer: Every divine utterance that takes the form of a rebuke, though it be outwardly addressed to the Prophets of God, is in reality directed to their followers. The wisdom of this is naught but unalloyed mercy, that the people might not be dismayed, disheartened or burdened by such reproaches and rebukes. These words are therefore outwardly addressed to the Prophets, but, even so, they are inwardly intended for the followers and not for the Messenger.</p>
<p>Moreover, the powerful and independent king represents his country: that which he says is the word of all, and every agreement that he makes is the agreement of all, for the wishes and desires of all his subjects are included in his wishes and desires. In the same way, every Prophet is the expression of the whole of the people. So the promise and speech of God addressed to Him is addressed to all.</p>	<p>Moreover, the mighty and sovereign monarch of a land represents all who inhabit that land; that is, whatsoever he may utter is the word of all, and whatsoever covenant he may conclude is the covenant of all, for the will and purpose of all his subjects is subsumed in his own. Likewise, every Prophet is the representative of the entire body of His followers. Therefore, the covenant that God makes with Him and the words that He addresses to Him apply to all His people.</p>
<p>Generally the speech of reproach and rebuke is rather too severe for the people and would be heartbreaking to them. So the Perfect Wisdom makes use of this form of address, as is clearly shown in the Bible itself, as, for example, when the children of Israel rebelled and said to Moses: “We cannot fight with the Amalekites, for they are powerful, mighty and courageous.” God then rebuked Moses and Aaron, though Moses was in complete obedience and not in rebellion. Surely such a great Man, Who is the mediator of the</p>	<p>Now, the divine reproach and rebuke tends to burden and afflict the hearts of the people, and the consummate wisdom of God demands therefore such a form of address. For example, it appears from the Torah itself that the Israelites rebelled against Moses, saying: “We cannot fight the Amalekites, for they are mighty, fierce and courageous.” God then spoke with rebuke to Moses and Aaron, although Moses was in complete obedience and not in rebellion. Surely such a glorious Being, who is the channel of God’s</p>

<p>Divine Bounty and the deliverer of the Law, must necessarily obey the commands of God.</p>	<p>grace and the champion of His law, must be obedient to the divine command.</p>
<p>These Holy Souls are like the leaves of a tree which are put in motion by the blowing of the wind, and not by Their own desire; for They are attracted by the breeze of the love of God, and Their will is absolutely submissive. Their word is the word of God; Their commandment is the commandment of God; Their prohibition is the prohibition of God. They are like the glass globe which receives light from the lamp. Although the light appears to emanate from the glass, in reality it is shining from the lamp. In the same way for the Prophets of God, the centers of manifestation, Their movement and repose come from divine inspiration, not from human passions. If it were not so, how could the Prophet be worthy of trust, and how could He be the Messenger of God, delivering the commands and the prohibitions of God? All the defects that are mentioned in the Holy Books with reference to the Manifestations refer to questions of this kind.</p>	<p>These holy Souls are like the leaves of a tree which are stirred into motion by the breeze and not of their own accord, for they are attracted by the breaths of the love of God and have forsaken their own will. Their word is the word of God; their commandment is the commandment of God; their prohibition is the prohibition of God. They are even as this glass globe whose light comes from the flame of the lamp. Although the light appears to emanate from the glass, in reality it proceeds from the flame. Similarly, the movement and repose of the Prophets of God, who are His Manifestations, proceed from revelation and not from mere human whim. Were it not so, how could the Prophet act as a faithful representative and chosen envoy of God? How could He promulgate God's commandments and prohibitions? All the shortcomings ascribed to the Manifestations of God in the sacred scriptures must therefore be understood in this light.</p>
<p>Praise be to God that you have come here and have met the servants of God! Have you perceived in them anything except the fragrance of the pleasure of God? Indeed, no. You have seen with your own eyes that day and night they endeavor and strive, and that they have no aim except the exaltation of the word of God, the education of men, the improvement of the masses, spiritual progress, the promulgation of universal peace, goodwill to all mankind, and kindness toward all nations. Sacrificing themselves for the good of humanity, they are detached from material advantages, and labor to give virtues to mankind.</p>	<p>Praise be to God that you have come here and met the servants of God! Have you inhaled from them aught save the fragrance of the good-pleasure of the Lord? Indeed, no! You have seen with your own eyes how they strive night and day to no other end but to exalt the Word of God, to foster the education of the souls, to rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind, to ensure spiritual progress, to promote universal peace, to show forth kindness and goodwill to all peoples and nations, to sacrifice themselves for the common good, to forsake their own material advantage, and to promote the virtues of the world of humanity.</p>
<p>But let us return to our subject. For example, in the Old Testament it is said in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 48, verse 12: "Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called; I am He; I am the first, I also am the last." It is evident that it does not mean Jacob who was Israel, but the people of Israel. Also in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 43, verse 1, it is said: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."</p>	<p>Let us return to our subject. In the Torah it is said in Isaiah 48:12: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." It is evident that the intended meaning is not Jacob who was called Israel, but the Israelites. Also in Isaiah 43:1 it is said: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."</p>

<p>Furthermore, in Numbers, chapter 20, verse 23: “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah”; and in verse 13: “This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and He was sanctified in them.”</p>	<p>Furthermore, in Numbers 20:23–24 it is said: “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah;” and in 20:13: “This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.”</p>
<p>Observe: the people of Israel rebelled, but apparently the reproach was for Moses and Aaron. As it is said in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 3, verse 26: “But the Lord was wroth with Me for your sakes, and would not hear Me: and the Lord said unto Me, Let it suffice Thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter.”</p>	<p>Observe that it was the people of Israel who had rebelled but the reproach was outwardly addressed to Aaron and Moses, as it is said in Deuteronomy 3:26: “But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”</p>
<p>Now this discourse and reproach really refer to the children of Israel, who, for having rebelled against the command of God, were held captive a long time in the arid desert, on the other side of Jordan, until the time of Joshua—upon him be salutations. This address and reproach appeared to be for Moses and Aaron, but in reality they were for the people of Israel.</p>	<p>Now, this reproach and rebuke was in reality addressed to the children of Israel, who, on account of their rebellion against the commandments of God, were made to dwell for a long period in the barren desert beyond the Jordan until the time of Joshua. This reproach and rebuke appeared to be addressed to Moses and Aaron, but in reality it was directed to the people of Israel.</p>
<p>In the same way in the Qur’án it is said to Muḥammad: “We have granted Thee a manifest victory, so that God may forgive Thee Thy preceding and subsequent sin.” This address, although apparently directed to Muḥammad, was in reality for all the people. This mode of address, as before said, was used by the perfect wisdom of God, so that the hearts of the people might not be troubled, anxious and tormented.</p>	<p>Similarly, in the Qur’án it is said to Muḥammad: “We have granted Thee a manifest victory, that God may forgive Thee Thy past and future sins.” Now, these words, though apparently addressed to Muḥammad, were in reality meant for all His people; and this proceeds from the consummate wisdom of God, as we said previously, so that hearts might not be troubled, perplexed or dismayed.</p>
<p>How often the Prophets of God and His supreme Manifestations in Their prayers confess Their sins and faults! This is only to teach other men, to encourage and incite them to humility and meekness, and to induce them to confess their sins and faults. For these Holy Souls are pure from every sin and sanctified from faults. In the Gospel it is said that a man came to Christ and called Him “Good Master.” Christ answered, “Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God.” This did not mean—God forbid!—that Christ was a sinner; but the intention was to teach submission, humility,</p>	<p>How often have the Prophets of God and His universal Manifestations confessed in their prayers to their sins and shortcomings! This is only to instruct other souls, to inspire and encourage them to be humble and submissive before God and to acknowledge their own sins and shortcomings. For these holy Souls are sanctified above every sin and freed from every fault. For example, it is said in the Gospel that a man came to Christ and called Him “Good Master.” Christ answered, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.” Now, this did not mean — God forbid! — that</p>

<p>meekness and modesty to the man to whom He spoke. These Holy Beings are lights, and light does not unite itself with darkness. They are life, and life and death are not confounded. They are for guidance, and guidance and error cannot be together. They are the essence of obedience, and obedience cannot exist with rebellion.</p>	<p>Christ was a sinner, but rather His intention was to teach humility, lowliness, meekness and modesty to the man He was addressing. These blessed Souls are light, and light cannot be united with darkness. They are life everlasting, and life cannot be gathered in with death. They are guidance, and guidance cannot be brought together with waywardness. They are the very essence of obedience, and obedience cannot join hands with rebellion.</p>
<p>To conclude, the addresses in the form of reproach which are in the Holy Books, though apparently directed to the Prophets—that is to say, to the Manifestations of God—in reality are intended for the people. This will become evident and clear to you when you have diligently examined the Holy Books.</p> <p>Salutations be upon you.</p>	<p>In brief, our meaning is that the rebukes recorded in the sacred scriptures, though outwardly addressed to the Prophets — the Manifestations of God — are in reality intended for the people. Were you to peruse the Bible this matter would become clear and evident. Salutations!</p>
<p>EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE OF THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS, “THERE IS NO PARTNER FOR HIM WHO IS THE DAYSPRING OF REVELATION IN HIS MOST GREAT INFALLIBILITY”</p>	<p>The Most Great Infallibility</p>
<p>It is said in the holy verse: “There is no partner for Him Who is the Dayspring of Revelation in His Most Great Infallibility. He is, in truth, the exponent of ‘God doeth whatsoever He willeth’ in the kingdom of creation. Indeed the Almighty hath exclusively reserved this station for Himself and to none is given a share in this sublime and highly exalted distinction.”</p>	<p>It is said in the blessed verse: “He Who is the Dawning-place of God’s Cause hath no partner in the Most Great Infallibility. He it is Who, in the kingdom of creation, is the Manifestation of ‘He doeth whatsoever He willeth’. God hath reserved this distinction unto His own Self, and ordained for none a share in so sublime and transcendent a station.”</p>
<p>Know that infallibility is of two kinds: essential infallibility and acquired infallibility. In like manner there is essential knowledge and acquired knowledge; and so it is with other names and attributes. Essential infallibility is peculiar to the supreme Manifestation, for it is His essential requirement, and an essential requirement cannot be separated from the thing itself. The rays are the essential necessity of the sun and are inseparable from it. Knowledge is an essential necessity of God and is inseparable from Him. Power is an essential necessity of God and is inseparable from Him. If it could be separated from Him, He would not be God. If the rays could be separated from the sun, it would not be the sun. Therefore, if one imagines separation of the Most Great Infallibility from the</p>	<p>Know that infallibility is of two kinds: infallibility in essence and infallibility as an attribute. The same holds true of all other names and attributes: for example, there is the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its attributes. Infallibility in essence is confined to the universal Manifestations of God, for infallibility is an essential requirement of their reality, and the essential requirement of a thing is inseparable from the thing itself. The rays are an essential requirement of the sun and are inseparable from it; knowledge is an essential requirement of God and is inseparable from Him; power is an essential requirement of God and is likewise inseparable from Him. If it were possible to separate these from Him, He would not be God. If the rays could be separated from the sun,</p>

<p>supreme Manifestation, He would not be the supreme Manifestation, and He would lack the essential perfections.</p>	<p>it would not be the sun. Therefore, were one to imagine the Most Great Infallibility being separated from the universal Manifestation of God, He would not be a universal Manifestation and would lack essential perfection.</p>
<p>But acquired infallibility is not a natural necessity; on the contrary, it is a ray of the bounty of infallibility which shines from the Sun of Reality upon hearts, and grants a share and portion of itself to souls. Although these souls have not essential infallibility, still they are under the protection of God—that is to say, God preserves them from error. Thus many of the holy beings who were not dawning-points of the Most Great Infallibility, were yet kept and preserved from error under the shadow of the protection and guardianship of God, for they were the mediators of grace between God and men. If God did not protect them from error, their error would cause believing souls to fall into error, and thus the foundation of the Religion of God would be overturned, which would not be fitting nor worthy of God.</p>	<p>But infallibility as an attribute is not an essential requirement; rather, it is a ray of the gift of infallibility which shines from the Sun of Truth upon certain hearts and grants them a share and portion thereof. Although these souls are not essentially infallible, yet they are under the care, protection and unerring guidance of God — which is to say, God guards them from error. Thus there have been many sanctified souls who were not themselves the Daysprings of the Most Great Infallibility, but who have nevertheless been guarded and preserved from error under the shadow of divine care and protection. For they were the channels of divine grace between God and man, and if God did not preserve them from error they would have led all the faithful to fall likewise into error, which would have wholly undermined the foundations of the religion of God and which would be unbecoming and unworthy of His exalted Reality.</p>
<p>To epitomize: essential infallibility belongs especially to the supreme Manifestations, and acquired infallibility is granted to every holy soul. For instance, the Universal House of Justice, if it be established under the necessary conditions—with members elected from all the people—that House of Justice will be under the protection and the unerring guidance of God. If that House of Justice shall decide unanimously, or by a majority, upon any question not mentioned in the Book, that decision and command will be guarded from mistake. Now the members of the House of Justice have not, individually, essential infallibility; but the body of the House of Justice is under the protection and unerring guidance of God: this is called conferred infallibility.</p>	<p>To summarize, infallibility in essence is confined to the universal Manifestations of God and infallibility as an attribute is conferred upon sanctified souls. For instance, the Universal House of Justice, if it be established under the necessary conditions — that is, if it be elected by the entire community — that House of Justice will be under the protection and unerring guidance of God. Should that House of Justice decide, either unanimously or by a majority, upon a matter that is not explicitly recorded in the Book, that decision and command will be guarded from error. Now, the members of the House of Justice are not essentially infallible as individuals, but the body of the House of Justice is under the protection and unerring guidance of God: this is called conferred infallibility.</p>
<p>Briefly, it is said that the “Dayspring of Revelation” is the manifestation of these words, “He doeth whatsoever He willeth”; this condition is peculiar to that Holy Being, and others have no share of this essential perfection. That is to say, that as the supreme Manifestations certainly</p>	<p>Briefly, Bahá’u’lláh says that “He Who is the Dawning-place of God’s Cause” is the manifestation of “He doeth whatsoever He willeth”, that this station is reserved to that sanctified Being, and that others receive no share of this essential perfection. That is, since the</p>

<p>possess essential infallibility, therefore whatever emanates from Them is identical with the truth, and conformable to reality. They are not under the shadow of the former laws. Whatever They say is the word of God, and whatever They perform is an upright action. No believer has any right to criticize; his condition must be one of absolute submission, for the Manifestation arises with perfect wisdom—so that whatever the supreme Manifestation says and does is absolute wisdom, and is in accordance with reality.</p>	<p>essential infallibility of the universal Manifestations of God has been established, whatsoever proceeds from them is identical with the truth and conformable to reality. They are not under the shadow of the former religion. Whatsoever they say is the utterance of God and whatsoever they do is a righteous deed; and to no believer is given the right to object: rather must he show forth absolute submission in this regard, for the Manifestation of God acts with consummate wisdom and human minds may be incapable of grasping the hidden wisdom of certain matters. Therefore, whatsoever the universal Manifestation of God says and does is the very essence of wisdom and conformable to reality.</p>
<p>If some people do not understand the hidden secret of one of His commands and actions, they ought not to oppose it, for the supreme Manifestation does what He wishes. How often it has occurred, when an act has been performed by a wise, perfect, intelligent man, that others incapable of comprehending its wisdom have objected to it and been amazed that this wise man could say or do such a thing. This opposition comes from their ignorance, and the wisdom of the sage is pure and exempt from error.</p>	<p>Now, if certain souls fail to grasp the mysteries concealed within a given commandment or action of the True One, they should raise no objection, for the universal Manifestation of God “doeth whatsoever He willeth.” How often has it happened that a wise, accomplished and sagacious person took a course of action, and those who were incapable of grasping its wisdom objected and questioned why he said or did thus. This objection is prompted by ignorance and the wisdom of that wise man is free and sanctified from error.</p>
<p>In the same way, the skilled doctor in treating the patient does what he wishes, and the patient has no right to object; whatever the doctor says and does is right; all ought to consider him the manifestation of these words, “He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and commandeth whatever He desireth.” It is certain that the doctor will use some medicine contrary to the ideas of other people; now opposition is not permitted to those who have not the advantage of science and the medical art. No, in the name of God! on the contrary, all ought to be submissive and to perform whatever the skilled doctor says. Therefore, the skilled doctor does what he wishes, and the patients have no share in this right. The skill of the doctor must be first ascertained; but when the skill of the doctor is once established, he does what he wishes.</p>	<p>In like manner, a skilled physician “doeth whatsoever he willeth” in treating the patient, and the latter has no right to object. Whatsoever the physician may say or do, the same is sound and true, and he must be regarded by all as the embodiment of “He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth.” The physician will doubtless prescribe remedies that are at variance with popular notions, but is it permissible for those who have no knowledge of science and medicine to object? No, by God! On the contrary, they must all acquiesce and follow whatsoever the skilled physician prescribes. Thus, the skilled physician “doeth whatsoever he willeth,” and the patients have no share in this station. First, the skill of the physician must be ascertained, and once this has been done, he “doeth whatsoever he willeth.”</p>
<p>So also, when the head of the army is unrivaled in the art of war, in what he says and commands he</p>	<p>Likewise, a general who is unrivalled in the art of war “doeth whatsoever he willeth” in all that he</p>

<p>does what he wishes. When the captain of a ship is proficient in the art of navigation, in whatever he says and commands he does what he wishes. And as the real educator is the Perfect Man, in whatever He says and commands He does what He wishes.</p>	<p>says or commands; and the same holds true of the ship's captain who masters the art of seafaring and of the True Educator who possesses all human perfections: they do whatsoever they will in all that they say and command.</p>
<p>In short, the meaning of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" is that if the Manifestation says something, or gives a command, or performs an action, and believers do not understand its wisdom, they still ought not to oppose it by a single thought, seeking to know why He spoke so, or why He did such a thing. The other souls who are under the shadow of the supreme Manifestations are submissive to the commandments of the Law of God, and are not to deviate as much as a hairsbreadth from it; they must conform their acts and words to the Law of God. If they do deviate from it, they will be held responsible and reprov'd in the presence of God. It is certain that they have no share in the permission "He doeth whatsoever He willeth," for this condition is peculiar to the supreme Manifestations.</p>	<p>In sum, the meaning of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" is that if the Manifestation of God issues a command, enforces a law, or performs an action whose wisdom His followers cannot grasp, they should not think for a moment of questioning His words or actions. All souls are under the shadow of the universal Manifestation, must submit to the authority of the religion of God, and are not to deviate so much as a hairsbreadth. Rather, they must conform their every act and deed to the religion of God; and should they deviate from it they will be reprov'd and held accountable before God. It is certain that they have no share of the station "He doeth whatsoever He willeth," for it is confined to the universal Manifestation of God.</p>
<p>So Christ—may my spirit be sacrificed to Him!—was the manifestation of these words, "He doeth whatsoever He willeth," but the disciples were not partakers of this condition; for as they were under the shadow of Christ, they could not deviate from His command and will.</p>	<p>Thus Christ — may my soul be a sacrifice for His sake! — was the embodiment of the words "He doeth whatsoever He willeth," but His disciples had no share of this station, for they abided under His shadow and were not granted leave to deviate from His will and command. Salutations!</p>
<p>ON THE ORIGIN, POWERS AND CONDITIONS OF MAN</p>	<p>On the Origin, Powers, and Conditions of Man</p>
<p>MODIFICATION OF SPECIES</p>	<p>Evolution and the True Nature of Man</p>
<p>We have now come to the question of the modification of species and of organic development—that is to say, to the point of inquiring whether man's descent is from the animal.</p>	<p>We now come to the question of the transformation of species and the evolutionary development of organs, that is, whether man has come from the animal kingdom.</p>
<p>This theory has found credence in the minds of some European philosophers, and it is now very difficult to make its falseness understood, but in the future it will become evident and clear, and the European philosophers will themselves realize its untruth. For, verily, it is an evident error. When man looks at the beings with a penetrating regard, and attentively examines the condition of existences, and when he sees the</p>	<p>This idea has entrenched itself in the minds of certain European philosophers, and it is very difficult now to make its falsity understood; but in the future it will become clear and evident, and the European philosophers will themselves recognize it. For in reality it is an evident error. When one examines creation with a penetrating eye, when one grasps the intricacies of created things and witnesses the condition, the order and</p>

<p>state, the organization and the perfection of the world, he will be convinced that in the possible world there is nothing more wonderful than that which already exists. For all existing beings, terrestrial and celestial, as well as this limitless space and all that is in it, have been created and organized, composed, arranged and perfected as they ought to be; the universe has no imperfection, so that if all beings became pure intelligence and reflected for ever and ever, it is impossible that they could imagine anything better than that which exists.</p>	<p>the completeness of the world of existence, one is convinced of the truth that “there is naught in creation more wondrous than that which already exists.” For all existing things, whether on earth or in the heavens, even this limitless firmament and all that it contains, have been most befittingly created, arranged, composed, ordered and completed, and suffer no imperfection. To such an extent is this true that if all beings were to become pure intelligence and to reflect until the end that has no end, they could not possibly imagine anything better than that which already exists.</p>
<p>If, however, the creation in the past had not been adorned with utmost perfection, then existence would have been imperfect and meaningless, and in this case creation would have been incomplete. This question needs to be considered with the greatest attention and thought. For example, imagine that the contingent world resembles in a general way the body of man. If this composition, organization, perfection, beauty and completeness which now exist in the human body were different, it would be absolute imperfection.</p>	<p>If in the past, however, the creation had lacked such completeness and adornment, if it had been in an inferior state, then existence would have necessarily been wanting and imperfect and, as such, incomplete. This matter requires the utmost attention and thought. Imagine, for example, the entire contingent world — the realm of existence — as resembling the body of man. If the composition, the arrangement, the completeness, the beauty and the perfection which now exist in the human body were in any way different, the result would be imperfection itself.</p>
<p>Now, if we imagine a time when man belonged to the animal world, or when he was merely an animal, we shall find that existence would have been imperfect—that is to say, there would have been no man, and this chief member, which in the body of the world is like the brain and mind in man, would have been missing. The world would then have been quite imperfect. It is thus proved that if there had been a time when man was in the animal kingdom, the perfection of existence would have been destroyed; for man is the greatest member of this world, and if the body was without this chief member, surely it would be imperfect. We consider man as the greatest member because, among the creatures, he is the sum of all existing perfections.</p>	<p>So if we were to imagine a time when man belonged to the animal kingdom, that is, when he was merely an animal, existence would have been imperfect. This means that there would have been no man, and this chief member, which in the body of the world is like the mind and the brain in a human being, would have been lacking and the world would thus have been utterly imperfect. This is sufficient proof in itself that if there had been a time when man belonged to the animal realm, the completeness of existence would have been destroyed; for man is the chief member of the body of this world, and a body without its chief member is undoubtedly imperfect. We regard man as the chief member because, among all created things, he encompasses all the perfections of existence.</p>
<p>When we speak of man, we mean the perfect one, the foremost individual in the world, who is the sum of spiritual and apparent perfections, and who is like the sun among the beings. Then imagine that at one time the sun did not exist,</p>	<p>Now, what we mean by man is the complete human being, the foremost person in the world, who is the sum of all spiritual and material perfections, and who is like the sun among all created things. Imagine, then, a time when the</p>

<p>but that it was a planet; surely at such a time the relations of existence would be disordered. How can such a thing be imagined? To a man who examines the world of existence what we have said is sufficient.</p>	<p>sun did not exist as such; in other words, when the sun was merely another celestial body. Undoubtedly, at such a time the relationships between existing things would have been disrupted. How can such a thing be imagined? Were one to carefully examine the world of existence, this argument alone would suffice.</p>
<p>There is another more subtle proof: all these endless beings which inhabit the world, whether man, animal, vegetable, mineral—whatever they may be—are surely, each one of them, composed of elements. There is no doubt that this perfection which is in all beings is caused by the creation of God from the composing elements, by their appropriate mingling and proportionate quantities, the mode of their composition, and the influence of other beings. For all beings are connected together like a chain; and reciprocal help, assistance and interaction belonging to the properties of things are the causes of the existence, development and growth of created beings. It is confirmed through evidences and proofs that every being universally acts upon other beings, either absolutely or through association. Finally, the perfection of each individual being—that is to say, the perfection which you now see in man or apart from him, with regard to their atoms, members or powers—is due to the composition of the elements, to their measure, to their balance, to the mode of their combination, and to mutual influence. When all these are gathered together, then man exists.</p>	<p>Let us give another, more subtle proof: The innumerable created things that are found in the world of existence, be they man, animal, plant, or mineral, must each be composed of elements. There is no doubt that the completeness seen in each and every thing arises, by divine creation, from the component elements, their appropriate combination, their proportionate measure, the manner of their composition, and the influence of other created things. For all beings are linked together like a chain, and mutual aid, assistance and interaction are among their intrinsic properties and are the cause of their formation, development and growth. It is established through numerous proofs and arguments that every single thing has an effect and influence upon every other, either independently or through a causal chain. In sum, the completeness of each and every thing — that is, the completeness which you now see in man, or in other beings, with regard to their parts, members and powers — arises from their component elements, their quantities and measures, the manner of their combination, and their mutual action, interaction and influence. When all these are brought together, then man comes into existence.</p>
<p>As the perfection of man is entirely due to the composition of the atoms of the elements, to their measure, to the method of their combination, and to the mutual influence and action of the different beings—then, since man was produced ten or a hundred thousand years ago from these earthly elements with the same measure and balance, the same method of combination and mingling, and the same influence of the other beings, exactly the same man existed then as now. This is evident and not worth debating. A thousand million years hence, if these elements of man are gathered together and arranged in this special proportion, and if the</p>	<p>As the completeness of man stems entirely from the component elements, their measure, their manner of combination, and the mutual action and interaction of other beings; and since man was produced ten or a hundred thousand years ago from the same earthly elements, with the same measures and quantities, the same manner of composition and combination, and the same interactions with other beings; it follows that man was exactly the same then as exists now. This is a self-evident truth and cannot be doubted. And if a thousand million years hence the component elements of man are brought together, measured out in the same proportion,</p>

<p>elements are combined according to the same method, and if they are affected by the same influence of other beings, exactly the same man will exist. For example, if after a hundred thousand years there is oil, fire, a wick, a lamp and the lighter of the lamp—briefly, if there are all the necessities which now exist, exactly the same lamp will be obtained.</p>	<p>combined in the same manner, and subjected to the same interaction with other beings, exactly the same man will come into existence. For example, if a hundred thousand years hence one were to bring together oil, flame, wick, lamp, and a lighter of the lamp — briefly, if all that is needed now be combined then — exactly the same lamp will be produced.</p>
<p>These are conclusive and evident facts. But the arguments which these European philosophers have used raise doubtful proofs and are not conclusive.</p>	<p>This matter is evident and these arguments conclusive. But those which the European philosophers have adduced are speculative and inconclusive.</p>
<p>THE UNIVERSE IS WITHOUT BEGINNING; THE ORIGIN OF MAN</p>	<p>The Origin of the Universe and the Evolution of Man</p>
<p>Know that it is one of the most abstruse spiritual truths that the world of existence—that is to say, this endless universe—has no beginning.</p>	<p>Know that it is one of the most abstruse questions of divinity that the world of existence — that is, this endless universe — has no beginning.</p>
<p>We have already explained that the names and attributes of the Divinity themselves require the existence of beings. Although this subject has been explained in detail, we will speak of it again briefly. Know that an educator without pupils cannot be imagined; a monarch without subjects could not exist; a master without scholars cannot be appointed; a creator without a creature is impossible; a provider without those provided for cannot be conceived; for all the divine names and attributes demand the existence of beings. If we could imagine a time when no beings existed, this imagination would be the denial of the Divinity of God.</p>	<p>We have already explained that the very names and attributes of Divinity require the existence of created things. Although a detailed explanation of this matter was already provided, a brief mention will again be made here. Know that a lord without vassals cannot be imagined; a sovereign without subjects cannot be; a teacher without pupils cannot be designated; a creator without a creation is impossible; a provider without those provided for is inconceivable — since all the divine names and attributes call for the existence of created things. If we were to imagine a time when created things did not exist, this would be tantamount to denying the divinity of God.</p>
<p>Moreover, absolute nonexistence cannot become existence. If the beings were absolutely nonexistent, existence would not have come into being. Therefore, as the Essence of Unity (that is, the existence of God) is everlasting and eternal—that is to say, it has neither beginning nor end—it is certain that this world of existence, this endless universe, has neither beginning nor end. Yes, it may be that one of the parts of the universe, one of the globes, for example, may come into existence, or may be disintegrated, but the other endless globes are still existing; the universe would not be disordered nor destroyed. On the contrary, existence is eternal and perpetual. As</p>	<p>Apart from this, absolute non-existence lacks the capacity to attain existence. If the universe were pure nothingness, existence could not have been realized. Thus, as that Essence of Oneness, or divine Being, is eternal and everlasting — that is, as it has neither beginning nor end — it follows that the world of existence, this endless universe, likewise has no beginning. To be sure, it is possible for some part of creation — one of the celestial globes — to be newly formed or to disintegrate, but the other countless globes would continue to exist and the world of existence itself would not be disrupted or destroyed. On the contrary, its existence is</p>

<p>each globe has a beginning, necessarily it has an end because every composition, collective or particular, must of necessity be decomposed. The only difference is that some are quickly decomposed, and others more slowly, but it is impossible that a composed thing should not eventually be decomposed.</p>	<p>perpetual and unchanging. Now, as each globe has a beginning, it must inevitably have an end as well, since every composition, whether universal or particular, must of necessity be decomposed. At most some disintegrate quickly and others slowly, but it is impossible for something that is composed not to ultimately decompose.</p>
<p>It is necessary, therefore, that we should know what each of the important existences was in the beginning—for there is no doubt that in the beginning the origin was one: the origin of all numbers is one and not two. Then it is evident that in the beginning matter was one, and that one matter appeared in different aspects in each element. Thus various forms were produced, and these various aspects as they were produced became permanent, and each element was specialized. But this permanence was not definite, and did not attain realization and perfect existence until after a very long time. Then these elements became composed, and organized and combined in infinite forms; or rather from the composition and combination of these elements innumerable beings appeared.</p>	<p>We must know then what each one of the great existent things was in the beginning. There is no doubt that initially there was a single origin: there cannot have been two origins. For the origin of all numbers is one and not two; the number two is itself in need of an origin. It is therefore evident that originally matter was one; and that one matter appeared in a different form in each element. Thus various forms appeared, and as they appeared they each assumed an independent form and became a specific element. But this distinction attained its full completion and realization only after a very long time. Then these elements were composed, arranged and combined in infinite forms; in other words, from the composition and combination of these elements countless beings appeared.</p>
<p>This composition and arrangement, through the wisdom of God and His preexistent might, were produced from one natural organization, which was composed and combined with the greatest strength, conformable to wisdom, and according to a universal law. From this it is evident that it is the creation of God, and is not a fortuitous composition and arrangement. This is why from every natural composition a being can come into existence, but from an accidental composition no being can come into existence. For example, if a man of his own mind and intelligence collects some elements and combines them, a living being will not be brought into existence since the system is unnatural. This is the answer to the implied question that, since beings are made by the composition and the combination of elements, why is it not possible for us to gather elements and mingle them together, and so create a living being. This is a false supposition, for the origin of this composition is from God; it is God Who makes the combination, and as it is done according to the natural system, from each composition one being is produced, and an</p>	<p>This composition and arrangement arose, through the wisdom of God and His ancient might, from one natural order. Thus, as this composition and combination has been produced according to a natural order, with perfect soundness, following a consummate wisdom, and subject to a universal law, it is clear that it is a divine creation and not an accidental composition and arrangement. That is why from every natural composition a living thing comes into existence, but from a chance composition no living thing will appear. So, for example, if man, with all his astuteness and intelligence, were to gather together and combine certain elements, a living being will not be brought into existence as it would not be according to the natural order. This is the answer to the implicit question that might arise, that since these beings come into existence through the composition and combination of these elements, then can we not also gather together and combine the very same elements and thus create a living thing? This idea is mistaken: for the original composition is a divine composition, and the combination is</p>

<p>existence is realized. A composition made by man produces nothing because man cannot create.</p>	<p>produced by God according to the natural order; and it is for this reason that a living being is created from this composition and an existence is realized. But a composition made by man produces nothing because man cannot create life.</p>
<p>Briefly, we have said that from the composition and combination of elements, from their decomposition, from their measure, and from the effect of other beings upon them, resulted forms, endless realities and innumerable beings. But it is clear that this terrestrial globe in its present form did not come into existence all at once, but that this universal existence gradually passed through different phases until it became adorned with its present perfection. Universal beings resemble and can be compared to particular beings, for both are subjected to one natural system, one universal law and divine organization. So you will find the smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe. It is clear that they come into existence from one laboratory of might under one natural system and one universal law; therefore, they may be compared to one another.</p>	<p>Briefly, we have said that from the composition of the elements, from their combination, manner and proportion, and from their interaction with other beings, countless forms and realities and innumerable beings have come to exist. But it is clear that this terrestrial globe in its present form did not come into existence all at once, but that this universal existent gradually traversed different stages until it appeared in its present completeness. Universal existences can be likened and compared to particular ones, for both are subject to one natural order, one universal law and one divine arrangement. For instance, you will find the smallest atoms to be similar in their general structure to the greatest entities in the universe, and it is clear that they have proceeded from one laboratory of might according to one natural order and one universal law, and can therefore be compared to one another.</p>
<p>Thus the embryo of man in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops, and appears in different forms and conditions, until in the degree of perfect beauty it reaches maturity and appears in a perfect form with the utmost grace. And in the same way, the seed of this flower which you see was in the beginning an insignificant thing, and very small; and it grew and developed in the womb of the earth and, after appearing in various forms, came forth in this condition with perfect freshness and grace. In the same manner, it is evident that this terrestrial globe, having once found existence, grew and developed in the matrix of the universe, and came forth in different forms and conditions, until gradually it attained this present perfection, and became adorned with innumerable beings, and appeared as a finished organization.</p>	<p>For example, the human embryo grows and develops gradually in the womb of its mother, and assumes different forms and conditions, until it reaches maturity with the utmost beauty and appears in a consummate form with the utmost grace. In like manner, the seed of this flower which you see before you was in the beginning a small and insignificant thing, but it grew and developed in the womb of the earth, and assumed different forms, until it appeared with such perfect vitality and grace in this degree. It is likewise clear and evident that this terrestrial globe came to exist, grow and develop in the matrix of the universe, and assumed different forms and conditions, until it gradually attained its present completeness, became adorned with countless beings, and appeared in such a consummate form.</p>
<p>Then it is clear that original matter, which is in the embryonic state, and the mingled and composed elements which were its earliest</p>	<p>It is therefore evident that the original matter, which is like unto the embryo, initially took the form of composed and combined elements, and</p>

<p>forms, gradually grew and developed during many ages and cycles, passing from one shape and form to another, until they appeared in this perfection, this system, this organization and this establishment, through the supreme wisdom of God.</p>	<p>that composition gradually grew and developed over a myriad ages and centuries, passing from one shape and form to another, until through the consummate wisdom of God it appeared with such completeness, order, arrangement and soundness.</p>
<p>Let us return to our subject that man, in the beginning of his existence and in the womb of the earth, like the embryo in the womb of the mother, gradually grew and developed, and passed from one form to another, from one shape to another, until he appeared with this beauty and perfection, this force and this power. It is certain that in the beginning he had not this loveliness and grace and elegance, and that he only by degrees attained this shape, this form, this beauty and this grace. There is no doubt that the human embryo did not at once appear in this form; neither did it then become the manifestation of the words "Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers." Gradually it passed through various conditions and different shapes, until it attained this form and beauty, this perfection, grace and loveliness. Thus it is evident and confirmed that the development and growth of man on this earth, until he reached his present perfection, resembled the growth and development of the embryo in the womb of the mother: by degrees it passed from condition to condition, from form to form, from one shape to another, for this is according to the requirement of the universal system and Divine Law.</p>	<p>Let us return to our subject. From the beginning of existence in the womb of the terrestrial globe, man gradually grew and developed like the embryo in the womb of its mother, and passed from one shape and form to another, until he appeared with this beauty and perfection, this power and constitution. It is certain that initially he did not possess such loveliness, grace, and refinement, and that he has only gradually attained such form, disposition, comeliness and grace. There is no doubt that, like the embryo in the womb of the mother, the embryo of humankind did not appear all at once in this form and become the embodiment of the words "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!" Rather, it gradually attained various conditions and assumed diverse forms until it attained this appearance and beauty, this perfection, refinement and grace. It is therefore clear and evident that the growth and development of man on this planet unto his present completeness, even as the growth and development of the embryo in the womb of the mother, has been by degrees and through passing from state to state and from one shape and form to another, for this is according to the requirements of the universal order and the divine law.</p>
<p>That is to say, the embryo passes through different states and traverses numerous degrees, until it reaches the form in which it manifests the words "Praise be to God, the best of Creators," and until the signs of reason and maturity appear. And in the same way, man's existence on this earth, from the beginning until it reaches this state, form and condition, necessarily lasts a long time, and goes through many degrees until it reaches this condition. But from the beginning of man's existence he is a distinct species. In the same way, the embryo of man in the womb of the mother was at first in a strange form; then this body passes from shape to shape, from state</p>	<p>That is, the human embryo assumes different conditions and traverses numerous stages, until it reaches that form in which it manifests the reality of the words "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!" and shows forth the signs of full development and maturity. In like manner, from the beginning of man's existence on this planet until he assumed his present shape, form and condition, a long time must have elapsed, and he must have traversed many stages before reaching his present condition. But from the beginning of his existence man has been a distinct species. This is similar to the embryo of man in the womb of the mother: it possesses at</p>

<p>to state, from form to form, until it appears in utmost beauty and perfection. But even when in the womb of the mother and in this strange form, entirely different from his present form and figure, he is the embryo of the superior species, and not of the animal; his species and essence undergo no change.</p>	<p>first a strange appearance; then this body passes from shape to shape and from form to form until it appears in the utmost beauty and perfection. But even when it possesses in the womb of the mother a strange form entirely different from its present shape and appearance, it is the embryo of a distinct species and not of an animal: the essence of the species and the innate reality undergo no transformation at all.</p>
<p>Now, admitting that the traces of organs which have disappeared actually exist, this is not a proof of the impermanence and the nonoriginality of the species. At the most it proves that the form, and fashion, and the organs of man have progressed. Man was always a distinct species, a man, not an animal. So, if the embryo of man in the womb of the mother passes from one form to another so that the second form in no way resembles the first, is this a proof that the species has changed? that it was at first an animal, and that its organs progressed and developed until it became a man? No, indeed! How puerile and unfounded is this idea and this thought! For the proof of the originality of the human species, and of the permanency of the nature of man, is clear and evident.</p>	<p>Now, were one to establish the existence of vestigial organs, this would not disprove the independence and originality of the species. At most it would prove that the form, appearance and organs of man have evolved over time. But man has always been a distinct species; he has been man, not an animal. Consider: If the embryo of man in the womb of the mother passes from one form to another which in no way resembles the former, is this a proof that the essence of the species has undergone transformation? That it was at first an animal and that its organs developed and evolved until it became a man? No, by God! How feeble and unfounded is this thought! For the originality of the human species and the independence of the essence of man are clear and evident. Salutations!</p>
<p>THE DIFFERENCE EXISTING BETWEEN MAN AND ANIMAL</p>	<p>The Difference between Man and Animal</p>
<p>Already we have talked once or twice on the subject of the spirit, but our words have not been written down.</p>	<p>We have already had one or two conversations on the subject of the spirit but they were not written down.</p>
<p>Know that people belong to two categories—that is to say, they constitute two parties. One party deny the spirit and say that man also is a species of animal; for they say: Do we not see that animals and men share the same powers and senses? These simple, single elements which fill space are endlessly combined, and from each of these combinations one of the beings is produced. Among these beings is the possessor of spirit, of the powers and of the senses. The more perfect the combination, the nobler is the being. The combination of the elements in the body of man is more perfect than the composition of any other being; it is mingled in absolute equilibrium; therefore, it is more noble and more perfect. “It is not,” they say, “that he has a special power and spirit which the other</p>	<p>Know that the people of the world are of two kinds, that is, they belong to two groups. One group denies the human spirit and says that man is a kind of animal. Why? Because we see that man and animal share in common the same powers and senses. The simple and individual elements that fill the space around us are brought together in countless combinations, each of which gives rise to a different being. Among these are sentient beings possessed of certain powers and senses. The more complete the combination, the nobler the being. The combination of the elements in the body of man is more complete than in any other being, and its elements have been combined in perfect equilibrium, and thus it is more noble and more perfect. It is not, they say, that man has a special</p>

<p>animals lack: animals possess sensitive bodies, but man in some powers has more sensation, although, in what concerns the outer senses, such as hearing, sight, taste, smell, touch and even in some interior powers like memory, the animal is more richly endowed than man.” “The animal, too,” they say, “has intelligence and perception.” All that they concede is that man’s intelligence is greater.</p>	<p>power and spirit of which the other animals are deprived: animals too have sensory perceptions, but man’s powers are simply more acute in certain respects (although with respect to the outer senses, such as hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch, and even with regard to inner powers such as memory, the animal is more richly endowed than man). The animal, they say, possesses the powers of intelligence and understanding. All they will concede is that man’s intelligence is greater.</p>
<p>This is what the philosophers of the present state; this is their saying, this is their supposition, and thus their imagination decrees. So with powerful arguments and proofs they make the descent of man go back to the animal, and say that there was once a time when man was an animal, that then the species changed and progressed little by little until it reached the present status of man.</p>	<p>Such are the claims of the present-day philosophers. Such are their words, such are their claims, and such are the dictates of their imaginations. And so, after extensive research and armed with powerful arguments, they place man in the lineage of the animal, saying that at one time man was an animal, and that the species gradually changed and evolved until it reached the human degree.</p>
<p>But the theologians say: No, this is not so. Though man has powers and outer senses in common with the animal, yet an extraordinary power exists in him of which the animal is bereft. The sciences, arts, inventions, trades and discoveries of realities are the results of this spiritual power. This is a power which encompasses all things, comprehends their realities, discovers all the hidden mysteries of beings, and through this knowledge controls them. It even perceives things which do not exist outwardly—that is to say, intellectual realities which are not sensible, and which have no outward existence because they are invisible; so it comprehends the mind, the spirit, the qualities, the characters, the love and sorrow of man, which are intellectual realities. Moreover, these existing sciences, arts, laws and endless inventions of man at one time were invisible, mysterious and hidden secrets; it is only the all-encompassing human power which has discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. So telegraphy, photography, phonography and all such inventions and wonderful arts were at one time hidden mysteries. The human reality discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. There</p>	<p>But the divine philosophers say: No, this is not so. Although man shares the same outward powers and senses in common with the animal, there exists in him an extraordinary power of which the animal is deprived. All sciences, arts, inventions, crafts, and discoveries of realities proceed from this singular power. This is a power that encompasses all created things, comprehends their realities, unravels their hidden mysteries, and brings them under its control. It even understands things that have no outward existence, that is, intelligible, imperceptible and unseen realities, such as the mind, the spirit, human attributes and qualities, love and sorrow, all of which are intelligible realities. Moreover, all the existing sciences and crafts, all the great undertakings and myriad discoveries of man, were at one time hidden and concealed mysteries, and it is that all-encompassing human power that has discovered them and brought them forth from the invisible into the visible realm. So the telegraph, the photograph, the phonograph — all such great inventions and crafts were once hidden mysteries which that human reality discovered and brought forth from the invisible to the visible realm. There was even a time when this piece of iron before you, and indeed every mineral, was a hidden mystery. The</p>

<p>was even a time when the qualities of this iron which you see—indeed of all the minerals—were hidden mysteries; men discovered this mineral, and wrought it in this industrial form. It is the same with all the other discoveries and inventions of man, which are innumerable.</p> <p>This we cannot deny.</p>	<p>human reality discovered this mineral and wrought its metal into this finished form. The same holds true for all the other discoveries and inventions of man, which are innumerable. This matter is irrefutable and there is no point in denying it.</p>
<p>If we say that these are effects of powers which animals also have, and of the powers of the bodily senses, we see clearly and evidently that the animals are, in regard to these powers, superior to man. For example, the sight of animals is much more keen than the sight of man; so also is their power of smell and taste. Briefly, in the powers which animals and men have in common, the animal is often the more powerful. For example, let us take the power of memory. If you carry a pigeon from here to a distant country, and there set it free, it will return, for it remembers the way. Take a dog from here to the center of Asia, set him free, and he will come back here and never once lose the road. So it is with the other powers such as hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch.</p> <p>Thus it is clear that if there were not in man a power different from any of those of the animals, the latter would be superior to man in inventions and the comprehension of realities. Therefore, it is evident that man has a gift which the animal does not possess.</p>	<p>If we were to claim that all these effects proceed from the powers of the animal nature and the physical senses, then we see plainly and clearly that, with regard to these powers, the animals are superior to man. For example, the sight of animals is much keener than that of man, their hearing is more acute, and likewise with their powers of smell and taste. Briefly, in the powers which man and animal share in common, the animal often has the advantage. Take the power of memory: If you carry a pigeon from here to a far away country, and there set it free, it will remember the way and return home. Take a dog from here to the heart of Asia, set it free, and it will return home without ever losing its way. And so is it with the other powers such as hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. It is clear then that if man did not possess a power beyond the animal powers, the animal would perform surpass man in significant discoveries and in the comprehension of realities. It follows from this argument that man is endowed with a gift, and possesses a perfection, which is not present in the animal.</p>
<p>Now, the animal perceives sensible things but does not perceive intellectual realities. For example, that which is within the range of its vision the animal sees, but that which is beyond the range of sight it is not possible for it to perceive, and it cannot imagine it. So it is not possible for the animal to understand that the earth has the form of a globe. But man from known things proves unknown things and discovers unknown truths. For example, man sees the curve of the horizon, and from this he infers the roundness of the earth. The Pole Star at 'Akká, for instance, is at 33—that is to say, it is 33 above the horizon. When a man goes toward the North Pole, the Pole Star rises one degree above the horizon for each degree of distance</p>	<p>Moreover, the animal perceives sensible things but cannot perceive conceptual realities. For example, the animal sees that which is within the range of its vision, but cannot comprehend or conceive that which lies beyond it. Thus it is not possible for the animal to comprehend that the earth has a spherical shape. But man can deduce the unknown from the known and discover hidden realities. So, for example, from observing the inclination of the heavens man infers the curvature of the earth. The Pole Star at 'Akká, for instance, is at 33 degrees, that is, it is inclined 33 degrees above the horizon. When one goes toward the North Pole, the Pole Star rises one degree above the horizon for every degree of distance travelled, that is, the inclination of the</p>

<p>that he travels—that is to say, the altitude of the Pole Star will be 34, then 40, then 50, then 60, then 70. If he reaches the North Pole the altitude of the Pole Star will be 90 or have attained the zenith—that is to say, will be directly overhead.</p>	<p>Pole Star will reach 34 degrees, then 40, 50, 60 and 70 degrees. When one reaches the North Pole, the inclination of the Pole Star will be 90 degrees and will be seen at the zenith, that is, directly overhead.</p>
<p>This Pole Star and its ascension are sensible things. The further one goes toward the Pole, the higher the Pole Star rises; from these two known truths an unknown thing has been discovered—that is, that the horizon is curved, meaning that the horizon of each degree of the earth is a different horizon from that of another degree. Man perceives this and proves from it an invisible thing which is the roundness of the earth. This it is impossible for the animal to perceive. In the same way, it cannot understand that the sun is the center and that the earth revolves around it. The animal is the captive of the senses and bound by them; all that is beyond the senses, the things that they do not control, the animal can never understand, although in the outer senses it is greater than man. Hence it is proved and verified that in man there is a power of discovery by which he is distinguished from the animals, and this is the spirit of man.</p>	<p>Now, the Pole Star is a sensible reality, and so too is its ascension, that is, the fact that the closer one goes to the Pole the higher the Pole Star rises. And from these two known realities an unknown reality is discovered, namely, that the heavens are inclined, meaning that the sky above the horizon at each latitude is different from that at another latitude. Man comprehends this relation and reasons from it a previously unknown thing, namely, the curvature of the earth. But this comprehension is impossible for the animal. It is likewise impossible for the animal to comprehend that the sun is the centre and that the earth revolves around it. The animal is a prisoner of the senses and is circumscribed by them: It cannot comprehend anything that lies beyond the reach or control of the senses, even though it excels man in the outward powers and senses. It is therefore clearly established that man is endowed with a power of discovery that distinguishes him from the animal, and this power is none but the human spirit.</p>
<p>Praise be to God! man is always turned toward the heights, and his aspiration is lofty; he always desires to reach a greater world than the world in which he is, and to mount to a higher sphere than that in which he is. The love of exaltation is one of the characteristics of man. I am astonished that certain philosophers of America and Europe are content to gradually approach the animal world and so to go backward; for the tendency of existence must be toward exaltation. Nevertheless, if you said to one of them, “You are an animal,” he would be extremely hurt and angry.</p>	<p>Praise be to God! Man ever aspires to greater heights and loftier goals. He ever seeks to attain a world surpassing that which he inhabits and to ascend to a degree above that which he occupies. This love of transcendence is one of the hallmarks of man. I am astonished that certain philosophers in Europe and America have consented to lower themselves to the animal realm and so to regress, whereas all existence must ever aspire toward exaltation. And yet, were you to call one of them an animal, he would be most hurt and offended.</p>
<p>What a difference between the human world and the world of the animal, between the elevation of man and the abasement of the animal, between the perfections of man and the ignorance of the animal, between the light of man and the darkness of the animal, between the glory of man and the degradation of the animal! An Arab child of ten years can manage two or three hundred</p>	<p>What a difference between the world of man and the world of the animal! What a difference between the loftiness of man and the abasement of the animal, between the perfections of man and the ignorance of the animal, between the light of man and the darkness of the animal, between the glory of man and the degradation of the animal! An Arab child of ten years can subdue</p>

<p>camels in the desert, and with his voice can lead them forward or turn them back. A weak Hindu can so control a huge elephant that the elephant becomes the most obedient of servants. All things are subdued by the hand of man; he can resist nature</p>	<p>two or three hundred camels in the desert and lead them about with his mere voice. A feeble Indian can so subdue a mighty elephant as to compel it to move in strict obedience. All things are subdued by the hand of man, who withstands nature itself.</p>
<p>while all other creatures are captives of nature: none can depart from her requirements. Man alone can resist nature. Nature attracts bodies to the center of the earth; man through mechanical means goes far from it and soars in the air. Nature prevents man from crossing the seas; man builds a ship, and he travels and voyages across the great ocean, and so on; the subject is endless. For example, man drives engines over the mountains and through the wildernesses, and gathers in one spot the news of the events of the East and West. All this is contrary to nature. The sea with its grandeur cannot deviate by an atom from the laws of nature; the sun in all its magnificence cannot deviate as much as a needle's point from the laws of nature, and can never comprehend the conditions, the state, the qualities, the movements and the nature of man.</p> <p>What, then, is the power in this small body of man which encompasses all this? What is this ruling power by which he subdues all things?</p>	<p>All other beings are captives of nature and cannot free themselves from its exigencies: man alone can withstand nature. So nature attracts all bodies to the centre of the earth, but through mechanical means man moves away from it and soars in the air; nature prevents man from crossing the sea, but man builds ships and traverses the heart of the great ocean, and so forth: the subject is endless. For example, man traverses mountains and plains in vehicles and gathers in one place the news of the events of East and West. This is how man withstands nature. The sea in all its vastness cannot deviate one iota from the rule of nature; the sun in all its greatness cannot stray so much as a needle's point from the rule of nature, nor can it ever comprehend the states, conditions, properties, movements and nature of man. What then is the power residing in man's puny form that encompasses all this? What conquering power is this that subdues all things?</p>
<p>One more point remains. Modern philosophers say: "We have never seen the spirit in man, and in spite of our researches into the secrets of the human body, we do not perceive a spiritual power. How can we imagine a power which is not sensible?" The theologians reply: "The spirit of the animal also is not sensible, and through its bodily powers it cannot be perceived. By what do you prove the existence of the spirit of the animal? There is no doubt that from its effects you prove that in the animal there is a power which is not in the plant, and this is the power of the senses—that is to say, sight, hearing and also other powers; from these you infer that there is an animal spirit. In the same way, from the proofs and signs we have mentioned, we argue that there is a human spirit. Since in the animal there are signs which are not in the plant, you say this power of sensation is a property of the animal spirit; you also see in man signs, powers and</p>	<p>One more point remains. Modern philosophers say: "Nowhere do we see a spirit in man, and, although we have investigated the inmost recesses of the human body, nowhere do we perceive a spiritual power. How then are we to imagine a power which is not sensible?" The divine philosophers reply: "The spirit of the animal is not sensible either and cannot be perceived through our material powers: How do you infer its existence? There is no doubt that it is from its effects that you infer in the animal the existence of a power which is lacking in the plant, and that is the power of the senses — sight, hearing and the other powers. It is from these that you infer that there is an animal spirit. Infer likewise from the aforementioned signs and arguments the existence of a human spirit. Thus, since there are signs in the animal that cannot be found in the plant, you say that this sensory power is one of the hallmarks of the animal spirit.</p>

<p>perfections which do not exist in the animal; therefore, you infer that there is a power in him which the animal is without.”</p>	<p>You see likewise in man signs, powers and perfections that do not exist in the animal: infer then that there is a power in him of which the animal is bereft.”</p>
<p>If we wish to deny everything that is not sensible, then we must deny the realities which unquestionably exist. For example, ethereal matter is not sensible, though it has an undoubted existence. The power of attraction is not sensible, though it certainly exists. From what do we affirm these existences? From their signs. Thus this light is the vibration of that ethereal matter, and from this vibration we infer the existence of ether.</p>	<p>If we were to deny all that is not accessible to the senses, then we would be forced to deny realities which undoubtedly exist. For example, the ether is not sensible, although its reality can be proven. The power of gravity is not sensible, although its existence is likewise undeniable. Whence do we affirm their existence? From their signs. For instance, this light consists in the vibrations of the ether, and from these vibrations we infer its existence.</p>
<p>THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN RACE</p>	<p>Evolution and the Existence of Man</p>
<p>Question.—What do you say with regard to the theories held by some European philosophers on the growth and development of beings?</p>	<p>Question: What do you say regarding the theory of the evolution of beings to which certain European philosophers subscribe?</p>
<p>Answer.—This subject was spoken of the other day, but we will speak of it again. Briefly, this question will be decided by determining whether species are original or not—that is to say, has the species of man been established from its origin, or was it afterward derived from the animals?</p>	<p>Answer: We discussed this matter the other day but we will speak of it again. Briefly, this question comes down to the originality or non-originality of the species, that is, whether the essence of the human species was fixed from the very origin or whether it subsequently came from the animals.</p>
<p>Certain European philosophers agree that the species grows and develops, and that even change and alteration are also possible. One of the proofs that they give for this theory is that through the attentive study and verification of the science of geology it has become clear that the existence of the vegetable preceded that of the animal, and that of the animal preceded that of man. They admit that both the vegetable and the animal species have changed, for in some of the strata of the earth they have discovered plants which existed in the past and are now extinct; they have progressed, grown in strength, their form and appearance have changed, and so the species have altered. In the same way, in the strata of the earth there are some species of animals which have changed and are transformed. One of these animals is the serpent. There are indications that the serpent once had feet, but through the lapse of time those members have disappeared. In the same way, in the vertebral column of man there is an</p>	<p>Certain European philosophers hold that species evolve and can even change and transform into other species. Among the proofs they advance for this claim is that through careful geological research and investigation it has become clear and evident to us that the existence of the plants preceded that of the animals and that the existence of the animals preceded that of man. They hold, moreover, that both vegetable and animal kingdoms have undergone transformation, for in certain strata of the earth plants have been discovered which existed in the past but which have since disappeared, meaning that they evolved, became hardier and changed in form and appearance, and thus the species have changed. Likewise, in the strata of the earth there are certain animal species which have changed and altered. One of these is the snake, which has vestigial limbs, that is, signs indicating that it once had feet, which have disappeared over time and left behind only a remnant. In like manner, there is in man’s vertebral column a</p>

<p>indication which amounts to a proof that, like other animals, he once had a tail. At one time that member was useful, but when man developed, it was no longer of use; and, therefore, it gradually disappeared. As the serpent took refuge under the ground and became a creeping animal, it was no longer in need of feet, so they disappeared; but their traces survive. The principal argument is this: that the existence of traces of members proves that they once existed, and as now they are no longer of service, they have gradually disappeared. Therefore, while the perfect and necessary members have remained, those which are unnecessary have gradually disappeared by the modification of the species, but the traces of them continue.</p>	<p>vestige indicating that like other animals he once had a tail, of which, they assert, traces still remain. At one point that member was useful, but as man evolved it lost its utility and hence it gradually disappeared. Likewise, as snakes came to live beneath the ground and became creeping animals, they were no longer in need of feet and so the latter disappeared, leaving behind a remnant. Their principal proof is that these vestigial limbs are evidence of the existence of earlier limbs that have gradually disappeared for want of use and that they no longer have any benefit or reason to exist. Thus, the fit and necessary limbs have remained, while the unnecessary ones have gradually disappeared as a result of the transformation of the species, but have left behind a remnant.</p>
<p>The first answer to this argument is the fact that the animal having preceded man is not a proof of the evolution, change and alteration of the species, nor that man was raised from the animal world to the human world. For while the individual appearance of these different beings is certain, it is possible that man came into existence after the animal. So when we examine the vegetable kingdom, we see that the fruits of the different trees do not arrive at maturity at one time; on the contrary, some come first and others afterward. This priority does not prove that the later fruit of one tree was produced from the earlier fruit of another tree.</p>	<p>The first answer to this argument is that the antecedence of animals to man is not a proof that the essence of the human species was altered or transformed or that man came from the animal kingdom. For so long as it is acknowledged that these different beings have appeared in time, it is possible that man simply came into existence after the animal. Thus we observe in the vegetable kingdom that the fruits of different trees do not appear all at once; on the contrary, some appear earlier in the season and others later. This priority is not a proof that the later fruit of one tree was produced from the earlier fruit of another.</p>
<p>Second, these slight signs and traces of members have perhaps a great reason of which the mind is not yet cognizant. How many things exist of which we do not yet know the reason! So the science of physiology—that is to say, the knowledge of the composition of the members—records that the reason and cause of the difference in the colors of animals, and of the hair of men, of the redness of the lips, and of the variety of the colors of birds, is still unknown; it is secret and hidden. But it is known that the pupil of the eye is black so as to attract the rays of the sun, for if it were another color—that is, uniformly white—it would not attract the rays of the sun. Therefore, as the reason of the things we have mentioned is unknown, it is possible that the reason and the wisdom of these traces of</p>	<p>Secondly, these minor traces and vestigial limbs might have some great underlying wisdom which the human mind has so far been unable to fathom. How many things are found in this world whose underlying wisdom to this day has not been grasped! Thus, it is said in physiology — the science of the relations of the body's organs — that the underlying wisdom and cause of the differences in the colouration of animals and of human hair, or of the redness of the lips, or of the variety of the colours of birds, are still unknown and remain hidden and concealed. But it has been discovered that the blackness of the pupil of the eye is due to its absorbing the rays of the sun, for if it were of another colour, say, uniformly white, it would not absorb these rays. Now, so long as the wisdom underlying the things</p>

<p>members, whether they be in the animal or man, are equally unknown. Certainly there is a reason, even though it is not known.</p>	<p>that we have mentioned is unknown, one may well imagine that the reason and wisdom of the vestigial limbs, whether in the animal or in man, is also unknown. Such an underlying wisdom of course exists, even though it may not be known.</p>
<p>Third, let us suppose that there was a time when some animals, or even man, possessed some members which have now disappeared; this is not a sufficient proof of the change and evolution of the species. For man, from the beginning of the embryonic period till he reaches the degree of maturity, goes through different forms and appearances. His aspect, his form, his appearance and color change; he passes from one form to another, and from one appearance to another. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the embryonic period he is of the species of man—that is to say, an embryo of a man and not of an animal; but this is not at first apparent, but later it becomes visible and evident.</p>	<p>Thirdly, even if we were to suppose that certain animals, or even man, once possessed limbs which have now disappeared, this would not be a sufficient proof of the transformation of the species. For man, from the conception of the embryo until the attainment of maturity, assumes different forms and appearances. His appearance, form, features and colour change, that is, he passes from form to form and from appearance to appearance. Yet, from the formation of the embryo he belongs to the human species, that is, it is the embryo of a man and not of an animal. But at first this fact is not apparent; only later does it become plain and visible.</p>
<p>For example, let us suppose that man once resembled the animal, and that now he has progressed and changed. Supposing this to be true, it is still not a proof of the change of species. No, as before mentioned, it is merely like the change and alteration of the embryo of man until it reaches the degree of reason and perfection. We will state it more clearly. Let us suppose that there was a time when man walked on his hands and feet, or had a tail; this change and alteration is like that of the fetus in the womb of the mother. Although it changes in all ways, and grows and develops until it reaches the perfect form, from the beginning it is a special species. We also see in the vegetable kingdom that the original species of the genus do not change and alter, but the form, color and bulk will change and alter, or even progress.</p>	<p>For example, let us suppose that man once bore a resemblance to the animal and that he has since evolved and transformed. Accepting this statement does not prove the transformation of species, but could instead be likened to the changes and transformations that the human embryo undergoes before reaching its full development and maturity, as was earlier mentioned. To be more explicit, let us suppose that man once walked on all fours or had a tail: this change and transformation is similar to that of the fetus in the womb of the mother. Even though the fetus develops and evolves in every possible way before it reaches its full development, from the beginning it belongs to a distinct species. The same holds true in the vegetable kingdom, where we observe that the original and distinctive character of the species does not change, while its form, colour and mass do change, transform, and evolve.</p>
<p>To recapitulate: as man in the womb of the mother passes from form to form, from shape to shape, changes and develops, and is still the human species from the beginning of the embryonic period—in the same way man, from the beginning of his existence in the matrix of the world, is also a distinct species—that is, man—and has gradually evolved from one form to</p>	<p>To summarize: Just as man progresses, evolves, and is transformed from one form and appearance to another in the womb of the mother, while remaining from the beginning a human embryo, so too has man remained a distinct essence — that is, the human species — from the beginning of his formation in the matrix of the world and has passed gradually from form</p>

<p>another. Therefore, this change of appearance, this evolution of members, this development and growth, even though we admit the reality of growth and progress, does not prevent the species from being original. Man from the beginning was in this perfect form and composition, and possessed capacity and aptitude for acquiring material and spiritual perfections, and was the manifestation of these words, "We will make man in Our image and likeness." He has only become more pleasing, more beautiful and more graceful. Civilization has brought him out of his wild state, just as the wild fruits which are cultivated by a gardener become finer, sweeter and acquire more freshness and delicacy.</p>	<p>to form. It follows that this change of appearance, this evolution of organs, and this growth and development do not preclude the originality of the species. Now, even accepting the reality of evolution and progress; nevertheless, from the moment of his appearance man has possessed perfect composition, and has had the capacity and potential to acquire both material and spiritual perfections and to become the embodiment of the verse, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." At most he has become more pleasing, more refined and graceful, and by virtue of civilization he has emerged from his wild state, just as the wild fruits become finer and sweeter under the cultivation of the gardener and acquire ever greater delicacy and vitality.</p>
<p>The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.</p>	<p>The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.</p>
<p>SPIRITUAL PROOFS OF THE ORIGIN OF MAN</p>	<p>Spiritual Proofs of the Originality of Man</p>
<p>The proofs which we have adduced relative to the origin of the human species were logical proofs. Now we will give the spiritual proofs, which are essential. For, as we have proved Divinity by logical arguments, and have also proved logically that man exists from his origin and foundation as man, and that his species has existed from all eternity, now we will establish spiritual proofs that human existence—that is, the species of man—is a necessary existence, and that without man the perfections of Divinity would not appear. But these are spiritual proofs, not logical proofs.</p>	<p>The arguments we have adduced thus far for the originality of the human species have been rational ones. Now we will provide spiritual arguments, which are indeed the fundamental ones. For we established the existence of God through rational arguments, and it was likewise established through rational arguments that man has been man from his very inception and origin and that the essence of his species has existed from eternity. We will now present spiritual proofs that human existence — that is, the human species — is a necessary existence and that without man the perfections of Divinity would not shine forth. But these are spiritual and not rational arguments.</p>
<p>We have many times demonstrated and established that man is the noblest of beings, the sum of all perfections, and that all beings and all existences are the centers from which the glory of God is reflected—that is to say, the signs of the Divinity of God are apparent in the realities of things and of creatures. Just as the terrestrial globe is the place where the rays of the sun are reflected—as its light, its heat and its influence are apparent and visible in all the atoms of the earth—so, in the same way, the atoms of beings, in this infinite space, proclaim and prove one of the divine perfections. Nothing is deprived of this</p>	<p>We have established time and again through proofs and arguments that man is the noblest of all beings and the sum of all perfections. Indeed all existing things are the seat of the revelation of the divine splendours, that is, the signs of the Divinity of God are manifest in the realities of all things. Just as the earth is the place where the rays of the sun are reflected — meaning that the light, heat and influence of the sun are plain and manifest in all the atoms of the earth — so too does each one of the atoms of the universe in this infinite space proclaim one of the perfections of God. Nothing is deprived of this: each is either</p>

<p>benefit; either it is a sign of the mercy of God, or it is a sign of His power, His greatness, His justice, His nurturing providence; or it is a sign of the generosity of God, His vision, His hearing, His knowledge, His grace and so on.</p>	<p>a sign of the mercy of God, or of His power, or His greatness, or His justice, or His sustaining providence, or His generosity, or His sight, or His hearing, or His knowledge, or His grace, and so on.</p>
<p>Without doubt each being is the center of the shining forth of the glory of God—that is to say, the perfections of God appear from it and are resplendent in it. It is like the sun, which is resplendent in the desert, upon the sea, in the trees, in the fruits and blossoms, and in all earthly things. The world, indeed each existing being, proclaims to us one of the names of God, but the reality of man is the collective reality, the general reality, and is the center where the glory of all the perfections of God shine forth—that is to say, for each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God there exists a sign in man. If it were otherwise, man could not imagine these perfections and could not understand them. So we say that God is the seer, and the eye is the sign of His vision; if this sight were not in man, how could we imagine the vision of God? For the blind (that is, one born blind) cannot imagine sight; and the deaf (that is, one deaf from birth) cannot imagine hearing; and the dead cannot realize life.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that every existing thing is of necessity the seat of the revelation of the divine splendours, that is, the perfections of God are manifested and revealed therein. It is even as the sun which shines upon the desert, the sea, the trees, the fruits, the blossoms — upon all earthly things. Now, the world of existence, indeed every created thing, proclaims but one of the names of God, but the reality of man is an all-encompassing and universal reality which is the seat of the revelation of all the divine perfections. That is, a sign of each one of the names, attributes and perfections that we ascribe to God exists in man. If such were not the case, he would be unable to imagine and comprehend these perfections. For example, we say that God is all-seeing. The eye is the sign of His sight: if this faculty were lacking in man, how could we imagine the sight of God? For one born blind cannot imagine what it is to see, any more than one born deaf can imagine what it is to hear, or the lifeless what it is to be alive.</p>
<p>Consequently, the Divinity of God, which is the sum of all perfections, reflects itself in the reality of man—that is to say, the Essence of Oneness is the gathering of all perfections, and from this unity He casts a reflection upon the human reality. Man, then, is the perfect mirror facing the Sun of Truth and is the center of radiation: the Sun of Truth shines in this mirror. The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the representative of God, the messenger of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of God.</p> <p>Therefore, it cannot be said there was a time when man was not. All that we can say is that this terrestrial globe at one time did not exist, and at its beginning man did not appear upon it.</p>	<p>Thus, the Divinity of God, which is the totality of all perfections, reveals itself in the reality of man — that is, the divine Essence is the sum total of all perfections, and from this station it casts a ray of its splendour upon the human reality. In other words, the Sun of Truth is reflected in this mirror. Thus man is a perfect mirror facing the Sun of Truth and is the seat of its reflection. The splendour of all the divine perfections is manifest in the reality of man, and it is for this reason that he is the vicegerent and apostle of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the purpose of existence is the revelation of the divine perfections. We cannot say, then, that there was a time when man was not. At most we can say that there was a time when this earth did not exist, and that at the beginning man was not present upon it.</p>
<p>But from the beginning which has no beginning, to the end which has no end, a Perfect</p>	<p>But from the beginning that has no beginning to the end that has no end, a perfect Manifestation</p>

<p>Manifestation always exists. This Man of Whom we speak is not every man; we mean the Perfect Man. For the noblest part of the tree is the fruit, which is the reason of its existence. If the tree had no fruit, it would have no meaning. Therefore, it cannot be imagined that the worlds of existence, whether the stars or this earth, were once inhabited by the donkey, cow, mouse and cat, and that they were without man! This supposition is false and meaningless.</p>	<p>has always existed. This Man of whom we speak here is not just any man: that which we intend is the Perfect Man. For the noblest part of the tree, and the fundamental purpose of its existence, is the fruit. A tree without fruit is of no use. Therefore, it cannot be imagined that the world of existence, whether in the realms above or below, was once populated by cows and donkeys, cats and mice, and yet was deprived of the presence of man. What a false and vacuous notion!</p>
<p>The word of God is clear as the sun. This is a spiritual proof, but one which we cannot at the beginning put forth for the benefit of the materialists. First we must speak of the logical proofs, afterward the spiritual proofs.</p>	<p>The word of God is as clear as the sun. This is a spiritual argument, but it cannot be presented to the material philosophers at the outset. Rather, we must first present the rational arguments and only afterward the spiritual ones.</p>
<p>THE SPIRIT AND MIND OF MAN HAVE EXISTED FROM THE BEGINNING</p>	<p>The Appearance of the Spirit and the Mind in Man</p>
<p>Question.—Does man in the beginning possess mind and spirit, or are they an outcome of his evolution?</p>	<p>Question: Did the mind and the spirit appear in the human species from the very beginning of its growth and development on earth, or was it a gradual process? And, if the latter, was this achieved over a short span of time or over a long period?</p>
<p>Answer.—The beginning of the existence of man on the terrestrial globe resembles his formation in the womb of the mother. The embryo in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops until birth, after which it continues to grow and develop until it reaches the age of discretion and maturity. Though in infancy the signs of the mind and spirit appear in man, they do not reach the degree of perfection; they are imperfect. Only when man attains maturity do the mind and the spirit appear and become evident in utmost perfection.</p>	<p>Answer: The beginning of the formation of man on the terrestrial globe is like the formation of the human embryo in the womb of the mother. The embryo gradually grows and develops until it is born, and thereafter it continues to grow and develop until it reaches the stage of maturity. Although in infancy the signs of the mind and the spirit are already present in man, they do not appear in a state of perfection and remain incomplete. But when man attains maturity the mind and the spirit manifest themselves in the utmost perfection.</p>
<p>So also the formation of man in the matrix of the world was in the beginning like the embryo; then gradually he made progress in perfectness, and grew and developed until he reached the state of maturity, when the mind and spirit became visible in the greatest power. In the beginning of his formation the mind and spirit also existed, but they were hidden; later they were manifested. In the womb of the world mind and spirit also existed in the embryo, but they were concealed; afterward they appeared. So it is that in the seed</p>	<p>Likewise, at the beginning of his formation in the matrix of the world, man was like an embryo. He then gradually progressed by degrees, and grew and developed until he reached the stage of maturity, when the mind and the spirit manifested themselves in the utmost perfection. From the beginning of his formation the mind and the spirit existed, but they were hidden and appeared only later. In the world of the womb, too, the mind and the spirit exist in the embryo, but are concealed and appear only afterward. It is</p>

<p>the tree exists, but it is hidden and concealed; when it develops and grows, the complete tree appears. In the same way the growth and development of all beings is gradual; this is the universal divine organization and the natural system. The seed does not at once become a tree; the embryo does not at once become a man; the mineral does not suddenly become a stone. No, they grow and develop gradually and attain the limit of perfection.</p>	<p>even as the seed: the tree exists within it but is hidden and concealed; when the seed grows and develops, the tree appears in its fullness. In like manner the growth and development of all beings proceeds by gradual degrees. This is the universal and divinely ordained law and the natural order. The seed does not suddenly become the tree; the embryo does not at once become the man; the mineral substance does not in a moment become the stone: No, all these grow and develop gradually until they attain the limit of perfection.</p>
<p>All beings, whether large or small, were created perfect and complete from the first, but their perfections appear in them by degrees. The organization of God is one; the evolution of existence is one; the divine system is one. Whether they be small or great beings, all are subject to one law and system. Each seed has in it from the first all the vegetable perfections. For example, in the seed all the vegetable perfections exist from the beginning, but not visibly; afterward little by little they appear. So it is first the shoot which appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits; but from the beginning of its existence all these things are in the seed, potentially, though not apparently.</p> <p>In the same way, the embryo possesses from the first all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, the sight, the smell, the taste—in one word, all the powers—but they are not visible and become so only by degrees.</p>	<p>All beings, whether universal or particular, were created perfect and complete from the beginning. The most one can say is that their perfections only become apparent gradually. The law of God is one; the evolution of existence is one; the divine order is one. All beings great and small are subject to one law and one order. Every seed has from the beginning all the perfections of the plant. For example, all the vegetable perfections existed in this seed at the outset but were invisible and appeared only gradually. So it is the shoot which first appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves and blossoms, and finally the fruits. But from the beginning of its formation all of these existed potentially, albeit invisibly, in the seed. Likewise, from the beginning the embryo possesses all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, sight, smell and taste — in a word, all the powers — but they are invisible and become apparent only gradually.</p>
<p>Similarly, the terrestrial globe from the beginning was created with all its elements, substances, minerals, atoms and organisms; but these only appeared by degrees: first the mineral, then the plant, afterward the animal, and finally man. But from the first these kinds and species existed, but were undeveloped in the terrestrial globe, and then appeared only gradually. For the supreme organization of God, and the universal natural system, surround all beings, and all are subject to this rule. When you consider this universal system, you see that there is not one of the beings which at its coming into existence has reached the limit of perfection. No, they</p>	<p>Similarly, the terrestrial globe was created from the beginning with all its elements, substances, minerals, parts and components; but these appeared only gradually: first the minerals, then the plants, then the animals, and finally man. But from the beginning these kinds and species were latent in the earthly realm and appeared gradually thereafter. For the supreme law of God and the universal natural order encompasses all things and subjects them to its rule. When you consider this universal order, you see that not a single thing reaches the limit of perfection immediately upon coming into existence, but grows and develops gradually until it reaches that stage.</p>

<p>gradually grow and develop, and then attain the degree of perfection.</p>	
<p>THE APPEARING OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BODY</p>	<p>The Appearance of the Spirit in the Body</p>
<p>Question.—What is the wisdom of the spirit's appearing in the body?</p>	<p>Question: What is the wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in the body?</p>
<p>Answer.—The wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in the body is this: the human spirit is a Divine Trust, and it must traverse all conditions, for its passage and movement through the conditions of existence will be the means of its acquiring perfections. So when a man travels and passes through different regions and numerous countries with system and method, it is certainly a means of his acquiring perfection, for he will see places, scenes and countries, from which he will discover the conditions and states of other nations. He will thus become acquainted with the geography of countries and their wonders and arts; he will familiarize himself with the habits, customs and usages of peoples; he will see the civilization and progress of the epoch; he will become aware of the policy of governments and the power and capacity of each country. It is the same when the human spirit passes through the conditions of existence: it will become the possessor of each degree and station. Even in the condition of the body it will surely acquire perfections.</p>	<p>Answer: The wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in the body is this: The human spirit is a divine trust which must traverse every degree, for traversing and passing through the degrees of existence is the means of its acquiring perfections. So, for example, when a man travels in an orderly and methodical manner through many different countries and regions, this will most certainly be the means of acquiring perfections, for he will see at firsthand various sites, scenes and regions, learn about the affairs and circumstances of other nations, become familiar with the geography of other lands, acquaint himself with their arts and wonders, become informed of the customs, conduct and character of their inhabitants, witness the civilization and the advancements of the time, and be apprised of the manner of government, the capacity and receptivity of each country. In the same way, when the human spirit traverses the degrees of existence and attains each degree and station — even that of the body — it will assuredly acquire perfections.</p>
<p>Besides this, it is necessary that the signs of the perfection of the spirit should be apparent in this world, so that the world of creation may bring forth endless results, and this body may receive life and manifest the divine bounties. So, for example, the rays of the sun must shine upon the earth, and the solar heat develop the earthly beings; if the rays and heat of the sun did not shine upon the earth, the earth would be uninhabited, without meaning; and its development would be retarded. In the same way, if the perfections of the spirit did not appear in this world, this world would be unenlightened and absolutely brutal. By the appearance of the spirit in the physical form, this world is enlightened. As the spirit of man is the cause of the life of the body, so the world is in the condition of the body, and man is in the condition of the spirit. If there were no man, the perfections of the spirit would not appear, and</p>	<p>Moreover, it is necessary that the signs of the perfections of the spirit appear in this world, that the realm of creation may bring forth endless fruits and that this body of the contingent world may receive life and manifest the divine bounties. So, for example, the rays of the sun must shine upon the earth and its heat must nurture all earthly beings; if the rays and heat of the sun were not to reach the earth, it would remain idle and desolate and its development would be arrested. Likewise, were the perfections of the spirit not to appear in this world, it would become dark and wholly animalistic. It is through the appearance of the spirit in the material body that this world is illumined. Just as the spirit of man is the cause of the life of his body, so is the whole world even as a body and man as its spirit. If man did not exist, if the perfections of the spirit were not manifested and the light of the mind</p>

<p>the light of the mind would not be resplendent in this world. This world would be like a body without a soul.</p>	<p>was not shining in this world, it would be like a body without a spirit.</p>
<p>This world is also in the condition of a fruit tree, and man is like the fruit; without fruit the tree would be useless.</p>	<p>By another token, this world is even as a tree and man as the fruit; without the fruit the tree would be of no use.</p>
<p>Moreover, these members, these elements, this composition, which are found in the organism of man, are an attraction and magnet for the spirit; it is certain that the spirit will appear in it. So a mirror which is clear will certainly attract the rays of the sun. It will become luminous, and wonderful images will appear in it—that is to say, when these existing elements are gathered together according to the natural order, and with perfect strength, they become a magnet for the spirit, and the spirit will become manifest in them with all its perfections.</p>	<p>Beyond this, the members, constituent parts and composition that are found within man attract and act as a magnet for the spirit: the spirit is bound to appear in it. Thus, when a mirror is polished, it is bound to attract the rays of the sun, to be illumined, and to reflect splendid images. That is, when these physical elements are gathered and combined together, according to the natural order and with the utmost perfection, they become a magnet for the spirit, and the spirit will manifest itself therein with all its perfections.</p>
<p>Under these conditions it cannot be said, “What is the necessity for the rays of the sun to descend upon the mirror?”—for the connection which exists between the reality of things, whether they be spiritual or material, requires that when the mirror is clear and faces the sun, the light of the sun must become apparent in it. In the same way, when the elements are arranged and combined in the most glorious system, organization and manner, the human spirit will appear and be manifest in them. This is the decree of the Powerful, the Wise.</p>	<p>From this perspective one does not ask, “Why is it necessary for the rays of the sun to fall upon the mirror?”, for the relationships that bind together the realities of all things, whether spiritual or material, require that when the mirror is polished and turned towards the sun it should manifest the rays thereof. In like manner, when the elements are composed and combined according to the noblest order, arrangement and manner, the human spirit will appear and manifest itself therein. Such is the decree of the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.</p>
<p>THE RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND THE CREATURE</p>	<p>The Connection between God and His Creation</p>
<p>Question.—What is the nature of the connection between God and the creature—that is to say, between the Independent, the Most High, and the other beings?</p>	<p>Question: What is the nature of the connection between God and His creation, between the Absolute and Inaccessible One and all other beings?</p>
<p>Answer.—The connection between God and the creatures is that of the creator to the creation; it is like the connection between the sun and the dark bodies of contingent beings, and is the connection between the maker and the things that he has made. The sun in its own essence is independent of the bodies which it lights, for its light is in itself and is free and independent of the terrestrial globe; so the earth is under the influence of the sun and receives its light, whereas the sun and its rays are entirely</p>	<p>Answer: The connection between God and His creation is that of the originator and the originated, of the sun and the dark bodies of the universe, of the craftsman and his handiwork. Not only is the sun sanctified in its very essence above all the bodies that receive its illumination, but its light is also in its essence sanctified from and independent of the earth. So, though the earth is nurtured by the sun and is the recipient of its light, the sun and its rays are nonetheless</p>

<p>independent of the earth. But if there were no sun, the earth and all earthly beings could not exist.</p>	<p>sanctified above it. But were it not for the sun, the earth and all terrestrial life could not exist.</p>
<p>The dependence of the creatures upon God is a dependence of emanation—that is to say, creatures emanate from God; they do not manifest Him. The relation is that of emanation and not that of manifestation. The light of the sun emanates from the sun; it does not manifest it. The appearance through emanation is like the appearance of the rays from the luminary of the horizons of the world—that is to say, the holy essence of the Sun of Truth is not divided and does not descend to the condition of the creatures. In the same way, the globe of the sun does not become divided and does not descend to the earth. No, the rays of the sun, which are its bounty, emanate from it and illumine the dark bodies.</p>	<p>The procession of creation from God is a procession through emanation; that is, creation emanates from God, it does not manifest Him. The connection is that of emanation and not of manifestation. The light of the sun emanates from the sun, it does not manifest it. Appearance through emanation is like the appearance of the rays from the sun: the sanctified Essence of the Sun of Truth cannot be divided or descend into the condition of the creation. In the same way, the sun does not divide itself or descend upon the earth, but its rays — the outpourings of its grace — emanate from it and illumine the dark bodies.</p>
<p>But the appearance through manifestation is the manifestation of the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit from the seed; for the seed in its own essence becomes branches and fruits, and its reality enters into the branches, the leaves and fruits. This appearance through manifestation would be for God, the Most High, simple imperfection; and this is quite impossible, for the implication would be that the Absolute Preexistent is qualified with phenomenal attributes. But if this were so, pure independence would become mere poverty, and true existence would become nonexistence, and this is impossible.</p>	<p>But appearance through manifestation is like the manifestation of the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits from the seed; for the seed itself becomes the branches and fruit and its reality descends into them. This manifestational appearance would be sheer imperfection and utterly impossible for the Most High, for this would require unconditioned pre-existence to take on the attributes of the originated, absolute independence to become abject poverty, and the essence of existence to become pure non-existence; and this is in no wise possible.</p>
<p>Therefore, all creatures emanate from God—that is to say, it is by God that all things are realized, and by Him that all beings have attained to existence. The first thing which emanated from God is that universal reality, which the ancient philosophers termed the “First Mind,” and which the people of Bahá call the “First Will.” This emanation, in that which concerns its action in the world of God, is not limited by time or place; it is without beginning or end—beginning and end in relation to God are one. The preexistence of God is the preexistence of essence, and also preexistence of time, and the phenomenality of contingency is essential and not temporal, as we have already explained one day at table.</p>	<p>It follows that all things have emanated from God, that is, it is through God that all things have been realized and through Him that the contingent world has come to exist. The first thing to emanate from God is that universal reality which the ancient philosophers termed the “First Intellect” and which the people of Bahá call the “Primal Will.” This emanation, with respect to its action in the world of God, is not limited by either time or place and has neither beginning nor end, for in relation to God the beginning and the end are one and the same. The pre-existence of God is both essential and temporal, while the origination of the contingent</p>

	world is essential but not temporal, as we have already explained another day at table.
Though the “First Mind” is without beginning, it does not become a sharer in the preexistence of God, for the existence of the universal reality in relation to the existence of God is nothingness, and it has not the power to become an associate of God and like unto Him in preexistence. This subject has been before explained.	Though the First Intellect is without beginning, this does not mean that it shares in the pre-existence of God, for in relation to the existence of God the existence of that universal Reality is mere nothingness — it cannot even be said to exist, let alone to partake of the pre-existence of God. An explanation of this matter was provided on a previous occasion.
The existence of living things signifies composition, and their death, decomposition. But universal matter and the elements do not become absolutely annihilated and destroyed. No, their nonexistence is simply transformation. For instance, when man is annihilated, he becomes dust; but he does not become absolutely nonexistent. He still exists in the shape of dust, but transformation has taken place, and this composition is accidentally decomposed. The annihilation of the other beings is the same, for existence does not become absolute nonexistence, and absolute nonexistence does not become existence.	As for created things, their life consists in composition and their death in decomposition. But matter and the universal elements cannot be entirely destroyed and annihilated. No, their annihilation is merely transformation. For instance, when man dies his body becomes dust, but it does not become absolute non-existence: it retains a mineral existence, but a transformation has taken place and that composition has been subjected to decomposition. It is the same with the annihilation of all other beings, for existence does not become absolute non-existence and absolute non-existence does not acquire existence.
ON THE PROCEEDING OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT FROM GOD	The Procession of the Human Spirit from God
Question.—In the Bible it is said that God breathed the spirit into the body of man. What is the meaning of this verse?	Question: In what manner does the human spirit proceed from God, since in the Torah it is said that God breathed the spirit into the body of man?
Answer.—Know that proceeding is of two kinds: the proceeding and appearance through emanation, and the proceeding and appearance through manifestation. The proceeding through emanation is like the coming forth of the action from the actor, of the writing from the writer. Now the writing emanates from the writer, and the discourse emanates from the speaker, and in the same way the human spirit emanates from God. It is not that it manifests God—that is to say, no part has been detached from the Divine Reality to enter the body of man. No, as the discourse emanates from the speaker, the spirit appears in the body of man.	Answer: Know that procession is of two kinds: procession and appearance through emanation and procession and appearance through manifestation. Emanational procession is like the procession of the handiwork from its author. For example, the writing proceeds from the writer. Now, just as the writing emanates from the writer and the discourse from the speaker, so does the human spirit emanate from God. But it does not manifest Him: that is, no part has been separated from the divine Reality to enter into the body of man. No, the human spirit has emanated, just as speech emanates from the speaker, and become manifested in the body of man.
But the proceeding through manifestation is the manifestation of the reality of a thing in other	As for manifestational procession, it is the manifestation of the reality of a thing in other

<p>forms, like the coming forth of this tree from the seed of the tree, or the coming forth of the flower from the seed of the flower, for it is the seed itself which appears in the form of the branches, leaves and flowers. This is called the proceeding through manifestation.</p>	<p>forms, like the procession of this tree or this flower from their seeds, for it is the seed itself that has become manifested in the form of the branches, leaves and flowers. This is called manifestational procession.</p>
<p>The spirits of men, with reference to God, have dependence through emanation, just as the discourse proceeds from the speaker and the writing from the writer—that is to say, the speaker himself does not become the discourse, nor does the writer himself become the writing; no, rather they have the proceeding of emanation. The speaker has perfect ability and power, and the discourse emanates from him, as the action does from the actor. The Real Speaker, the Essence of Unity, has always been in one condition, which neither changes nor alters, has neither transformation nor vicissitude. He is the Eternal, the Immortal. Therefore, the proceeding of the human spirits from God is through emanation. When it is said in the Bible that God breathed His spirit into man, this spirit is that which, like the discourse, emanates from the Real Speaker, taking effect in the reality of man.</p>	<p>The spirits of men proceed from God by emanation, in the same way as the discourse proceeds from the speaker and the writing from the writer; that is, the speaker himself does not become the speech, any more than the writer becomes the writing: the connection is rather one of emanational procession. For the speaker remains in an absolute state of ability and power as the discourse emanates from him, even as the action emanates from its author. The true Speaker, the divine Essence, ever remains in the same condition and experiences no change or alteration, no transformation or vicissitude. It has neither beginning nor end. The procession of human spirits from God is therefore an emanational procession. When it is said in the Torah that God breathed His spirit into man, this spirit is even as speech that has emanated from the true Speaker and taken effect in the reality of man.</p>
<p>But the proceeding through manifestation (if by this is meant the divine appearance, and not division into parts), we have said, is the proceeding and the appearance of the Holy Spirit and the Word, which is from God. As it is said in the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God”; then the Holy Spirit and the Word are the appearance of God. The Spirit and the Word mean the divine perfections that appeared in the Reality of Christ, and these perfections were with God; so the sun manifests all its glory in the mirror. For the Word does not signify the body of Christ, no, but the divine perfections manifested in Him. For Christ was like a clear mirror which was facing the Sun of Reality; and the perfections of the Sun of Reality—that is to say, its light and heat—were visible and apparent in this mirror. If we look into the mirror, we see the sun, and we say, “It is the sun.” Therefore, the Word and the Holy Spirit, which signify the perfections of God, are the divine appearance. This is the meaning of the</p>	<p>Now, if we were to understand manifestational procession as “appearance” rather than “division into parts,” we have already stated that this is the manner of the procession and appearance of the Holy Spirit and the Word, which are from God. As it is said in the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” It follows then that the Holy Spirit and the Word are the appearance of God and consist in the divine perfections that shone forth in the reality of Christ. And these perfections were with God, even as the sun which manifests the fullness of its glory in a mirror. For by the Word is not meant the body of Christ but the divine perfections that were manifested in Him. Thus Christ was like a spotless mirror which was turned towards the Sun of Truth, and the perfections of that Sun, that is, its light and heat, were plainly manifest in that mirror. If we look into the mirror, we see the sun and we say it is the sun. Therefore, the Word and the Holy Spirit, which consist in the perfections of God, are the</p>

<p>verse in the Gospel which says: “The Word was with God, and the Word was God”; for the divine perfections are not different from the Essence of Oneness. The perfections of Christ are called the Word because all the beings are in the condition of letters, and one letter has not a complete meaning, while the perfections of Christ have the power of the word because a complete meaning can be inferred from a word. As the Reality of Christ was the manifestation of the divine perfections, therefore, it was like the word. Why? Because He is the sum of perfect meanings. This is why He is called the Word.</p>	<p>divine appearance. This is the meaning of the verse in the Gospel which says: “the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” for the divine perfections cannot be distinguished from the divine Essence. The perfections of Christ are called the Word since all created things are like individual letters, and individual letters do not convey a complete meaning; while the perfections of Christ are even as an entire word, for from a word a complete meaning can be inferred. As the reality of Christ was the manifestation of the divine perfections, it was even as a word. Why? Because it comprised a complete meaning, and that is why it has been called the Word.</p>
<p>And know that the proceeding of the Word and the Holy Spirit from God, which is the proceeding and appearance of manifestation, must not be understood to mean that the Reality of Divinity had been divided into parts, or multiplied, or that it had descended from the exaltation of holiness and purity. God forbid! If a pure, fine mirror faces the sun, the light and heat, the form and the image of the sun will be resplendent in it with such manifestation that if a beholder says of the sun, which is brilliant and visible in the mirror, “This is the sun,” it is true. Nevertheless, the mirror is the mirror, and the sun is the sun. The One Sun, even if it appears in numerous mirrors, is one. This state is neither abiding nor entering, neither commingling nor descending; for entering, abiding, descending, issuing forth and commingling are the necessities and characteristics of bodies, not of spirits; then how much less do they belong to the sanctified and pure Reality of God. God is exempt from all that is not in accordance with His purity and His exalted and sublime sanctity.</p>	<p>And know that the procession of the Word and the Holy Spirit from God, which is a manifestational procession and appearance, should not be taken to mean that the reality of the Divinity has been divided or multiplied or has descended from its heights of purity and sanctity. God forbid! If a clear and spotless mirror were placed before the sun, the light and heat, the form and image of the sun would appear therein with such a manifestational appearance that if a beholder were to say, “This is the sun,” he would be speaking the truth. But the mirror is the mirror and the sun is the sun. The sun is but one sun, and remains one even if it appears in numerous mirrors. There is no place here for inherence, egress, commingling or descent; for egress, regress, inherence, descent and commingling are among the characteristics and requirements of bodies, not of spirits, how much less of the holy and sanctified Reality of the Divinity. Glorified is God above all that ill beseemeth His holiness and sanctity, and exalted is He in the heights of His sublimity!</p>
<p>The Sun of Reality, as we have said, has always been in one condition; it has no change, no alteration, no transformation and no vicissitude. It is eternal and everlasting. But the Holy Reality of the Word of God is in the condition of the pure, fine and shining mirror; the heat, the light, the image and likeness—that is to say, the perfections of the Sun of Reality—appear in it. That is why Christ says in the Gospel, “The Father is in the Son”—that is to say, the Sun of Reality</p>	<p>The Sun of Truth, as we have said, has ever remained in the same condition and undergoes neither change nor alteration, neither transformation nor vicissitude. It has neither beginning nor end. But the sanctified Reality of the Word of God is even as a clear, spotless and shining mirror, wherein the heat and light, the form and image of the Sun of Truth — that is to say, all its perfections — are reflected. That is why Christ says in the Gospel, “The Father is in</p>

appears in the mirror. Praise be to the One Who shone upon this Holy Reality, Who is sanctified among the beings!	the Son,” meaning that the Sun of Truth shines resplendent in this mirror. Glorified be He Who hath cast His splendour upon this Reality that is sanctified above all created things!
SOUL, SPIRIT AND MIND	Spirit, Soul, and Mind
Question.—What is the difference between the mind, spirit and soul?	Question: What is the difference between mind, spirit, and soul?
Answer.—It has been before explained that spirit is universally divided into five categories: the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the Holy Spirit.	Answer: It was already explained that in general spirit is divided into five categories: the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the Holy Spirit.
The vegetable spirit is the power of growth which is brought about in the seed through the influence of other existences.	The vegetable spirit is that power of growth which is brought about in the seed through the influence of other created things.
The animal spirit is the power of all the senses, which is realized from the composition and mingling of elements; when this composition decomposes, the power also perishes and becomes annihilated. It may be likened to this lamp: when the oil, wick and fire are combined, it is lighted; and when this combination is dissolved—that is to say, when the combined parts are separated from one another—the lamp also is extinguished.	The animal spirit is that all-embracing sensory power which is realized through the composition and combination of the elements. When this composition disintegrates, that spirit likewise perishes and becomes non-existent. It may be likened to this lamp: When oil, wick and flame are brought together and combined, it is lit; and when this combination disintegrates, that is, when the constituent parts are separated from one another, the lamp also is extinguished.
The human spirit which distinguishes man from the animal is the rational soul, and these two names—the human spirit and the rational soul—designate one thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is the rational soul, embraces all beings, and as far as human ability permits discovers the realities of things and becomes cognizant of their peculiarities and effects, and of the qualities and properties of beings. But the human spirit, unless assisted by the spirit of faith, does not become acquainted with the divine secrets and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, polished and brilliant, is still in need of light. Until a ray of the sun reflects upon it, it cannot discover the heavenly secrets.	The human spirit, which distinguishes man from the animal, is the rational soul, and these two terms — the human spirit and the rational soul — designate one and the same thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is called the rational soul, encompasses all things and, as far as human capacity permits, discovers their realities and becomes aware of the properties and effects, the characteristics and conditions of earthly things. But the human spirit, unless it be assisted by the spirit of faith, cannot become acquainted with the divine mysteries and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, bright and polished, is still in need of light. Not until a sunbeam falls upon it can it discover the divine mysteries.
But the mind is the power of the human spirit. Spirit is the lamp; mind is the light which shines from the lamp. Spirit is the tree, and the mind is the fruit. Mind is the perfection of the spirit and is its essential quality, as the sun’s rays are the essential necessity of the sun.	As for the mind, it is the power of the human spirit. The spirit is as the lamp and the mind as the light that shines from it. The spirit is as the tree and the mind as the fruit. The mind is the perfection of the spirit and a necessary attribute thereof, even as the rays of the sun are an essential requirement of the sun itself.

<p>This explanation, though short, is complete; therefore, reflect upon it, and if God wills, you may become acquainted with the details.</p>	<p>This explanation, however brief, is complete. Reflect upon it and, God willing, you will grasp the details.</p>
<p>THE PHYSICAL POWERS AND THE INTELLECTUAL POWERS</p>	<p>The Outward and the Inward Powers of Man</p>
<p>In man five outer powers exist, which are the agents of perception—that is to say, through these five powers man perceives material beings. These are sight, which perceives visible forms; hearing, which perceives audible sounds; smell, which perceives odors; taste, which perceives foods; and feeling, which is in all parts of the body and perceives tangible things. These five powers perceive outward existences.</p>	<p>There are five outward material powers in man which are the means of perception, that is, five powers whereby man perceives material things. They are sight, which perceives sensible forms; hearing, which perceives audible sounds; smell, which perceives odours; taste, which perceives edible things; and touch, which is distributed throughout the body and which perceives tactile realities. These five powers perceive external objects.</p>
<p>Man has also spiritual powers: imagination, which conceives things; thought, which reflects upon realities; comprehension, which comprehends realities; memory, which retains whatever man imagines, thinks and comprehends. The intermediary between the five outward powers and the inward powers is the sense which they possess in common—that is to say, the sense which acts between the outer and inner powers, conveys to the inward powers whatever the outer powers discern. It is termed the common faculty, because it communicates between the outward and inward powers and thus is common to the outward and inward powers.</p>	<p>Man has likewise a number of spiritual powers: the power of imagination, which forms a mental image of things; thought, which reflects upon the realities of things; comprehension, which understands these realities; memory, which retains whatever man has imagined, thought and understood. The intermediary between these five outward powers and the inward powers is a common faculty, a sense which mediates between them and which conveys to the inward powers whatever the outward powers have perceived. It is termed the common faculty, as it is shared in common between the outward and inward powers.</p>
<p>For instance, sight is one of the outer powers; it sees and perceives this flower, and conveys this perception to the inner power—the common faculty—which transmits this perception to the power of imagination, which in its turn conceives and forms this image and transmits it to the power of thought; the power of thought reflects and, having grasped the reality, conveys it to the power of comprehension; the comprehension, when it has comprehended it, delivers the image of the object perceived to the memory, and the memory keeps it in its repository.</p>	<p>For instance, sight, which is one of the outward powers, sees and perceives this flower and conveys this perception to the inward power of the common faculty; the common faculty transmits it to the power of imagination, which in turn conceives and forms this image and transmits it to the power of thought; the power of thought reflects upon it and, having apprehended its reality, conveys it to the power of comprehension; the comprehension, once it has understood it, delivers the image of the sensible object to the memory, and the memory preserves it in its repository.</p>
<p>The outward powers are five: the power of sight, of hearing, of taste, of smell and of feeling.</p>	<p>The outward powers are five: the power of sight, of hearing, of taste, of smell and of touch. The inward powers are also five: the common faculty</p>

<p>The inner powers are also five: the common faculty, and the powers of imagination, thought, comprehension and memory.</p>	<p>and the powers of imagination, thought, comprehension and memory.</p>
<p>THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCES IN THE CHARACTERS OF MEN</p>	<p>The Differences in Human Character</p>
<p>Question.—How many kinds of character has man, and what is the cause of the differences and varieties in men?</p>	<p>Question: How many kinds of character are there in man and what are the causes of the differences and variations among them?</p>
<p>Answer.—He has the innate character, the inherited character, and the acquired character which is gained by education.</p>	<p>Answer: There is the innate character, the inherited character, and the acquired character, which is gained through education.</p>
<p>With regard to the innate character, although the divine creation is purely good, yet the varieties of natural qualities in man come from the difference of degree; all are excellent, but they are more or less so, according to the degree. So all mankind possess intelligence and capacities, but the intelligence, the capacity and the worthiness of men differ. This is evident.</p>	<p>As to the innate character, although the innate nature bestowed by God upon man is purely good, yet that character differs among men according to the degrees they occupy: all degrees are good, but some are more so than others. Thus every human being possesses intelligence and capacity, but intelligence, capacity and aptitude differ from person to person. This is self-evident.</p>
<p>For example, take a number of children of one family, of one place, of one school, instructed by one teacher, reared on the same food, in the same climate, with the same clothing, and studying the same lessons—it is certain that among these children some will be clever in the sciences, some will be of average ability, and some dull. Hence it is clear that in the original nature there exists a difference of degree and varieties of worthiness and capacity. This difference does not imply good or evil but is simply a difference of degree. One has the highest degree, another the medium degree, and another the lowest degree. So man exists; the animal, the plant and the mineral exist also—but the degrees of these four existences vary. What a difference between the existence of man and of the animal! Yet both are existences. It is evident that in existence there are differences of degrees.</p>	<p>For example, take a number of children from the same place and family, attending the same school and instructed by the same teacher, raised on the same food and in the same climate, wearing the same clothing, and studying the same lessons: it is certain that among these children some will become skilled in the arts and sciences, some will be of average ability, and some will be dull. It is therefore clear that in man's innate nature there is a difference in degree, aptitude and capacity, but it is not a matter of good or evil — it is merely a difference of degree. One occupies the highest degree, another the middle degree, and yet another the lowest degree. Thus man, the animal, the plant and the mineral all exist, but the existence of these four kinds of beings is different. Indeed, what a difference there is between the existence of man and that of the animal! Yet all these do exist, and it is evident that in existence there are differences of degree.</p>
<p>The variety of inherited qualities comes from strength and weakness of constitution—that is to say, when the two parents are weak, the children will be weak; if they are strong, the children will be robust. In the same way, purity of blood has a great effect; for the pure germ is like the superior stock which exists in plants and animals. For</p>	<p>As to differences in inherited character, they arise from the strength and weakness of man's constitution, that is, if the parents are of weak constitution then the children will be likewise, and if they are strong then the children will also be robust. Moreover, the excellence of the bloodline exerts a major influence, for the goodly</p>

<p>example, you see that children born from a weak and feeble father and mother will naturally have a feeble constitution and weak nerves; they will be afflicted and will have neither patience, nor endurance, nor resolution, nor perseverance, and will be hasty; for the children inherit the weakness and debility of their parents.</p>	<p>seed is like the superior stock that exists likewise among plants and animals. For example, you see that children born of a weak and sickly mother and father will naturally have a weak constitution and nerves, will lack patience, endurance, resolution, and perseverance, and will be impulsive, for they have inherited the weakness and frailty of their parents.</p>
<p>Besides this, an especial blessing is conferred on some families and some generations. Thus it is an especial blessing that from among the descendants of Abraham should have come all the Prophets of the children of Israel. This is a blessing that God has granted to this descent: to Moses from His father and mother, to Christ from His mother's line; also to Muḥammad and the Báḅ, and to all the Prophets and the Holy Manifestations of Israel. The Blessed Beauty is also a lineal descendant of Abraham, for Abraham had other sons besides Ishmael and Isaac who in those days migrated to the lands of Persia and Afghanistan, and the Blessed Beauty is one of their descendants.</p>	<p>Aside from this, certain families and lineages have been singled out for a special blessing. Thus the descendants of Abraham received the special blessing that all the Prophets of the House of Israel were raised up from among their ranks. This is a blessing that God bestowed upon that lineage. Moses, through both His father and His mother, Christ, through His mother, Muḥammad, the Báḅ, and all the Prophets and Holy Ones of Israel belong to that lineage. Bahá'u'lláh too is a lineal descendant of Abraham, for Abraham had other sons besides Ishmael and Isaac who in those days emigrated to the regions of Persia and Afghanistan, and the Blessed Beauty is one of their descendants.</p>
<p>Hence it is evident that inherited character also exists, and to such a degree that if the characters are not in conformity with their origin, although they belong physically to that lineage, spiritually they are not considered members of the family, like Canaan, who is not reckoned as being of the race of Noah.</p>	<p>Hence it is evident that inherited character also exists, to such a degree that if one's character does not conform to that of one's forbears, one would not be accounted among that lineage in spirit even if one were a descendant in body. Such is the case of Canaan, who is not reckoned among the descendants of Noah.</p>
<p>But the difference of the qualities with regard to culture is very great, for education has great influence. Through education the ignorant become learned; the cowardly become valiant. Through cultivation the crooked branch becomes straight; the acid, bitter fruit of the mountains and woods becomes sweet and delicious; and the five-petaled flower becomes hundred petaled. Through education savage nations become civilized, and even the animals become domesticated. Education must be considered as most important, for as diseases in the world of bodies are extremely contagious, so, in the same way, qualities of spirit and heart are extremely contagious. Education has a universal influence, and the differences caused by it are very great.</p>	<p>As to the differences of character arising from education, they are great indeed, for education exerts an enormous influence. Through education the ignorant become learned, the cowardly become courageous, the crooked branch becomes straight, the acrid and bitter fruit of the mountains and woods becomes sweet and succulent, and the five-petaled flower puts forth a hundred petals. Through education barbarous nations become civilized and even animals take on human-like manners. Education must be accorded the greatest importance, for just as diseases are highly communicable in the world of bodies, so is character highly communicable in the realm of hearts and spirits. The differences caused by education are enormous and exert a major influence.</p>

Perhaps someone will say that, since the capacity and worthiness of men differ, therefore, the difference of capacity certainly causes the difference of characters.

But this is not so, for capacity is of two kinds: natural capacity and acquired capacity. The first, which is the creation of God, is purely good—in the creation of God there is no evil; but the acquired capacity has become the cause of the appearance of evil. For example, God has created all men in such a manner and has given them such a constitution and such capacities that they are benefited by sugar and honey and harmed and destroyed by poison. This nature and constitution is innate, and God has given it equally to all mankind. But man begins little by little to accustom himself to poison by taking a small quantity each day, and gradually increasing it, until he reaches such a point that he cannot live without a gram of opium every day. The natural capacities are thus completely perverted. Observe how much the natural capacity and constitution can be changed, until by different habits and training they become entirely perverted. One does not criticize vicious people because of their innate capacities and nature, but rather for their acquired capacities and nature.

In creation there is no evil; all is good. Certain qualities and natures innate in some men and apparently blameworthy are not so in reality. For example, from the beginning of his life you can see in a nursing child the signs of greed, of anger and of temper. Then, it may be said, good and evil are innate in the reality of man, and this is contrary to the pure goodness of nature and creation. The answer to this is that greed, which is to ask for something more, is a praiseworthy quality provided that it is used suitably. So if a man is greedy to acquire science and knowledge, or to become compassionate, generous and just, it is most praiseworthy. If he exercises his anger and wrath against the bloodthirsty tyrants who are like ferocious beasts, it is very praiseworthy; but if he does not use these qualities in a right way, they are blameworthy.

Now, someone might say that, since the capacity and aptitude of souls differ, such difference in capacity must inevitably lead to a difference in character. But this is not so, for capacity is of two kinds: innate and acquired. The innate capacity, which is the creation of God, is wholly and entirely good — in the innate nature there is no evil. The acquired capacity, however, can become the cause of evil. For example, God has created all men in such a fashion and has given them such a capacity and disposition that they are benefited by sugar and honey and are harmed or killed by poison. This is an innate capacity and disposition that God has bestowed equally upon all men. But man may begin little by little to take poison by ingesting a small quantity every day, and gradually increasing it, until he reaches the point where he would perish if he were not to consume several grams of opium every day and where his innate capacities are completely subverted. Consider how the innate capacity and disposition can be so completely changed, through variation of habit and training, as to be entirely perverted. It is not on account of their innate capacity and disposition that one reproaches the wicked but rather on account of that which they themselves have acquired.

In the innate nature of things there is no evil — all is good. This applies even to certain apparently blameworthy attributes and dispositions which seem inherent in some people but which are not in reality reprehensible. For example, from the beginning of its life you can see in a nursing child the signs of greed, of anger and ill-temper; and so it might be argued that good and evil are innate in the reality of man and that this is contrary to the pure goodness of the innate nature and of creation. The answer is that greed, which is to demand ever more, is a praiseworthy quality provided that it is displayed under the right circumstances. Thus should a person show greed in acquiring science and knowledge, or in the exercise of compassion, high-mindedness and justice, this would be most praiseworthy. And should he direct his anger and wrath against the bloodthirsty tyrants who are like ferocious beasts, this too would be most praiseworthy. But

	should he display these qualities under other conditions, this would be deserving of blame.
Then it is evident that in creation and nature evil does not exist at all; but when the natural qualities of man are used in an unlawful way, they are blameworthy. So if a rich and generous person gives a sum of money to a poor man for his own necessities, and if the poor man spends that sum of money on unlawful things, that will be blameworthy. It is the same with all the natural qualities of man, which constitute the capital of life; if they be used and displayed in an unlawful way, they become blameworthy. Therefore, it is clear that creation is purely good.	It follows therefore that in existence and creation there is no evil at all, but that when man's innate qualities are used in an unlawful way, they become blameworthy. Thus if a wealthy and generous person gives alms to a poor man to spend on his necessities, and if the latter spends that sum in an improper way, that is blameworthy. The same holds true of all the innate qualities of man which constitute the capital of human life: if they are displayed and employed in an improper way, they become blameworthy. It is clear then that the innate nature is purely good.
Consider that the worst of qualities and most odious of attributes, which is the foundation of all evil, is lying. No worse or more blameworthy quality than this can be imagined to exist; it is the destroyer of all human perfections and the cause of innumerable vices. There is no worse characteristic than this; it is the foundation of all evils. Notwithstanding all this, if a doctor consoles a sick man by saying, "Thank God you are better, and there is hope of your recovery," though these words are contrary to the truth, yet they may become the consolation of the patient and the turning point of the illness. This is not blameworthy.	Consider that the worst of all qualities and the most odious of all attributes, and the very foundation of all evil, is lying; and that no more evil or reprehensible quality can be imagined in all existence. It brings all human perfections to naught and gives rise to countless vices. There is no worse attribute than this, and it is the foundation of all wickedness. Now, all this notwithstanding, should a physician console a patient and say, "Thank God, you are doing better and there is hope for your recovery," although these words may be contrary to the truth, yet sometimes they will ease the patient's mind and become the means of curing the illness. And this is not blameworthy.
This question is now clearly elucidated. Salutations!	This question has now been elucidated most clearly. Salutations!
THE DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE POSSESSED BY MAN AND THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS	The Extent and Limitation of Human Comprehension
Question.—Of what degree is the perception of the human world, and what are its limitations?	Question: How far does human comprehension extend and what are its limitations?
Answer.—Know that perception varies. The lowest degree of perception is that of the animals—that is to say, the natural feeling which appears through the powers of the senses, and which is called sensation. In this, men and animals are sharers; moreover, some animals with regard to the senses are more powerful than man. But in humanity, perception differs and varies in accordance with the different conditions of man.	Answer: Know that comprehension varies. Its lowest degree consists in the senses of the animal realm, that is, the natural sensations which arise from the powers of the outward senses. This comprehension is common to man and animals, and indeed certain animals surpass man in this regard. In the human realm, however, comprehension differs and varies in accordance with the different degrees occupied by man.

<p>The first condition of perception in the world of nature is the perception of the rational soul. In this perception and in this power all men are sharers, whether they be neglectful or vigilant, believers or deniers. This human rational soul is God's creation; it encompasses and excels other creatures; as it is more noble and distinguished, it encompasses things. The power of the rational soul can discover the realities of things, comprehend the peculiarities of beings, and penetrate the mysteries of existence. All sciences, knowledge, arts, wonders, institutions, discoveries and enterprises come from the exercised intelligence of the rational soul. There was a time when they were unknown, preserved mysteries and hidden secrets; the rational soul gradually discovered them and brought them out from the plane of the invisible and the hidden into the realm of the visible. This is the greatest power of perception in the world of nature, which in its highest flight and soaring comprehends the realities, the properties and the effects of the contingent beings.</p>	<p>The foremost degree of comprehension in the world of nature is that of the rational soul. This power and comprehension is shared in common by all men, whether they be heedless or aware, wayward or faithful. In the creation of God the rational soul of man encompasses and is distinguished above all other created things: it is by virtue of its nobility and distinction that it encompasses them all. Through the power of the rational soul man can discover the realities of things, comprehend their properties and penetrate the mysteries of existence. All the sciences, branches of learning, arts, inventions, institutions, undertakings and discoveries have resulted from the comprehension of the rational soul. These were once impenetrable secrets, hidden mysteries and unknown realities, and the rational soul gradually discovered them and brought them out of the invisible plane into the realm of the visible. This is the greatest power of comprehension in the world of nature, and the uttermost limit of its flight is to comprehend the realities, signs and properties of contingent things.</p>
<p>But the universal divine mind, which is beyond nature, is the bounty of the Preexistent Power. This universal mind is divine; it embraces existing realities, and it receives the light of the mysteries of God. It is a conscious power, not a power of investigation and of research. The intellectual power of the world of nature is a power of investigation, and by its researches it discovers the realities of beings and the properties of existences; but the heavenly intellectual power, which is beyond nature, embraces things and is cognizant of things, knows them, understands them, is aware of mysteries, realities and divine significations, and is the discoverer of the concealed verities of the Kingdom. This divine intellectual power is the special attribute of the Holy Manifestations and the Dawning-places of prophethood; a ray of this light falls upon the mirrors of the hearts of the righteous, and a portion and a share of this power comes to them through the Holy Manifestations.</p>	<p>But the universal divine Intellect, which transcends nature, is the outpouring grace of the pre-existent Power. It encompasses all existing realities and receives its share of the lights and mysteries of God. It is an all-knowing power, not a power of investigation and sensing. The spiritual power associated with the world of nature is the power of investigation, and it is through investigation that it discovers the realities and properties of things. But the heavenly intellectual power, which is beyond nature, encompasses, knows and comprehends all things, is aware of the divine mysteries, truths and inner meanings, and discovers the hidden verities of the Kingdom. This divine intellectual power is confined to the holy Manifestations and the Daysprings of prophethood. A ray of this light falls upon the mirrors of the hearts of the righteous, that they may also receive, through the holy Manifestations, a share and benefit of this power.</p>
<p>The Holy Manifestations have three conditions: one, the physical condition; one, that of the rational soul; and one, that of the manifestation</p>	<p>The holy Manifestations have three stations: the corporeal station, the station of the rational soul, and the station of perfect divine manifestation</p>

<p>of perfection and of the lordly splendor. The body comprehends things according to the degree of its ability in the physical world; therefore, in certain cases it shows physical weakness. For example: "I was sleeping and unconscious; the breeze of God passed over Me and awoke Me, and commanded Me to proclaim the Word"; or when Christ in His thirtieth year was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; before this the Holy Spirit did not manifest itself in Him. All these things refer to the bodily condition of the Manifestations; but Their heavenly condition embraces all things, knows all mysteries, discovers all signs, and rules over all things; before as well as after Their mission, it is the same. That is why Christ has said: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" —that is to say, there has never been and never shall be any change and alteration in Me.</p>	<p>and heavenly splendour. Their bodies perceive things only according to the capacity of the material world; and so it is that they have at certain times expressed physical weakness. For example: "I was asleep and unconscious; the breeze of God wafted over Me, awoke Me, and summoned Me to voice His call"; or when Christ was baptized in His thirtieth year and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, having not manifested itself in Him before this time. All these things refer to the corporeal station of the Manifestations; but their heavenly station encompasses all things, is aware of all mysteries, is informed of all signs, and rules supreme over all things. And this is equally true both before and after the intimation of their mission. That is why Christ said: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" — that is, there has never been, nor shall there ever be, any change or alteration in Me.</p>
<p>MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD</p>	<p>Man's Comprehension of God</p>
<p>Question.—To what extent can the understanding of man comprehend God?</p>	<p>Question: To what extent can human perception comprehend God?</p>
<p>Answer.—This subject requires ample time, and to explain it thus at table is not easy; nevertheless, we will speak of it briefly.</p>	<p>Answer: This subject requires ample time, and to explain it at table will be difficult. Nevertheless, a brief explanation will be given.</p>
<p>Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its qualities. The essence of a thing is known through its qualities; otherwise, it is unknown and hidden.</p>	<p>Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its attributes. The essence of each thing is known only through its attributes; otherwise, that essence is unknown and unfathomed.</p>
<p>As our knowledge of things, even of created and limited things, is knowledge of their qualities and not of their essence, how is it possible to comprehend in its essence the Divine Reality, which is unlimited? For the inner essence of anything is not comprehended, but only its qualities. For example, the inner essence of the sun is unknown, but is understood by its qualities, which are heat and light. The inner essence of man is unknown and not evident, but by its qualities it is characterized and known. Thus everything is known by its qualities and not by its essence. Although the mind encompasses all things, and the outward beings are comprehended by it, nevertheless these beings</p>	<p>As our knowledge of things, even of created and limited ones, is of their attributes and not of their essence, how then can it be possible to understand in its essence the unbounded Reality of the Divinity? For the inner essence of a thing can never be known, only its attributes. For example, the inner reality of the sun is unknown, but it is understood through its attributes, which are heat and light. The inner essence of man is unknown and unfathomed, but it is known and characterized by its attributes. Thus everything is known by its attributes and not by its essence: Even though the human mind encompasses all things, and all outward things are in turn encompassed by it, yet the latter are unknown</p>

<p>with regard to their essence are unknown; they are only known with regard to their qualities.</p> <p>Then how can the eternal everlasting Lord, Who is held sanctified from comprehension and conception, be known by His essence? That is to say, as things can only be known by their qualities and not by their essence, it is certain that the Divine Reality is unknown with regard to its essence and is known with regard to its attributes.</p>	<p>with regard to their essence and can only be known with regard to their attributes. How then can the ancient and everlasting Lord, Who is sanctified above all comprehension and imagining, be known in His Essence? That is, as created things can only be known through their attributes and not in their essence, the reality of the Divinity, too, must be unknown with regard to its essence and known only with respect to its attributes.</p>
<p>Besides, how can the phenomenal reality embrace the Preexistent Reality? For comprehension is the result of encompassing—embracing must be, so that comprehension may be—and the Essence of Unity surrounds all and is not surrounded.</p>	<p>Furthermore, how can a reality that is originated encompass that Reality which has existed from all eternity? For comprehension is the result of encompassing — the latter must take place in order that the former may occur — and the divine Essence is all-encompassing and can never be encompassed.</p>
<p>Also the difference of conditions in the world of beings is an obstacle to comprehension. For example, this mineral belongs to the mineral kingdom; however far it may rise, it can never comprehend the power of growth. The plants, the trees, whatever progress they may make, cannot conceive of the power of sight or the powers of the other senses; and the animal cannot imagine the condition of man—that is to say, his spiritual powers. Difference of condition is an obstacle to knowledge; the inferior degree cannot comprehend the superior degree. How then can the phenomenal reality comprehend the Preexistent Reality?</p>	<p>Moreover, differences of degree in the world of creation are a barrier to knowledge. For example, as this mineral belongs to the mineral kingdom, however far it may rise it can never comprehend the power of growth. The plants and trees, however far they may progress, cannot imagine the powers of sight or of the other senses. The animal cannot imagine the human degree, that is, the spiritual powers. Thus, differences of degree are a barrier to knowledge: the inferior degree cannot comprehend the superior. How then can a reality which is originated comprehend that Reality which has existed from all eternity?</p>
<p>Knowing God, therefore, means the comprehension and the knowledge of His attributes, and not of His Reality. This knowledge of the attributes is also proportioned to the capacity and power of man; it is not absolute. Philosophy consists in comprehending the reality of things as they exist, according to the capacity and the power of man. For the phenomenal reality can comprehend the Preexistent attributes only to the extent of the human capacity. The mystery of Divinity is sanctified and purified from the comprehension of the beings, for all that comes to the imagination is that which man understands, and the power of the understanding of man does not embrace the Reality of the Divine Essence. All that man is able</p>	<p>Knowing God, therefore, means the comprehension and knowledge of His attributes and not of His Reality. And even this knowledge of His attributes extends only as far as human power and capacity permit and remains wholly inadequate. Philosophy consists in comprehending, so far as human power permits, the realities of things as they are in themselves. The originated reality has no recourse but to comprehend the pre-existent attributes within the intrinsic limits of human capacity. The invisible realm of the Divinity is sanctified and exalted above the comprehension of all beings, and all that can be imagined is mere human understanding. The power of human understanding does not encompass the reality of</p>

<p>to understand are the attributes of Divinity, the radiance of which appears and is visible in the world and within men’s souls.</p>	<p>the divine Essence: All that man can hope to achieve is to comprehend the attributes of the Divinity, the light of which is manifest and resplendent in the world and within the souls of men.</p>
<p>When we look at the world and within men’s souls, we see wonderful signs of the divine perfections, which are clear and apparent; for the reality of things proves the Universal Reality. The Reality of Divinity may be compared to the sun, which from the height of its magnificence shines upon all the horizons; and each horizon, and each soul, receives a share of its radiance. If this light and these rays did not exist, beings would not exist; all beings express something and partake of some ray and portion of this light. The splendors of the perfections, bounties and attributes of God shine forth and radiate from the reality of the Perfect Man—that is to say, the Unique One, the supreme Manifestation of God. Other beings receive only one ray, but the supreme Manifestation is the mirror for this Sun, which appears and becomes manifest in it, with all its perfections, attributes, signs and wonders.</p>	<p>When we examine the world and the souls of men, the perspicuous signs of the perfections of the Divinity appear clear and manifest, for the realities of all things attest to the existence of a universal Reality. The reality of the Divinity is even as the sun, which from the heights of its sanctity shines upon every land, and of whose radiance every land and every soul receives a share. Were it not for this light and this radiance, nothing could exist. Now, all created things tell of this light, partake of its rays and receive their portion thereof, but the full splendour of the perfections, bounties and attributes of the Divinity shines forth from the reality of the Perfect Man, that is, that unique Individual Who is the universal Manifestation of God. For the other beings have each received only a portion of that light, but the universal Manifestation of God is the mirror held before this Sun, and the latter manifests itself therein with all its perfections, attributes, signs and effects.</p>
<p>The knowledge of the Reality of the Divinity is impossible and unattainable, but the knowledge of the Manifestations of God is the knowledge of God, for the bounties, splendors and divine attributes are apparent in Them. Therefore, if man attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God, he will attain to the knowledge of God; and if he be neglectful of the knowledge of the Holy Manifestations, he will be bereft of the knowledge of God. It is then ascertained and proved that the Holy Manifestations are the center of the bounty, signs and perfections of God. Blessed are those who receive the light of the divine bounties from the enlightened Dawning-points!</p>	<p>The knowledge of the reality of the Divinity is in no wise possible, but the knowledge of the Manifestations of God is the knowledge of God, for the bounties, splendours and attributes of God are manifest in them. Thus, whoso attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God attains to the knowledge of God, and whoso remains heedless of them remains bereft of that knowledge. It is therefore clearly established that the Holy Manifestations are the focal centres of the heavenly bounties, signs and perfections. Blessed are those who receive the light of divine bounties from those luminous Daysprings!</p>
<p>We hope that the Friends of God, like an attractive force, will draw these bounties from the source itself, and that they will arise with such illumination and signs that they will be evident proofs of the Sun of Reality.</p>	<p>We cherish the hope that the loved ones of God, like unto an attractive force, will draw these bounties from their very source and arise with such radiance and exert such influence as to become the perspicuous signs of the Sun of Truth.</p>
<p>THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT (1)</p>	<p>The Immortality of the Spirit (1)</p>

<p>Having shown that the spirit of man exists, we must prove its immortality.</p>	<p>Having established the existence of the human spirit, we must now establish its immortality.</p>
<p>The immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books; it is the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now punishments and rewards are said to be of two kinds: first, the rewards and punishments of this life; second, those of the other world. But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds. Gaining these rewards is the gaining of eternal life. That is why Christ said, "Act in such a way that you may find eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit, so that you may enter into the Kingdom."</p>	<p>In the heavenly books mention is made of the immortality of the spirit, which is the very foundation of the divine religions. For rewards and punishments are said to be of two kinds, one being existential rewards and punishments and the other, ultimate rewards and punishments. Existential paradise and hell are to be found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the heavenly realms of the spirit, and to gain these rewards is to attain life eternal. That is why Christ said: Act in such a manner that you may find eternal life, be born of water and of the spirit, and thus enter into the Kingdom.</p>
<p>The rewards of this life are the virtues and perfections which adorn the reality of man. For example, he was dark and becomes luminous; he was ignorant and becomes wise; he was neglectful and becomes vigilant; he was asleep and becomes awakened; he was dead and becomes living; he was blind and becomes a seer; he was deaf and becomes a hearer; he was earthly and becomes heavenly; he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he gains spiritual birth and becomes a new creature. He becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel where it is said of the disciples that they "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" —that is to say, they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities which are the characteristics of human nature, and they became qualified with the divine characteristics, which are the bounty of God. This is the meaning of the second birth. For such people there is no greater torture than being veiled from God, and no more severe punishment than sensual vices, dark qualities, lowness of nature, engrossment in carnal desires. When they are delivered through the light of faith from the darkness of these vices, and become illuminated with the radiance of the sun of reality, and ennobled with all the virtues, they esteem this the greatest reward, and they know it to be the true paradise. In the same way they consider that the spiritual punishment—that is to say, the torture and punishment of existence—is to be subjected to the world of</p>	<p>Existential rewards consist in the virtues and perfections that adorn the human reality. For example, man was immersed in darkness and becomes luminous; he was ignorant and becomes informed; he was heedless and becomes aware; he was asleep and is awakened; he was dead and is quickened to life; he was blind and begins to see; he was deaf and begins to hear; he was earthly and becomes heavenly; he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he is reborn in spirit, is created anew, and becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel that says that the Apostles "were born, not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" — that is, they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities that are inherent to human nature and acquired divine attributes, which are the outpouring grace of God. This is the true meaning of being born again. For such souls there is no greater torment than to be veiled from God and no worse punishment than selfish qualities, evil attributes, baseness of character, and engrossment in carnal desires. When these souls are delivered from the darkness of these vices through the light of faith, when they are illumined by the rays of the Sun of Truth and endowed with every human virtue, they reckon this as the greatest reward and regard it as the true paradise. In like manner they consider spiritual punishment, that is, existential torment and chastisement, to consist in subjection to the world of nature, in being veiled from God, in</p>

<p>nature; to be veiled from God; to be brutal and ignorant; to fall into carnal lusts; to be absorbed in animal frailties; to be characterized with dark qualities, such as falsehood, tyranny, cruelty, attachment to the affairs of the world, and being immersed in satanic ideas. For them, these are the greatest punishments and tortures.</p>	<p>ignorance and unawareness, in engrossment with covetous desires, in absorption in animal vices, in being marked by evil attributes, such as falsehood, tyranny and iniquity, in attachment to worldly things, and in immersion in satanic fancies, all of which they reckon to be the greatest of torments and punishments.</p>
<p>Likewise, the rewards of the other world are the eternal life which is clearly mentioned in all the Holy Books, the divine perfections, the eternal bounties and everlasting felicity. The rewards of the other world are the perfections and the peace obtained in the spiritual worlds after leaving this world, while the rewards of this life are the real luminous perfections which are realized in this world, and which are the cause of eternal life, for they are the very progress of existence. It is like the man who passes from the embryonic world to the state of maturity and becomes the manifestation of these words: "Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers." The rewards of the other world are peace, the spiritual graces, the various spiritual gifts in the Kingdom of God, the gaining of the desires of the heart and the soul, and the meeting of God in the world of eternity. In the same way the punishments of the other world—that is to say, the torments of the other world—consist in being deprived of the special divine blessings and the absolute bounties, and falling into the lowest degrees of existence. He who is deprived of these divine favors, although he continues after death, is considered as dead by the people of truth.</p>	<p>The ultimate rewards, which consist in life everlasting, have been explicitly recorded in all the heavenly scriptures. They are divine perfections, eternal bounty and everlasting joy. The ultimate rewards are the gifts and perfections that man attains in the spiritual realms after his ascension from this world, while the existential rewards are those true and luminous perfections which are attained while still abiding in this world and which are the cause of everlasting life. For the existential rewards are the advancement of existence itself and are analogous to the passage of man from the stage of the embryo to that of maturity and becoming the embodiment of the verse, "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!" The ultimate rewards consist in spiritual bounties and bestowals, such as the manifold gifts of God that are vouchsafed after the ascension of the soul, the attainment of the heart's desire, and reunion with Him in the everlasting realm. Similarly, ultimate retributions and punishments consist in being deprived of the special bounties and unfailing bestowals of God and sinking to the lowest degrees of existence. And whoso is deprived of these favours, though he continue to exist after death, is accounted as dead in the eyes of the people of truth.</p>
<p>The logical proof of the immortality of the spirit is this, that no sign can come from a nonexisting thing—that is to say, it is impossible that from absolute nonexistence signs should appear—for the signs are the consequence of an existence, and the consequence depends upon the existence of the principle. So from a nonexisting sun no light can radiate; from a nonexisting sea no waves appear; from a nonexisting cloud no rain falls; a nonexisting tree yields no fruit; a nonexisting man neither manifests nor produces anything. Therefore, as long as signs of existence</p>	<p>A rational proof for the immortality of the spirit is this, that no effect can be produced by a non-existent thing; that is, it is impossible that any effect should appear from absolute nothingness. For the effect of a thing is secondary to its existence, and that which is secondary is conditioned upon the existence of that which is primary. So from a non-existent sun no rays can shine; from a non-existent sea no waves can surge; from a non-existent cloud no rain can fall; from a non-existent tree no fruit can appear; from a non-existent man nothing can be manifested or produced. Therefore, so long as</p>

appear, they are a proof that the possessor of the sign is existent.	the effects of existence are visible, they prove that the author of that effect exists.
Consider that today the Kingdom of Christ exists. From a nonexistent king how could such a great kingdom be manifested? How, from a nonexistent sea, can the waves mount so high? From a nonexistent garden, how can such fragrant breezes be wafted? Reflect that no effect, no trace, no influence remains of any being after its members are dispersed and its elements are decomposed, whether it be a mineral, a vegetable or an animal. There is only the human reality and the spirit of man which, after the disintegration of the members, dispersing of the particles, and the destruction of the composition, persists and continues to act and to have power.	Consider how to this day the sovereignty of Christ has endured. How can a sovereignty of such greatness be manifested by a non-existent sovereign? How can such waves surge from a non-existent sea? How can such heavenly breezes waft from a non-existent garden? Consider that as soon as the constituent parts of anything, be it mineral, plant or animal, are disintegrated and its elemental composition is dissolved, all effect, influence and trace thereof vanish. But it is not so with the human spirit and reality, which continues to manifest its signs, to exert its influence, and to sustain its effects even after the dissociation and decomposition of the various parts and members of the body.
This question is extremely subtle: consider it attentively. This is a rational proof which we are giving, so that the wise may weigh it in the balance of reason and justice. But if the human spirit will rejoice and be attracted to the Kingdom of God, if the inner sight becomes opened, and the spiritual hearing strengthened, and the spiritual feelings predominant, he will see the immortality of the spirit as clearly as he sees the sun, and the glad tidings and signs of God will encompass him.	This question is very subtle: consider it attentively. This is a rational proof that we are providing, that rational minds may weigh it in the balance of reason and fair-mindedness. But if the human spirit be rejoiced and attracted to the Kingdom, if the inner eye be opened and the spiritual ear attuned, and if spiritual feelings come to predominate, the immortality of the spirit will be seen as clearly as the sun and heavenly tidings and intimations will encompass that spirit.
Tomorrow we will give other proofs.	Tomorrow we will give other proofs.
THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT (2)	The Immortality of the Spirit (2)
Yesterday we were occupied in discussing the immortality of the spirit. Know that the power and the comprehension of the human spirit are of two kinds—that is to say, they perceive and act in two different modes. One way is through instruments and organs: thus with this eye it sees; with this ear it hears; with this tongue it talks. Such is the action of the spirit, and the perception of the reality of man, by means of organs—that is to say, that the spirit is the seer, through the eyes; the spirit is the hearer, through the ear; the spirit is the speaker, through the tongue.	Yesterday we were discussing the immortality of the spirit. Know that the influence and perception of the human spirit is of two kinds, that is, the human spirit has two modes of operation and understanding. One mode is through the mediation of bodily instruments and organs. Thus it sees with the eye, hears with the ear, speaks with the tongue. These are actions of the spirit and operations of the human reality, but they occur through the mediation of bodily instruments. Thus, it is the spirit that sees, but by means of the eye; it is the spirit that hears, but by means of the ear; it is the spirit that speaks, but by means of the tongue.
The other manifestation of the powers and actions of the spirit is without instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep without	The other mode of the spirit's influence and action is without these bodily instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep, it sees

<p>eyes it sees; without an ear it hears; without a tongue it speaks; without feet it runs. Briefly, these actions are beyond the means of instruments and organs. How often it happens that it sees a dream in the world of sleep, and its signification becomes apparent two years afterward in corresponding events. In the same way, how many times it happens that a question which one cannot solve in the world of wakefulness is solved in the world of dreams. In wakefulness the eye sees only for a short distance, but in dreams he who is in the East sees the West. Awake he sees the present; in sleep he sees the future. In wakefulness, by means of rapid transit, at the most he can travel only twenty farsakhs an hour; in sleep, in the twinkling of an eye, he traverses the East and West. For the spirit travels in two different ways: without means, which is spiritual traveling; and with means, which is material traveling: as birds which fly, and those which are carried.</p>	<p>without eyes, it hears without ears, it speaks without a tongue, it runs without feet — in brief, all these powers are exerted without the mediation of instruments and organs. How often it happens that the spirit has a dream in the realm of sleep whose purport comes to be exactly materialized two years hence! Likewise, how often it happens that in the world of dreams the spirit solves a problem that it could not solve in the realm of wakefulness. Awake, the eye sees only a short distance, but in the realm of dreams one who is in the East may see the West. Awake, he sees only the present; in sleep he beholds the future. Awake, by the fastest means he travels at most seventy miles in an hour; in sleep he traverses East and West in the blink of an eye. For the spirit has two modes of travel: without means, or spiritual travel, and with means, or material travel, as birds that fly or as being carried in a vehicle.</p>
<p>In the time of sleep this body is as though dead; it does not see nor hear; it does not feel; it has no consciousness, no perception—that is to say, the powers of man have become inactive, but the spirit lives and subsists. Nay, its penetration is increased, its flight is higher, and its intelligence is greater. To consider that after the death of the body the spirit perishes is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage, and the spirit is like the bird. We see that without the cage this bird flies in the world of sleep; therefore, if the cage becomes broken, the bird will continue and exist. Its feelings will be even more powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness increased. In truth, from hell it reaches a paradise of delights because for the thankful birds there is no paradise greater than freedom from the cage. That is why with utmost joy and happiness the martyrs hasten to the plain of sacrifice.</p>	<p>While asleep, this physical body is as dead: it neither sees, nor hears, nor feels, and it has neither consciousness nor perception — its powers are suspended. Yet the spirit is not only alive and enduring but exerts a greater influence, soars to loftier heights and possesses a deeper understanding. To hold that the spirit is annihilated upon the death of the body is to imagine that a bird imprisoned in a cage would perish if the cage were to be broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the breaking of the cage. This body is even as the cage and the spirit is like the bird: We observe that this bird, unencumbered by its cage, soars freely in the world of sleep. Therefore, should the cage be broken the bird would not only continue to exist but its senses would be heightened, its perception would be expanded and its joy would grow more intense. In reality it would be leaving a place of torment for a delightful paradise, for there is no greater paradise for the grateful birds than to be freed from their cage. So it is that the martyrs hasten to the field of sacrifice with the utmost joy and elation.</p>
<p>In wakefulness the eye of man sees at the utmost as far as one hour of distance because through the instrumentality of the body the power of the</p>	<p>In wakefulness the eye of man sees at most as far as one hour's distance, for the influence of the spirit through the intermediary of the body</p>

<p>spirit is thus determined; but with the inner sight and the mental eye it sees America, and it can perceive that which is there, and discover the conditions of things and organize affairs. If, then, the spirit were the same as the body, it would be necessary that the power of the inner sight should also be in the same proportion. Therefore, it is evident that this spirit is different from the body, and that the bird is different from the cage, and that the power and penetration of the spirit is stronger without the intermediary of the body. Now, if the instrument is abandoned, the possessor of the instrument continues to act. For example, if the pen is abandoned or broken, the writer remains living and present; if a house is ruined, the owner is alive and existing. This is one of the logical evidences for the immortality of the soul.</p>	<p>extends only so far; but with the mind's eye it sees America, understands that land, is apprised of its condition, and arranges affairs accordingly. Now, if the spirit were identical with the body, its power of vision would extend no further. It is therefore evident that the spirit is different from the body, that the bird is different from the cage, and that the power and influence of the spirit is more pronounced without the intermediary of the body. Now, if the instrument becomes idle, its wielder continues to exist. For example, if the pen is abandoned or broken, the writer remains alive and well; if a house is destroyed, its owner lives on. This is one of the rational arguments proving the immortality of the soul.</p>
<p>There is another: this body becomes weak or heavy or sick, or it finds health; it becomes tired or rested; sometimes the hand or leg is amputated, or its physical power is crippled; it becomes blind or deaf or dumb; its limbs may become paralyzed; briefly, the body may have all the imperfections. Nevertheless, the spirit in its original state, in its own spiritual perception, will be eternal and perpetual; it neither finds any imperfection, nor will it become crippled. But when the body is wholly subjected to disease and misfortune, it is deprived of the bounty of the spirit, like a mirror which, when it becomes broken or dirty or dusty, cannot reflect the rays of the sun nor any longer show its bounties.</p>	<p>Another proof is this: Man's body may become weak or robust, sick or healthy, tired or rested; it may suffer the loss of a hand or leg; it may decline in material powers; it may become blind, deaf, dumb or paralyzed — in short, it may become gravely impaired. And yet despite this the spirit maintains its original condition and spiritual perceptions, suffering no impairment or disruption. But when the body is afflicted with a major illness or calamity it is deprived of the grace of the spirit, like a mirror that is broken or covered with dust and that can no longer reflect the light of the sun or manifest its bounty.</p>
<p>We have already explained that the spirit of man is not in the body because it is freed and sanctified from entrance and exit, which are bodily conditions. The connection of the spirit with the body is like that of the sun with the mirror. Briefly, the human spirit is in one condition. It neither becomes ill from the diseases of the body nor cured by its health; it does not become sick, nor weak, nor miserable, nor poor, nor light, nor small—that is to say, it will not be injured because of the infirmities of the body, and no effect will be visible even if the body becomes weak, or if the hands and feet and tongue be cut off, or if it loses the power of hearing or sight. Therefore, it is evident and</p>	<p>We have already explained that the spirit of man is not contained within the body, for it is freed and sanctified from egress and regress, which are among the properties of material bodies. Rather, the connection of the spirit with the body is like that of the sun with the mirror. Briefly, the human spirit is always in one condition. It neither falls ill with the illness of the body nor is it made healthy by the latter's health; it does not become weak or incapacitated, wretched or downtrodden, diminished or lessened — that is, it suffers no harm or ill effect on account of the infirmities of the body, even if the body were to waste away, or if the hands, feet and tongue were to be cut off, or if the powers of sight and</p>

<p>certain that the spirit is different from the body, and that its duration is independent of that of the body; on the contrary, the spirit with the utmost greatness rules in the world of the body; and its power and influence, like the bounty of the sun in the mirror, are apparent and visible. But when the mirror becomes dusty or breaks, it will cease to reflect the rays of the sun.</p>	<p>hearing were to be disrupted. It is therefore evident and established that the spirit is different from the body and that its immortality is not conditioned upon the latter's, but that the spirit rules supreme in the world of the body and that its power and influence are as plain and visible as the bounty of the sun in a mirror. But when the mirror is covered with dust or broken, it will be deprived of the rays of the sun.</p>
<p>PERFECTIONS ARE WITHOUT LIMIT</p>	<p>The Infinite Perfections of Existence and the Progress of the Soul in the Next World</p>
<p>Know that the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of prophethood and of Deity, but the divine and the contingent perfections are unlimited. When you reflect deeply, you discover that also outwardly the perfections of existence are also unlimited, for you cannot find a being so perfect that you cannot imagine a superior one. For example, you cannot see a ruby in the mineral kingdom, a rose in the vegetable kingdom, or a nightingale in the animal kingdom, without imagining that there might be better specimens.</p>	<p>Know that the degrees of existence are finite — the degrees of servitude, of prophethood and of Divinity — but that the perfections of God and of creation are infinite. If you examine the matter with care you will see that even in their most outward sense the perfections of existence are infinite, for it is impossible to find any created thing such that nothing superior to it can be imagined. For example, one cannot find in the mineral kingdom a ruby, or in the vegetable kingdom a rose, or in the animal kingdom a nightingale, such that an even better specimen cannot be imagined.</p>
<p>As the divine bounties are endless, so human perfections are endless. If it were possible to reach a limit of perfection, then one of the realities of the beings might reach the condition of being independent of God, and the contingent might attain to the condition of the absolute. But for every being there is a point which it cannot overpass—that is to say, he who is in the condition of servitude, however far he may progress in gaining limitless perfections, will never reach the condition of Deity. It is the same with the other beings. A mineral, however far it may progress in the mineral kingdom, cannot gain the vegetable power. Also in a flower, however far it may progress in the vegetable kingdom, no power of the senses will appear. So this silver mineral cannot gain hearing or sight; it can only improve in its own condition and become a perfect mineral, but it cannot acquire the power of growth, or the power of sensation, or attain to life; it can only progress in its own condition.</p>	<p>As the grace of God is limitless, so too are the perfections of man. If it were possible for the reality of anything to reach the very summit of perfection, then it would become independent of God and the contingent reality would attain to the station of the necessary reality. But every created thing has been assigned a degree which it can in no wise overpass. So he who occupies the degree of servitude, no matter how far he may progress and acquire endless perfections, can never reach the degree of divine Lordship. The same holds true of all other created things. No matter how far a mineral may progress it can never acquire the power of growth in the mineral kingdom. No matter how far this flower may progress, it can never manifest the power of sensation while it is in the vegetable kingdom. So this silver mineral can never gain sight or hearing; at most it can progress in its own degree and become a perfect mineral, but it cannot acquire the power of growth or sensation and can never become living; it can only progress in its own degree.</p>

<p>For example, Peter cannot become Christ. All that he can do is, in the condition of servitude, to attain endless perfections; for every existing reality is capable of making progress. As the spirit of man after putting off this material form has an everlasting life, certainly any existing being is capable of making progress; therefore, it is permitted to ask for advancement, forgiveness, mercy, beneficence and blessings for a man after his death because existence is capable of progression. That is why in the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh forgiveness and remission of sins are asked for those who have died. Moreover, as people in this world are in need of God, they will also need Him in the other world. The creatures are always in need, and God is absolutely independent, whether in this world or in the world to come.</p>	<p>For example, Peter cannot become Christ. At most he can attain infinite perfections in the degrees of servitude; for every existing reality is capable of progress. As the spirit of man lives forever after casting off this elemental frame, it is, like all existing things, undoubtedly capable of progress, and thus one may pray for a departed soul to advance, to be forgiven, or to be made the recipient of divine favours, bounties and grace. That is why, in the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh, the forgiveness and pardon of God are implored for those who have ascended to the next world. Moreover, just as people are in need of God in this world, so too are they in need of Him in the next. The creatures are ever in need, and God is ever completely independent of them, whether in this world or in the world to come.</p>
<p>The wealth of the other world is nearness to God. Consequently, it is certain that those who are near the Divine Court are allowed to intercede, and this intercession is approved by God. But intercession in the other world is not like intercession in this world. It is another thing, another reality, which cannot be expressed in words.</p>	<p>The wealth of the next world consists in nearness to God. It is certain therefore that those who enjoy near access to the divine threshold are permitted to intercede, and that this intercession is approved in the sight of God. But intercession in the next world bears no resemblance to intercession in this world. It is an altogether different condition and reality, which cannot be expressed in words.</p>
<p>If a wealthy man at the time of his death bequeaths a gift to the poor and miserable, and gives a part of his wealth to be spent for them, perhaps this action may be the cause of his pardon and forgiveness, and of his progress in the Divine Kingdom.</p>	<p>Should a wealthy man choose to bequeath upon his death a portion of his wealth to the poor and needy, perchance this action will bring about divine pardon and forgiveness and result in his progress in the Kingdom of the All-Merciful.</p>
<p>Also a father and mother endure the greatest troubles and hardships for their children; and often when the children have reached the age of maturity, the parents pass on to the other world. Rarely does it happen that a father and mother in this world see the reward of the care and trouble they have undergone for their children. Therefore, children, in return for this care and trouble, must show forth charity and beneficence, and must implore pardon and forgiveness for their parents. So you ought, in return for the love and kindness shown you by your father, to give to the poor for his sake, with greatest submission and humility implore pardon</p>	<p>Likewise, parents endure the greatest toil and trouble for their children, and often, by the time the latter have reached the age of maturity, the former have hastened to the world beyond. Rarely do the mother and father enjoy in this world the rewards of all the pain and trouble they have endured for their children. The children must therefore, in return for this pain and trouble, make charitable contributions and perform good works in their name, and implore pardon and forgiveness for their souls. You should therefore, in return for the love and kindness of your father, give to the poor in his name and, with the utmost lowliness and fervour,</p>

<p>and remission of sins, and ask for the supreme mercy.</p>	<p>pray for God's pardon and forgiveness and seek His infinite mercy.</p>
<p>It is even possible that the condition of those who have died in sin and unbelief may become changed—that is to say, they may become the object of pardon through the bounty of God, not through His justice—for bounty is giving without desert, and justice is giving what is deserved. As we have power to pray for these souls here, so likewise we shall possess the same power in the other world, which is the Kingdom of God. Are not all the people in that world the creatures of God? Therefore, in that world also they can make progress. As here they can receive light by their supplications, there also they can plead for forgiveness and receive light through entreaties and supplications. Thus as souls in this world, through the help of the supplications, the entreaties and the prayers of the holy ones, can acquire development, so is it the same after death. Through their own prayers and supplications they can also progress, more especially when they are the object of the intercession of the Holy Manifestations.</p>	<p>It is even possible for those who have died in sin and unbelief to be transformed, that is, to become the object of divine forgiveness. This is through the grace of God and not through His justice, for grace is to bestow without desert and justice is to give that which is deserved. As we have the power to pray for those souls here, so too will we have the same power in the next world, the world of the Kingdom. Are not all the creatures in that world the creation of God? They must therefore be able to progress in that world as well. And just as they can seek illumination here through supplication, so too can they plead there for forgiveness and seek illumination through prayer and supplication. Thus, as souls can progress in this world through their entreaties and supplications, or through the prayers of holy souls, so too after death can they progress through their own prayers and supplications, particularly if they become the object of the intercession of the holy Manifestations.</p>
<p>THE PROGRESS OF MAN IN THE OTHER WORLD</p>	<p>The Progress of All Things Within their Own Degree</p>
<p>Know that nothing which exists remains in a state of repose—that is to say, all things are in motion. Everything is either growing or declining; all things are either coming from nonexistence into being, or going from existence into nonexistence. So this flower, this hyacinth, during a certain period of time was coming from the world of nonexistence into being, and now it is going from being into nonexistence. This state of motion is said to be essential—that is, natural; it cannot be separated from beings because it is their essential requirement, as it is the essential requirement of fire to burn.</p>	<p>Know that nothing that exists remains in a state of repose — that is, all things are in motion. They are either growing or declining, either coming from non-existence into existence or passing from existence into non-existence. So this flower, this hyacinth, was for a time coming from non-existence into existence and is now passing from existence into non-existence. This is called essential or natural motion, and it can in no wise be dissociated from created things, for it is one of their essential requirements, just as it is an essential requirement of fire to burn.</p>
<p>Thus it is established that this movement is necessary to existence, which is either growing or declining. Now, as the spirit continues to exist after death, it necessarily progresses or declines; and in the other world to cease to progress is the same as to decline; but it never leaves its own condition, in which it continues to develop. For example, the reality of the spirit of Peter, however far it may progress, will not reach to the</p>	<p>It is therefore clearly established that motion, whether advancing or declining, is necessary to existence. Now, as the human spirit continues after death, it must either advance or decline, and in the next world to cease to advance is the same as to decline. But the human spirit never transcends its own degree: it progresses only within that degree. For example, no matter how far the spirit and reality of Peter may progress, it</p>

<p>condition of the Reality of Christ; it progresses only in its own environment.</p>	<p>will never reach the degree of the reality of Christ but will progress only within its own inherent limits.</p>
<p>Look at this mineral. However far it may evolve, it only evolves in its own condition; you cannot bring the crystal to a state where it can attain to sight. This is impossible. So the moon which is in the heavens, however far it might evolve, could never become a luminous sun, but in its own condition it has apogee and perigee. However far the disciples might progress, they could never become Christ. It is true that coal could become a diamond, but both are in the mineral condition, and their component elements are the same.</p>	<p>Thus, you see that however much this mineral may progress, its progress remains within its own degree; you cannot possibly bring this crystal, for example, to a state where it gains the power of sight. The moon, howsoever it may progress, can never become the shining sun, and its apogee and perigee will always remain within its own degree. And however far the Apostles might have progressed, they could never have become Christ. It is true that coal can become a diamond, but both are in the mineral degree and their constituent parts are the same.</p>
<p>THE STATE OF MAN AND HIS PROGRESS AFTER DEATH</p>	<p>The Station of Man and His Progress after Death</p>
<p>When we consider beings with the seeing eye, we observe that they are limited to three sorts—that is to say, as a whole they are either mineral, vegetable or animal, each of these three classes containing species. Man is the highest species because he is the possessor of the perfections of all the classes—that is, he has a body which grows and which feels. As well as having the perfections of the mineral, of the vegetable and of the animal, he also possesses an especial excellence which the other beings are without—that is, the intellectual perfections. Therefore, man is the most noble of beings.</p>	<p>When we examine all things with the eye of discernment, we observe that they are generally confined to three categories: mineral, vegetable, and animal. Thus there are three classes of beings and each class has its associated species. Man is the most distinguished species in that he combines the perfections of all three classes—that is, he possesses a material body, the power of growth, and the power of sensation. Beyond the mineral, vegetable and animal perfections, however, he also possesses a special perfection of which other created things are bereft, namely, the perfections of the mind. Thus man is the noblest of all existing things.</p>
<p>Man is in the highest degree of materiality, and at the beginning of spirituality—that is to say, he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the last degree of darkness, and at the beginning of light; that is why it has been said that the condition of man is the end of the night and the beginning of day, meaning that he is the sum of all the degrees of imperfection, and that he possesses the degrees of perfection. He has the animal side as well as the angelic side, and the aim of an educator is to so train human souls that their angelic aspect may overcome their animal side. Then if the divine power in man, which is his essential perfection, overcomes the satanic power, which is absolute imperfection, he becomes the most excellent among the creatures; but if the satanic power</p>	<p>Man is in the ultimate degree of materiality and the beginning of spirituality, that is, he is at the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the furthestmost degree of darkness and the beginning of the light. That is why the station of man is said to be the end of night and the beginning of day, meaning that he encompasses all the degrees of imperfection and that he potentially possesses all the degrees of perfection. He has both an animal side and an angelic side; and the role of the educator is to so train human souls that the angelic side may overcome the animal. Thus, should the divine powers, which are identical with perfection, overcome in man the satanic powers, which are absolute imperfection, he becomes the noblest of all creatures, but should the converse take place</p>

<p>overcomes the divine power, he becomes the lowest of the creatures. That is why he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection.</p>	<p>he becomes the vilest of all beings. That is why he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection.</p>
<p>Not in any other of the species in the world of existence is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction and opposition as in the species of man. Thus the reflection of the Divine Light was in man, as in Christ, and see how loved and honored He is! At the same time we see man worshipping a stone, a clod of earth or a tree. How vile he is, in that his object of worship should be the lowest existence—that is, a stone or clay, without spirit; a mountain, a forest or a tree. What shame is greater for man than to worship the lowest existences?</p>	<p>In no other species in the world of existence can such difference, distinction, contrast and contradiction be seen as in man. For instance, it is upon man that the effulgent light of the Divinity has been shed, as it was with Christ — see how glorious and noble man is! At the same time he worships stones, trees, and lumps of clay — see how wretched he is, that the object of his worship should be the basest degrees of existence, that is, lifeless stones and clods of earth, mountains, woods and trees! What greater wretchedness can there be for man than to worship the lowliest of all things?</p>
<p>In the same way, knowledge is a quality of man, and so is ignorance; truthfulness is a quality of man; so is falsehood; trustworthiness and treachery, justice and injustice, are qualities of man, and so forth. Briefly, all the perfections and virtues, and all the vices, are qualities of man.</p> <p>Consider equally the differences between individual men. The Christ was in the form of man, and Caiaphas was in the form of man; Moses and Pharaoh, Abel and Cain, Bahá'u'lláh and Yahyá, were men.</p>	<p>Moreover, knowledge is a human attribute but so is ignorance; truthfulness is a human attribute but so is falsehood; and the same holds true of trustworthiness and treachery, justice and tyranny, and so forth. In brief, every perfection and virtue, as well as every vice, is an attribute of man. Consider likewise the differences that exist among the members of the human race. Christ was in the form of a man and so was Caiaphas; Moses was a man and so was Pharaoh; Abel was a man and so was Cain; Bahá'u'lláh was a man and so was Yahyá.</p>
<p>Man is said to be the greatest representative of God, and he is the Book of Creation because all the mysteries of beings exist in him. If he comes under the shadow of the True Educator and is rightly trained, he becomes the essence of essences, the light of lights, the spirit of spirits; he becomes the center of the divine appearances, the source of spiritual qualities, the rising-place of heavenly lights, and the receptacle of divine inspirations. If he is deprived of this education, he becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the sum of animal vices, and the source of all dark conditions.</p>	<p>That is why man is said to be the greatest sign of God — that is, he is the Book of Creation — for all the mysteries of the universe are found in him. Should he come under the shadow of the true Educator and be rightly trained, he becomes the gem of gems, the light of lights, and the spirit of spirits; he becomes the focal centre of divine blessings, the wellspring of spiritual attributes, the dawning-place of heavenly lights, and the recipient of divine inspirations. Should he, however, be deprived of this education, he becomes the embodiment of satanic attributes, the epitome of animal vices, and the source of all that is oppressive and dark.</p>
<p>The reason of the mission of the Prophets is to educate men, so that this piece of coal may become a diamond, and this fruitless tree may be engrafted and yield the sweetest, most delicious fruits. When man reaches the noblest state in the world of humanity, then he can make further</p>	<p>This is the wisdom of the appearance of the Prophets: to educate humanity, that this lump of coal may become a diamond and this barren tree may be grafted and yield fruit of the utmost sweetness and delicacy. And after the noblest stations in the world of humanity have been</p>

<p>progress in the conditions of perfection, but not in state; for such states are limited, but the divine perfections are endless.</p>	<p>attained, further progress can be made only in the degrees of perfection, not in station, for the degrees are finite but the divine perfections are infinite.</p>
<p>Both before and after putting off this material form, there is progress in perfection but not in state. So beings are consummated in perfect man. There is no other being higher than a perfect man. But man when he has reached this state can still make progress in perfections but not in state because there is no state higher than that of a perfect man to which he can transfer himself. He only progresses in the state of humanity, for the human perfections are infinite. Thus, however learned a man may be, we can imagine one more learned.</p>	<p>Both before and after casting off this elemental frame, the human soul progresses in perfections but not in station. The progression of all created things culminates in perfect man, and no greater being than him exists: Man, having reached the human station, can progress only in perfections and not in station, for there is no higher station to which he can find passage than that of a perfect man. He can progress solely within the human station, as human perfections are infinite. Thus, however learned a man may be, it is always possible to imagine one even more learned.</p>
<p>Hence, as the perfections of humanity are endless, man can also make progress in perfections after leaving this world.</p>	<p>And as the perfections of man are infinite, he can also advance in these perfections after his ascension from this world.</p>
<p>EXPLANATION OF A VERSE IN THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS</p>	<p>Faith and Works</p>
<p>Question.—It is said in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas “...whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed.” What is the meaning of this verse?</p>	<p>Question: It is said in the Most Holy Book: “...whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed.” What is the meaning of this verse?</p>
<p>Answer.—This blessed verse means that the foundation of success and salvation is the knowledge of God, and that the results of the knowledge of God are the good actions which are the fruits of faith.</p>	<p>Answer: The meaning of this blessed verse is that the foundation of success and salvation is the recognition of God, and that good deeds, which are the fruit of faith, derive from this recognition.</p>
<p>If man has not this knowledge, he will be separated from God, and when this separation exists, good actions have not complete effect. This verse does not mean that the souls separated from God are equal, whether they perform good or bad actions. It signifies only that the foundation is to know God, and the good actions result from this knowledge. Nevertheless, it is certain that between the good, the sinners and the wicked who are veiled from God there is a difference. For the veiled one who has good principles and character deserves the pardon of God, while he who is a sinner, and has bad qualities and character, is deprived of the bounties and blessings of God. Herein lies the difference.</p>	<p>When this recognition is not attained man remains veiled from God, and, being veiled, his good works fail to achieve their full and desired effect. This verse does not mean that those who are veiled from God are all equal whether they be doers of good or workers of iniquity. It means only that the foundation is the recognition of God and that good deeds derive from this knowledge. Nevertheless, it is certain that among those who are veiled from God there is a difference between the doer of good and the sinner and malefactor. For the veiled soul who is endowed with good character and conduct merits the forgiveness of God, while the veiled sinner possessed of bad character and conduct will be deprived of the bounties and bestowals of God. Herein lies the difference.</p>

<p>Therefore, the blessed verse means that good actions alone, without the knowledge of God, cannot be the cause of eternal salvation, everlasting success, and prosperity, and entrance into the Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>This blessed verse means therefore that good deeds alone, without the recognition of God, cannot lead to eternal redemption, to everlasting success and salvation, and to admittance into the Kingdom of God.</p>
<p>THE EXISTENCE OF THE RATIONAL SOUL AFTER THE DEATH OF THE BODY</p>	<p>The Subsistence of the Rational Soul after the Death of the Body</p>
<p>Question.—After the body is put aside and the spirit has obtained freedom, in what way will the rational soul exist? Let us suppose that the souls who are assisted by the bounty of the Holy Spirit attain to true existence and eternal life. But what becomes of the rational souls—that is to say, the veiled spirits?</p>	<p>Question: After the body has been cast off and the spirit has taken flight, through what will the rational soul subsist? Let us suppose that those souls who are aided by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit attain true existence and everlasting life. But what becomes of those rational souls who are veiled from God?</p>
<p>Answer.—Some think that the body is the substance and exists by itself, and that the spirit is accidental and depends upon the substance of the body, although, on the contrary, the rational soul is the substance, and the body depends upon it. If the accident—that is to say, the body—be destroyed, the substance, the spirit, remains.</p>	<p>Answer: Some hold that the body is the substance and that it subsists by itself, and that the spirit is an accident that subsists through the substance of the body. The truth, however, is that the rational soul is the substance through which the body subsists. If the accident — the body — is destroyed, the substance — the spirit — remains.</p>
<p>Second, the rational soul, meaning the human spirit, does not descend into the body—that is to say, it does not enter it, for descent and entrance are characteristics of bodies, and the rational soul is exempt from this. The spirit never entered this body, so in quitting it, it will not be in need of an abiding-place: no, the spirit is connected with the body, as this light is with this mirror. When the mirror is clear and perfect, the light of the lamp will be apparent in it, and when the mirror becomes covered with dust or breaks, the light will disappear.</p>	<p>Secondly, the rational soul, or the human spirit, does not subsist through this body by inherence — that is to say, it does not enter it, for inherence and entrance are characteristics of bodies, and the rational soul is sanctified above this. It never entered this body to begin with that it should require, upon leaving it, some other abode. No, the connection of the spirit with the body is even as the connection of this lamp with a mirror. If the mirror is polished and perfected the light of the lamp appears therein, and if the mirror is broken or covered with dust the light remains concealed.</p>
<p>The rational soul—that is to say, the human spirit—has neither entered this body nor existed through it; so after the disintegration of the composition of the body, how should it be in need of a substance through which it may exist? On the contrary, the rational soul is the substance through which the body exists. The personality of the rational soul is from its beginning; it is not due to the instrumentality of the body, but the state and the personality of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world; it will make progress and will attain to the</p>	<p>The rational soul — the human spirit — did not descend into this body or subsist through it to begin with, that it should require some substance to depend upon after the constituent parts of the body have decomposed. On the contrary, the rational soul is the substance upon which the body depends. The rational soul is endowed from the beginning with individuality; it does not acquire it through the intermediary of the body. At most, what can be said is that the individuality and identity of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world, and that it may either</p>

degrees of perfection, or it will remain in the lowest abyss of ignorance, veiled and deprived from beholding the signs of God.	progress and attain to the degrees of perfection or remain in the lowest abyss of ignorance and be veiled from and deprived of beholding the signs of God.
Question.—Through what means will the spirit of man—that is to say, the rational soul—after departing from this mortal world, make progress?	Question: Through what means can the spirit of man — the rational soul — progress after departing from this mortal world?
Answer.—The progress of man’s spirit in the divine world, after the severance of its connection with the body of dust, is through the bounty and grace of the Lord alone, or through the intercession and the sincere prayers of other human souls, or through the charities and important good works which are performed in its name.	Answer: The progress of the human spirit in the divine world, after its connection with the physical body has been severed, is either purely through the grace and bounty of the Lord, or through the intercession and prayers of other human souls, or through the significant contributions and charitable deeds which are offered in its name.
THE IMMORTALITY OF CHILDREN	[no separate heading in new translation]
Question.—What is the condition of children who die before attaining the age of discretion or before the appointed time of birth?	Question: What happens to children who die before reaching the age of maturity or before the appointed time of birth?
Answer.—These infants are under the shadow of the favor of God; and as they have not committed any sin and are not soiled with the impurities of the world of nature, they are the centers of the manifestation of bounty, and the Eye of Compassion will be turned upon them.	Answer: These children abide under the shadow of the Divine Providence, and, as they have committed no sin and are unsullied by the defilements of the world of nature, they will become the manifestations of divine bounty and the glances of the eye of divine mercy will be directed towards them.
ETERNAL LIFE AND ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD	Eternal Life and Entrance into the Kingdom of God
You question about eternal life and the entrance into the Kingdom. The outer expression used for the Kingdom is heaven; but this is a comparison and similitude, not a reality or fact, for the Kingdom is not a material place; it is sanctified from time and place. It is a spiritual world, a divine world, and the center of the Sovereignty of God; it is freed from body and that which is corporeal, and it is purified and sanctified from the imaginations of the human world. To be limited to place is a property of bodies and not of spirits. Place and time surround the body, not the mind and spirit.	You have asked concerning eternal life and entrance into the Kingdom. The Kingdom is outwardly referred to as “heaven”, but this is an expression and likeness and not a factual statement or reality. For the Kingdom is not a material location but is sanctified above time and place. It is a spiritual realm, a divine world, and it is the seat of the sovereignty of the almighty Lord. It is exalted above bodies and all that is corporeal, and it is freed and sanctified from the idle conjectures of men. For to be confined to place is a characteristic of bodies and not of spirits: Time and place encompass the body, not the mind and the soul.
Observe that the body of man is confined to a small place; it covers only two spans of earth. But the spirit and mind of man travel to all countries and regions—even through the limitless space of the heavens—surround all that exists, and make	Observe that the body of man abides in a limited space and occupies no more than two spans of earth. But the spirit and mind of man traverses all countries and regions and even the limitless expanse of the heavens; it encompasses all

<p>discoveries in the exalted spheres and infinite distances. This is because the spirit has no place; it is placeless; and for the spirit the earth and the heaven are as one since it makes discoveries in both. But the body is limited to a place and does not know that which is beyond it.</p>	<p>existence and makes discoveries in the spheres above and in the infinite reaches of the universe. This is because the spirit has no place: it is a placeless reality, and for the spirit earth and heaven are the same, since it makes discoveries in both. But the body is confined in space and is unaware of that which lies beyond.</p>
<p>For life is of two kinds: that of the body and that of the spirit. The life of the body is material life, but the life of the spirit expresses the existence of the Kingdom, which consists in receiving the Spirit of God and becoming vivified by the breath of the Holy Spirit. Although the material life has existence, it is pure nonexistence and absolute death for the holy saints. So man exists, and this stone also exists, but what a difference between the existence of man and that of the stone! Though the stone exists, in relation to the existence of man it is nonexistent.</p>	<p>Now, life is of two kinds: that of the body and that of the spirit. The life of the body consists in material life, but the life of the spirit is a heavenly existence which consists in receiving the grace of the Divine Spirit and being quickened through the breath of the Holy Spirit. Although material life has existence, yet in the eyes of holy and spiritually minded souls it is utter non-existence and death. Thus man exists and so does this stone, but what a difference between the existence of man and that of the stone! Although the stone exists, in relation to the existence of man it is non-existent.</p>
<p>The meaning of eternal life is the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the flower receives the gift of the season, the air, and the breezes of spring. Consider: this flower had life in the beginning like the life of the mineral; but by the coming of the season of spring, of the bounty of the clouds of the springtime, and of the heat of the glowing sun, it attained to another life of the utmost freshness, delicacy and fragrance. The first life of the flower, in comparison to the second life, is death.</p>	<p>What is meant by eternal life is receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit, even as a flower partakes of the gifts and breezes of spring. Observe that in the beginning this flower had a purely mineral life, yet through the advent of springtime, the outpouring of its vernal showers and the heat of its shining sun, it found another life and appeared with the utmost vitality, delicacy and fragrance. Compared to its latter life, the former life of the flower was even as death.</p>
<p>The meaning is that the life of the Kingdom is the life of the spirit, the eternal life, and that it is purified from place, like the spirit of man which has no place. For if you examine the human body, you will not find a special spot or locality for the spirit, for it has never had a place; it is immaterial. It has a connection with the body like that of the sun with this mirror. The sun is not within the mirror, but it has a connection with the mirror.</p> <p>In the same way the world of the Kingdom is sanctified from everything that can be perceived by the eye or by the other senses—hearing, smell, taste or touch.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that the life of the Kingdom is the life of the spirit, and that it is eternal and sanctified above time and place, even as the human spirit, which is placeless. For were you to search throughout the human body you would be unable to find a specific place or location for the spirit. The spirit is absolutely placeless and immaterial, but it has a connection with the body, even as the sun has a connection with this mirror: The sun occupies no place within the mirror but it has a connection with it. In the same way, the world of the Kingdom is sanctified above all that can be seen by the eye or perceived by the other senses such as hearing, smell, taste or touch.</p>
<p>The mind which is in man, the existence of which is recognized—where is it in him? If you examine</p>	<p>Where then can one find in man this mind that resides in him and whose existence is beyond</p>

<p>the body with the eye, the ear or the other senses, you will not find it; nevertheless, it exists. Therefore, the mind has no place, but it is connected with the brain. The Kingdom is also like this. In the same way love has no place, but it is connected with the heart; so the Kingdom has no place, but is connected with man.</p>	<p>doubt? Were you to examine the human body with the eye, the ear or the other senses, you would fail to find it, even though it clearly exists. The mind therefore has no place, although it is connected with the brain. So it is with the Kingdom. Likewise, love has no place, but it is connected with the heart. And in the same way, the Kingdom has no place, but it is connected with the human reality.</p>
<p>Entrance into the Kingdom is through the love of God, through detachment, through holiness and chastity, through truthfulness, purity, steadfastness, faithfulness and the sacrifice of life.</p>	<p>Entrance into the Kingdom is through the love of God, through detachment, through sanctity and holiness, through truthfulness and purity, through steadfastness and faithfulness, and through self-sacrifice.</p>
<p>These explanations show that man is immortal and lives eternally. For those who believe in God, who have love of God, and faith, life is excellent—that is, it is eternal; but to those souls who are veiled from God, although they have life, it is dark, and in comparison with the life of believers it is nonexistence.</p>	<p>It follows clearly from these explanations that man is immortal and everlasting. Those who believe in God, who cherish His love, and who have attained certitude, enjoy that blessed life which we call life eternal; but those who are veiled from God, though they be endowed with life, yet they live in darkness and their life in comparison with that of the believers is non-existence.</p>
<p>For example, the eye and the nail are living; but the life of the nail in relation to the life of the eye is nonexistent. This stone and this man both exist; but the stone in relation to the existence of man is nonexistent; it has no being; for when man dies, and his body is destroyed and annihilated, it becomes like stone and earth. Therefore, it is clear that although the mineral exists, in relation to man it is nonexistent.</p>	<p>Thus, the eye is alive and so too is the fingernail, but the life of the fingernail in relation to that of the eye is non-existence. The stone and the man both exist, but in relation to man the stone has no existence or being. For when man dies and his body is disintegrated and destroyed, it becomes like the stone, the earth and the mineral. It is therefore clear that even though the mineral exists, it is non-existent in relation to man.</p>
<p>In the same way, the souls who are veiled from God, although they exist in this world and in the world after death, are, in comparison with the holy existence of the children of the Kingdom of God, nonexistent and separated from God.</p>	<p>Likewise, those souls who are veiled from God, although they exist both in this world and in the world to come, are non-existent and forgotten in relation to the sanctified existence of the children of the divine Kingdom.</p>
<p>FATE</p>	<p>Two Kinds of Fate</p>
<p>Question.—Is the predestination which is mentioned in the Holy Books a decreed thing? If so, is not the effort to avoid it useless?</p>	<p>Question: Is fate, which is mentioned in the Holy Books, an irrevocable thing? If so, what use or benefit will come from seeking to avoid it?</p>
<p>Answer.—Fate is of two kinds: one is decreed, and the other is conditional or impending. The decreed fate is that which cannot change or be altered, and conditional fate is that which may occur. So, for this lamp, the decreed fate is that the oil burns and will be consumed; therefore, its</p>	<p>Answer: Fate is of two kinds: one is irrevocable and the other is conditional, or, as it is said, impending. Irrevocable fate is that which cannot be changed or altered, while conditional fate is that which may or may not occur. Thus, the irrevocable fate for this lamp is that its oil will be</p>

<p>eventual extinction is a decree which it is impossible to alter or to change because it is a decreed fate. In the same way, in the body of man a power of life has been created, and as soon as it is destroyed and ended, the body will certainly be decomposed, so when the oil in this lamp is burnt and finished, the lamp will undoubtedly become extinguished.</p>	<p>burned and consumed. Its eventual extinction is therefore certain and it is impossible to change or alter this outcome, for such is its irrevocable fate. Likewise, a power has been created in the body of man whose depletion and exhaustion leads inevitably to the disintegration of the body. It is even as the oil in this lamp: after it has been burnt and consumed, the lamp will assuredly be extinguished.</p>
<p>But conditional fate may be likened to this: while there is still oil, a violent wind blows on the lamp, which extinguishes it. This is a conditional fate. It is wise to avoid it, to protect oneself from it, to be cautious and circumspect. But the decreed fate, which is like the finishing of the oil in the lamp, cannot be altered, changed nor delayed. It must happen; it is inevitable that the lamp will become extinguished.</p>	<p>But conditional fate may be likened to this: while some oil yet remains, a strong wind blows and extinguishes the lamp. This fate is conditional. It is expedient to avoid this fate, to guard oneself against it, and to be cautious and prudent. But the irrevocable fate, which is like the depletion of the oil of the lamp, cannot be changed, altered or delayed. It is bound to occur and the lamp will undoubtedly be extinguished.</p>
<p>THE INFLUENCE OF THE STARS</p>	<p>The Influence of the Stars and the Interconnectedness of All Things</p>
<p>Question.—Have the stars of the heavens any influence upon the human soul, or have they not?</p>	<p>Question: Do the stars of the heavens have a spiritual influence upon human souls or not?</p>
<p>Answer.—Some of the celestial stars have a clear and apparent material effect upon the terrestrial globe and the earthly beings, which needs no explanation. Consider the sun, which through the aid and the providence of God develops the earth and all earthly beings. Without the light and heat of the sun, all the earthly creatures would be entirely nonexistent.</p>	<p>Answer: Certain celestial bodies exert a physical influence upon the earth and its creatures which is clear and apparent and which requires no explanation. Consider the sun, which, through the help of divine grace, nurtures the earth and all its creatures. Indeed, were it not for the light and heat of the sun, all earthly things would entirely cease to exist.</p>
<p>With regard to the spiritual influence of stars, though this influence of stars in the human world may appear strange, still, if you reflect deeply upon this subject, you will not be so much surprised at it. My meaning is not, however, that the decrees which the astrologers of former times inferred from the movements of the stars corresponded to occurrences; for the decrees of those former astrologers were forms of imagination which were originated by Egyptian, Assyrian and Chaldean priests; nay, rather, they were due to the fancies of Hindus, to the myths of the Greeks, Romans and other star worshipers. But I mean that this limitless universe is like the human body, all the members of which are connected and linked with one another with the</p>	<p>As to spiritual influences, although it might seem strange that these stars should exert a spiritual influence upon the human world, yet were you to reflect deeply upon this matter you would not be greatly surprised by it. My meaning, however, is not that the deductions that the astrologers of old made from the motions of the stars and planets were true, for these were mere figments of the imagination which had their origin with the Egyptian, Assyrian and Chaldean priests, or rather stemmed from the idle conjectures of the Hindus and the superstitions of the Greeks, the Romans and the other star-worshipers. My meaning, instead, is that this endless universe is like the human body and that all its parts are connected one with another and are linked together in the</p>

<p>greatest strength. How much the organs, the members and the parts of the body of man are intermingled and connected for mutual aid and help, and how much they influence one another! In the same way, the parts of this infinite universe have their members and elements connected with one another, and influence one another spiritually and materially.</p> <p>For example, the eye sees, and all the body is affected; the ear hears, and all the members of the body are moved. Of this there is no doubt; and the universe is like a living person. Moreover, the connection which exists between the members of beings must necessarily have an effect and impression, whether it be material or spiritual.</p>	<p>utmost perfection. That is, in the same way that the parts, members and organs of the human body are interconnected, and that they mutually assist, reinforce and influence each other, so too are the parts and members of this endless universe connected with, and spiritually and materially influenced by, one another. For example, the eye sees and the entire body is affected; the ear hears and every limb and member is stirred. Of this there is no doubt, for the world of existence is also like a living person. Thus, the interconnection that exists between the various parts of the universe requires mutual influences and effects, whether material or spiritual.</p>
<p>For those who deny spiritual influence upon material things we mention this brief example: wonderful sounds and tones, melodies and charming voices, are accidents which affect the air—for sound is the term for vibrations of the air—and by these vibrations the nerves of the tympanum of the ear are affected, and hearing results. Now reflect that the vibration of the air, which is an accident of no importance, attracts and exhilarates the spirit of man and has great effect upon him: it makes him weep or laugh; perhaps it will influence him to such a degree that he will throw himself into danger. Therefore, see the connection which exists between the spirit of man and the atmospheric vibration, so that the movement of the air becomes the cause of transporting him from one state to another, and of entirely overpowering him; it will deprive him of patience and tranquillity. Consider how strange this is, for nothing comes forth from the singer which enters into the listener; nevertheless, a great spiritual effect is produced. Therefore, surely so great a connection between beings must have spiritual effect and influence.</p>	<p>For those who deny the spiritual influence of material things we mention this brief example: Beautiful sounds, wondrous tones, and harmonious melodies are accidents which affect the air, for sound consists in vibrations of the air, and through these vibrations the nerves of the tympanum are excited and hearing results. Now consider how the vibrations of the air, which are an accident among accidents and which are accounted as naught, attract and exhilarate the spirit of man and move him to the utmost: they cause him to laugh and to weep, and can even induce him to throw himself in harm's way. Observe, then, what a connection exists between the spirit of man and the vibrations of the air, that the latter can transport him to another state and so overwhelm him as to entirely deprive him of patience and composure. Consider how strange this is, for nothing comes forth from the singer and enters into the listener, and yet great spiritual effects are produced. This intimate relationship between all created things is therefore bound to give rise to spiritual influences and effects.</p>
<p>It has been mentioned that the members and parts of man affect and influence one another. For example, the eye sees; the heart is affected. The ear hears; and the spirit is influenced. The heart is at rest; the thoughts become serene, and for all the members of man's body a pleasant condition is realized. What a connection and</p>	<p>It was already mentioned that the parts and members of the human body mutually influence one another. For instance, the eye sees and the heart is affected. The ear hears and the spirit is influenced. The heart finds peace, the thoughts expand and all the members of the body experience a state of well-being. What a</p>

<p>what an agreement is this! Since this connection, this spiritual effect and this influence, exists between the members of the body of man, who is only one of many finite beings, certainly between these universal and infinite beings there will also be a spiritual and material connection. Although by existing rules and actual science these connections cannot be discovered, nevertheless, their existence between all beings is certain and absolute.</p>	<p>connection and relationship this is! And if such relationships, such spiritual influences and effects are found among the various members of the body of man, which is only one particular being among many, then there must assuredly exist both spiritual and material relationships among the countless universal beings. And although our present methods and sciences cannot detect these relationships among the universal beings, their existence is nonetheless clear and indisputable.</p>
<p>To conclude: the beings, whether great or small, are connected with one another by the perfect wisdom of God, and affect and influence one another. If it were not so, in the universal system and the general arrangement of existence, there would be disorder and imperfection. But as beings are connected one with another with the greatest strength, they are in order in their places and perfect.</p>	<p>In sum, all beings, whether universal or particular, are mutually connected in accordance with God's consummate wisdom and mutually influence one another. Were it not so, the all-embracing organization and universal arrangement of existence would become disordered and disrupted. And as all created things are most soundly connected one with another, they are well-ordered, arranged and perfected.</p>
<p>This subject is worthy of examination.</p>	<p>This matter deserves close examination and calls for careful attention and deep reflection.</p>
<p>FREE WILL</p>	<p>Free Will and its Limits</p>
<p>Question.—Is man a free agent in all his actions, or is he compelled and constrained?</p>	<p>Question: Is man free and unconstrained in all his actions or is he compelled and constrained?</p>
<p>Answer.—This question is one of the most important and abstruse of divine problems. If God wills, another day, at the beginning of dinner, we will undertake the explanation of this subject in detail; now we will explain it briefly, in a few words, as follows.</p>	<p>Answer: This is one of the most important questions of divinity and it is most abstruse. God willing, another day we will explain this matter at length from the beginning of our lunch. For now we will briefly say a few words, as follows.</p>
<p>Some things are subject to the free will of man, such as justice, equity, tyranny and injustice, in other words, good and evil actions; it is evident and clear that these actions are, for the most part, left to the will of man. But there are certain things to which man is forced and compelled, such as sleep, death, sickness, decline of power, injuries and misfortunes; these are not subject to the will of man, and he is not responsible for them, for he is compelled to endure them. But in the choice of good and bad actions he is free, and he commits them according to his own will.</p>	<p>Certain matters are subject to the free will of man, such as acting with justice and fairness or injustice and iniquity; in other words, in the choice of good or evil actions. It is clear and evident that the will of man figures greatly in these actions. But there are certain matters where man is forced and compelled, such as sleep, death, sickness, failing powers, misfortune and material loss; these are not subject to the will of man and he is not accountable for them, for he is compelled to endure them. But he is free in the choice of good and evil actions and it is of his own accord that he performs them.</p>
<p>For example, if he wishes, he can pass his time in praising God, or he can be occupied with other</p>	<p>For example, should he so wish he can pass his days in praise of God, and should he so desire he</p>

<p>thoughts. He can be an enkindled light through the fire of the love of God, and a philanthropist loving the world, or he can be a hater of mankind, and engrossed with material things. He can be just or cruel. These actions and these deeds are subject to the control of the will of man himself; consequently, he is responsible for them.</p>	<p>can occupy himself with that which is other than Him. He can light the candle of his heart with the flame of the love of God and become a well-wisher of the world, or he can become an enemy of all mankind or set his affections on worldly things; he can choose to be just or iniquitous: all these deeds and actions are under his own control and he is therefore accountable for them.</p>
<p>Now another question arises. Man is absolutely helpless and dependent, since might and power belong especially to God. Both exaltation and humiliation depend upon the good pleasure and the will of the Most High.</p> <p>It is said in the New Testament that God is like a potter who makes "one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour." Now the dishonoured vessel has no right to find fault with the potter saying, "Why did you not make me a precious cup, which is passed from hand to hand?" The meaning of this verse is that the states of beings are different. That which is in the lowest state of existence, like the mineral, has no right to complain, saying, "O God, why have You not given me the vegetable perfections?" In the same way, the plant has no right to complain that it has been deprived of the perfections of the animal world. Also it is not befitting for the animal to complain of the want of the human perfections. No, all these things are perfect in their own degree, and they must strive after the perfections of their own degree. The inferior beings, as we have said, have neither the right to, nor the fitness for, the states of the superior perfections. No, their progress must be in their own state.</p>	<p>But another question arises: Man's condition is one of utter helplessness and absolute poverty. All might and power belong to God alone, and man's exaltation and abasement depend on the will and purpose of the Most High. Thus it is said in the Gospel that God is like a potter who makes "one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour." Now, the dishonoured vessel has no right to reproach the potter, saying, "Why did you not make me a precious cup that would be passed from hand to hand?" The meaning of these words is that souls occupy different stations. That which occupies the lowest station of existence, like the mineral, has no right to object, saying, "O God, why have you denied me the perfections of the plant?" Likewise, the plant has no right to protest that it has been deprived of the perfections of the animal realm. And similarly it is not befitting for the animal to complain of the want of human perfections. No, all these things are perfect in their own degree and must pursue the perfections of that degree. As we have said previously, that which is inferior in rank has no right or qualification to aspire to the station and perfections of that which is superior, but must progress within its own degree.</p>
<p>Also the inaction or the movement of man depend upon the assistance of God. If he is not aided, he is not able to do either good or evil. But when the help of existence comes from the Generous Lord, he is able to do both good and evil; but if the help is cut off, he remains absolutely helpless. This is why in the Holy Books they speak of the help and assistance of God. So this condition is like that of a ship which is moved by the power of the wind or steam; if this power ceases, the ship cannot move at all. Nevertheless, the rudder of the ship turns it to either side, and the power of the steam moves it in the desired</p>	<p>Moreover, man's stillness or motion itself is conditioned upon the aid of God. Should this assistance fail to reach him, he can do neither good nor evil. But when the assistance of the all-bounteous Lord confers existence upon man, he is capable of both good and evil. And should that assistance be cut off he would become absolutely powerless. That is why the aid and assistance of God are mentioned in the sacred scriptures. This condition can be likened to that of a ship that moves by the power of wind or steam. Should this power be cut off, the ship becomes entirely unable to move. Nevertheless, in whatever</p>

<p>direction. If it is directed to the east, it goes to the east; or if it is directed to the west, it goes to the west. This motion does not come from the ship; no, it comes from the wind or the steam.</p>	<p>direction the rudder is turned, the power of the steam propels the ship in that direction. If the rudder is turned to the east, the ship moves eastward, and if it is directed to the west, the ships moves west. This motion does not arise from the ship itself but from the wind or steam.</p>
<p>In the same way, in all the action or inaction of man, he receives power from the help of God; but the choice of good or evil belongs to the man himself. So if a king should appoint someone to be the governor of a city, and should grant him the power of authority, and should show him the paths of justice and injustice according to the laws—if then this governor should commit injustice, although he should act by the authority and power of the king, the latter would be absolved from injustice. But if he should act with justice, he would do it also through the authority of the king, who would be pleased and satisfied.</p>	<p>In like manner, all the doings of man are sustained by the power of divine assistance, but the choice of good or evil belongs to him alone. It is like when the king appoints an individual as governor of a city, grants him full authority, and shows him that which is just and unjust according to the law. Now, should the governor commit injustice, even though he act by the power and authority of the king, yet the king would not condone his injustice. And should the governor act with justice, this too would be through the royal authority, and the king would be well-pleased and satisfied with his justice.</p>
<p>That is to say, though the choice of good and evil belongs to man, under all circumstances he is dependent upon the sustaining help of life, which comes from the Omnipotent. The Kingdom of God is very great, and all are captives in the grasp of His Power. The servant cannot do anything by his own will; God is powerful, omnipotent, and the Helper of all beings.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that the choice of good and evil belongs to man, but that under all circumstances he is dependent upon the life-sustaining assistance of Divine Providence. The sovereignty of God is great indeed and all are held captive in the grasp of His power. The servant can do nothing of his own will alone: God is almighty and all-powerful and bestows His assistance upon all creation.</p>
<p>This question has become clearly explained. Salutations!</p>	<p>This question has been clearly explained and elucidated. Salutations!</p>
<p>VISIONS AND COMMUNICATION WITH SPIRITS</p>	<p>Spiritual Disclosures</p>
<p>Question.—Some people believe that they achieve spiritual discoveries—that is to say, that they converse with spirits. What kind of communion is this?</p>	<p>Question: Some people believe that they have spiritual disclosures, that is, that they converse with spirits. How is this?</p>
<p>Answer.—Spiritual discoveries are of two kinds: one kind is of the imagination and is only the assertion of a few people; the other kind resembles inspiration, and this is real—such are the revelations of Isaiah, of Jeremiah and of St. John, which are real.</p>	<p>Answer: Spiritual disclosures are of two kinds: one, which is commonly referred to among other peoples, is mere imagination, while the other is true spiritual visions such as the revelations of Isaiah, of Jeremiah and of John.</p>
<p>Reflect that man’s power of thought consists of two kinds. One kind is true, when it agrees with a determined truth. Such conceptions find realization in the exterior world; such are accurate opinions, correct theories, scientific discoveries and inventions.</p>	<p>Consider that man’s contemplative powers produce two kinds of conceptions. One kind consists in sound and true conceptions, which, when combined with resolution, become outwardly realized, such as proper arrangements, wise opinions, scientific discoveries and</p>

<p>The other kind of conceptions is made up of vain thoughts and useless ideas which yield neither fruit nor result, and which have no reality. No, they surge like the waves of the sea of imaginations, and they pass away like idle dreams.</p>	<p>technological inventions. The other consists in false ideas and baseless imaginations, which yield no fruit and have no reality. They surge like the waves of the sea of delusion and fade away like idle dreams.</p>
<p>In the same way, there are two sorts of spiritual discoveries. One is the revelations of the Prophets, and the spiritual discoveries of the elect. The visions of the Prophets are not dreams; no, they are spiritual discoveries and have reality. They say, for example, "I saw a person in a certain form, and I said such a thing, and he gave such an answer." This vision is in the world of wakefulness, and not in that of sleep. Nay, it is a spiritual discovery which is expressed as if it were the appearance of a vision.</p>	<p>In like manner, spiritual disclosures are of two kinds. One is the visions of the Prophets and the spiritual disclosures of the chosen ones of God. The visions of the Prophets are not dreams but true spiritual disclosures. Thus when they say, "I saw someone in such a form, and I spoke such words, and he gave such a reply," this vision takes place in a state of wakefulness and not in the realm of sleep. It is a spiritual discovery that is expressed in the form of a vision.</p>
<p>The other kind of spiritual discoveries is made up of pure imaginations, but these imaginations become embodied in such a way that many simple-hearted people believe that they have a reality. That which proves it clearly is that from this controlling of spirits no result or fruit has ever been produced. No, they are but narratives and stories.</p>	<p>The other kind of spiritual disclosures is mere illusion, but these illusions take such a tangible form in the mind that many simple-hearted people imagine them to be real. The obvious proof of this is that no concrete result or outcome ever follows from this supposed compelling or summoning of spirits. No, these are mere fables and fictions.</p>
<p>Know that the reality of man embraces the realities of things, and discovers the verities, properties and secrets of things. So all these arts, wonders, sciences and knowledge have been discovered by the human reality. At one time these sciences, knowledge, wonders and arts were hidden and concealed secrets; then gradually the human reality discovered them and brought them from the realm of the invisible to the plane of the visible. Therefore, it is evident that the reality of man embraces things. Thus it is in Europe and discovers America; it is on the earth, and it makes discoveries in the heavens. It is the revealer of the secrets of things, and it is the knower of the realities of that which exists. These discoveries corresponding to the reality are similar to revelation, which is spiritual comprehension, divine inspiration and the association of human spirits. For instance, the Prophet says, "I saw, I said, I heard such a thing."</p>	<p>Know therefore that the human reality encompasses the realities of all things and discovers their true nature, their properties and their mysteries. For instance, all the existing crafts, inventions, sciences and branches of learning have been discovered by the human reality. At one time they were all hidden and concealed mysteries, but the reality of man gradually discovered them and brought them forth from the invisible world into the visible realm. It is therefore evident that the reality of man encompasses all things. Thus it is in Europe and discovers America; it is on the earth and makes discoveries in the heavens. It unravels the mysteries of all things and apprehends the realities of all beings. These true disclosures which conform to reality are similar to visions — which consist in spiritual understanding, heavenly inspiration and the close communion of human spirits — and thus the recipient will say that he saw, or said, or heard such a thing.</p>

<p>It is, therefore, evident that the spirit has great perception without the intermediary of any of the five senses, such as the eyes or ears. Among spiritual souls there are spiritual understandings, discoveries, a communion which is purified from imagination and fancy, an association which is sanctified from time and place. So it is written in the Gospel that, on Mount Tabor, Moses and Elias came to Christ, and it is evident that this was not a material meeting. It was a spiritual condition which is expressed as a physical meeting.</p>	<p>It is therefore clear that the spirit has powerful perceptions that are not mediated by the organs of the five senses such as the eyes and the ears. And, with respect to spiritual understandings and inner disclosures, there exists among spiritual souls a unity that surpasses all imagination and comparison and a communion that transcends time and place. So, for example, when it is written in the Gospel that Moses and Elijah came to Christ on Mount Tabor, it is clear that this was not a material communion but a spiritual condition that has been expressed as a physical meeting.</p>
<p>The other sort of converse, presence and communications of spirits is but imagination and fancy, which only appears to have reality. The mind and the thought of man sometimes discover truths, and from this thought and discovery signs and results are produced. This thought has a foundation. But many things come to the mind of man which are like the waves of the sea of imaginations; they have no fruit, and no result comes from them. In the same way, man sees in the world of sleep a vision which becomes exactly realized; at another time, he sees a dream which has absolutely no result.</p>	<p>The other kind of summoning of and conversation and communication with spirits is vain imagination and pure illusion, although it may appear to be real. The mind and thought of man at times discovers certain truths, and this thought and discovery produce definite results and benefits. Such thoughts have a solid foundation. But many things come to mind that are like the waves of the sea of delusion; they bear no fruit and produce no result. In the world of sleep, too, one may have a dream which exactly comes true, while on another occasion one will have a dream which has absolutely no result.</p>
<p>What we mean is that this state, which we call the converse and communications of spirits, is of two kinds: one is simply imaginary, and the other is like the visions which are mentioned in the Holy Book, such as the revelations of St. John and Isaiah and the meeting of Christ with Moses and Elias. These are real, and produce wonderful effects in the minds and thoughts of men, and cause their hearts to be attracted.</p>	<p>Our meaning is that this condition which we call conversation or communication with spirits is of two kinds: one is sheer delusion, and the other, which consists in the visions mentioned in the Bible such as those of Isaiah and John and the meeting of Christ with Moses and Elijah, is real. The latter exert a marvellous effect upon minds and thoughts and produce powerful attractions in the hearts.</p>
<p>HEALING BY SPIRITUAL MEANS</p>	<p>Healing without Medicine</p>
<p>Question.—Some people heal the sick by spiritual means—that is to say, without medicine. How is this?</p>	<p>Question: Some heal the sick by spiritual means — that is, without medicine. How is this?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that there are four kinds of curing and healing without medicine. Two are due to material causes, and two to spiritual causes.</p>	<p>Answer: A detailed explanation of this matter was provided earlier. If you have not fully grasped it, we will repeat it so that you may. Know that there are four kinds of treatment and healing without medicine. Two are due to material causes and two to spiritual ones.</p>

<p>Of the two kinds of material healing, one is due to the fact that in man both health and sickness are contagious. The contagion of disease is violent and rapid, while that of health is extremely weak and slow. If two bodies are brought into contact with each other, it is certain that microbic particles will pass from one to the other. In the same way that disease is transferred from one body to another with rapid and strong contagion, it may be that the strong health of a healthy man will alleviate a very slight malady in a sick person. That is to say, the contagion of disease is violent and has a rapid effect, while that of health is very slow and has a small effect, and it is only in very slight diseases that it has even this small effect. The strong power of a healthy body can overcome a slight weakness of a sick body, and health results. This is one kind of healing.</p>	<p>As to the two material kinds, one is due to the fact that in reality both health and sickness are contagious. The contagiousness of disease is rapid and violent, whereas that of health is exceedingly slow and weak. If two bodies are brought into contact with each other, it is certain that microbial particles will be transmitted from one to the other. In the same way that disease is rapidly and violently transmitted from one body to another, the strong health of a healthy person may also alleviate a very slight condition in a sick person. Our meaning is that the contagiousness of disease is rapid and violent while that of health is very slow and of limited effect, and it is only in minor ills that this modest effect can be felt. In such cases the strength of the healthy body overcomes the slight weakness of the sick body and brings about its health. This is one kind of healing.</p>
<p>The other kind of healing without medicine is through the magnetic force which acts from one body on another and becomes the cause of cure. This force also has only a slight effect. Sometimes one can benefit a sick person by placing one's hand upon his head or upon his heart. Why? Because of the effect of the magnetism, and of the mental impression made upon the sick person, which causes the disease to vanish. But this effect is also very slight and weak.</p>	<p>Another kind of healing is through the force of bodily magnetism, where the magnetic force of one body affects another body and brings about the cure. This force, too, has only a slight effect. Thus someone may lay his hand upon the head or stomach of a patient and perchance the latter will benefit from this. Why? Because the effect of the magnetism, and the impression made upon the psyche of the patient, may dispel the disease. But this effect is also very slight and weak.</p>
<p>Of the two other kinds of healing which are spiritual—that is to say, where the means of cure is a spiritual power—one results from the entire concentration of the mind of a strong person upon a sick person, when the latter expects with all his concentrated faith that a cure will be effected from the spiritual power of the strong person, to such an extent that there will be a cordial connection between the strong person and the invalid. The strong person makes every effort to cure the sick patient, and the sick patient is then sure of receiving a cure. From the effect of these mental impressions an excitement of the nerves is produced, and this impression and this excitement of the nerves will become the cause of the recovery of the sick person. So when a sick person has a strong desire and intense hope for something and hears suddenly the tidings of its realization, a nervous</p>	<p>The two other kinds are spiritual, that is, the means of healing is a spiritual power. One is when a healthy person focuses his whole attention upon a sick person, and the latter in turn fully expects to be healed through the spiritual power of the former, and is wholly convinced thereof, to such an extent that a strong connection is created between their hearts. Should the healthy individual then bend every effort to heal the sick one, and should the latter have full faith that health will be attained, an excitement may be produced in his nerves from these soul-to-soul influences and bring about the cure. So for example when a sick person is suddenly given the good news that his most ardent wish and desire has been realized, a nervous excitement may result that will entirely dispel the ailment. In the same way, when a terrifying event suddenly comes to pass, such an</p>

<p>excitement is produced which will make the malady entirely disappear. In the same way, if a cause of terror suddenly occurs, perhaps an excitement may be produced in the nerves of a strong person which will immediately cause a malady. The cause of the sickness will be no material thing, for that person has not eaten anything, and nothing harmful has touched him; the excitement of the nerves is then the only cause of the illness. In the same way the sudden realization of a chief desire will give such joy that the nerves will be excited by it, and this excitement may produce health.</p>	<p>excitement may be produced in the nerves of a healthy person that he immediately falls ill. The cause of the illness is not a material thing, for that person has not ingested or come into contact with anything: the nervous excitement alone has brought about the illness. Likewise, the sudden realization of a most cherished desire may impart such joy as to excite the nerves and restore health.</p>
<p>To conclude, the complete and perfect connection between the spiritual doctor and the sick person—that is, a connection of such a kind that the spiritual doctor entirely concentrates himself, and all the attention of the sick person is given to the spiritual doctor from whom he expects to realize health—causes an excitement of the nerves, and health is produced. But all this has effect only to a certain extent, and that not always. For if someone is afflicted with a very violent disease, or is wounded, these means will not remove the disease nor close and heal the wound—that is to say, these means have no power in severe maladies, unless the constitution helps, because a strong constitution often overcomes disease. This is the third kind of healing.</p>	<p>In brief, a complete and perfect connection between the spiritual physician and the patient — that is, one where the physician concentrates his entire attention on the patient and where the patient likewise concentrates all his attention on the spiritual physician and anticipates healing — causes a nervous excitement whereby health is regained. But this is effective only to a point and not in all cases. For instance, should someone contract a grave illness or be physically injured, these means will neither dispel the illness nor soothe and heal the injury — that is, these means have no sway over grave illnesses, unless assisted by the constitution of the patient, for a strong constitution will often ward off an illness. This is the third kind of healing.</p>
<p>But the fourth kind of healing is produced through the power of the Holy Spirit. This does not depend on contact, nor on sight, nor upon presence; it is not dependent upon any condition. Whether the disease be light or severe, whether there be a contact of bodies or not, whether a personal connection be established between the sick person and the healer or not, this healing takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>But the fourth kind is when healing is brought about through the power of the Holy Spirit. This depends neither upon physical contact, nor upon sight, nor even upon presence: it is not dependent upon any condition. Whether the disease be mild or severe, whether there be contact between the bodies or not, whether a connection be established between patient and physician or not, whether the patient be present or not, this healing takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>HEALING BY MATERIAL MEANS</p>	<p>Healing by Material Means</p>
<p>Yesterday at table we spoke of curative treatment and spiritual healing, which consists in treating maladies through the spiritual powers.</p>	<p>Yesterday at table we mentioned, in connection with the question of spiritual medicine and healing, how illnesses can be cured through spiritual powers.</p>

<p>Now let us speak of material healing. The science of medicine is still in a condition of infancy; it has not reached maturity. But when it has reached this point, cures will be performed by things which are not repulsive to the smell and taste of man—that is to say, by aliments, fruits and vegetables which are agreeable to the taste and have an agreeable smell. For the provoking cause of disease—that is to say, the cause of the entrance of disease into the human body—is either a physical one or is the effect of excitement of the nerves.</p>	<p>Now we will speak of material healing. The science of medicine is still in its infancy and has not yet reached maturity. But when it reaches that stage, treatments will be administered with things that are not repulsive to the senses of taste and smell, that is, through foods, fruits and plants that have an agreeable taste and a pleasant smell. For the cause of the intrusion of illness into the human body is either a physical agent or a nervous excitement and stimulation.</p>
<p>But the principal causes of disease are physical, for the human body is composed of numerous elements, but in the measure of an especial equilibrium. As long as this equilibrium is maintained, man is preserved from disease; but if this essential balance, which is the pivot of the constitution, is disturbed, the constitution is disordered, and disease will supervene.</p>	<p>As to physical agents, which are the primary cause of illness, their effect is due to the following: the human body is composed of numerous elements according to a particular state of equilibrium. So long as this equilibrium is maintained man is preserved from sickness, but should this fundamental balance, which is the central requirement of a sound constitution, be upset, the constitution will be disrupted and illnesses will supervene.</p>
<p>For instance, there is a decrease in one of the constituent ingredients of the body of man, and in another there is an increase; so the proportion of the equilibrium is disturbed, and disease occurs. For example, one ingredient must be one thousand grams in weight, and another five grams, in order that the equilibrium be maintained. The part which is one thousand grams diminishes to seven hundred grams, and that which is five grams augments until the measure of the equilibrium is disturbed; then disease occurs. When by remedies and treatments the equilibrium is reestablished, the disease is banished. So if the sugar constituent increases, the health is impaired; and when the doctor forbids sweet and starchy foods, the sugar constituent diminishes, the equilibrium is reestablished, and the disease is driven off.</p>	<p>For instance, if there is a deficiency in one of the component parts of the body and a surfeit of another, the state of equilibrium is disturbed and illness occurs. So, for example, equilibrium may require one component to be a thousand grams and another to be five grams. Should the former fall to seven hundred grams and the latter increase in such wise that the state of equilibrium is disturbed, then illness will supervene; and should equilibrium be restored through medicines and treatments, the illness will be overcome. Thus if the sugar component becomes excessive, the health is impaired; and when the physician forbids sweet and starchy foods, the sugar component diminishes, equilibrium is restored, and the illness is banished.</p>
<p>Now the readjustment of these constituents of the human body is obtained by two means—either by medicines or by aliments; and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium, disease is banished. All the elements that are combined in man exist also in vegetables; therefore, if one of the constituents which compose the body of man diminishes, and he</p>	<p>Now, the equilibration of these bodily components can be accomplished by one of two means, either through medicines or with foods; and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium the illness is banished. Since all the constituent elements of the human body are also found in plants, if one of these components were to become deficient, and if one were to partake</p>

<p>partakes of foods in which there is much of that diminished constituent, then the equilibrium will be established, and a cure will be obtained. So long as the aim is the readjustment of the constituents of the body, it can be effected either by medicine or by food.</p>	<p>of foods that are rich in that component, then equilibrium would be restored and the cure realized. So long as the aim is the equilibration of the component parts of the body, this can be equally effected through medicines or various foods.</p>
<p>The majority of the diseases which overtake man also overtake the animal, but the animal is not cured by drugs. In the mountains, as in the wilderness, the animal's physician is the power of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness; he eats those that are sweet and fragrant to his smell and taste, and is cured. The cause of his healing is this. When the sugar ingredient has become diminished in his constitution, he begins to long for sweet things; therefore, he eats an herb with a sweet taste, for nature urges and guides him; its smell and taste please him, and he eats it. The sugar ingredient in his nature will be increased, and health will be restored.</p>	<p>The majority of the illnesses that afflict man also afflict animals, but the animal does not treat them through medicines. The animal's physician in the mountains and the wilderness is its powers of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness, eats those that its smell and taste find to be sweet and fragrant, and is cured. The reason is this: When for example the sugar component in its body becomes deficient, it craves sweet things and thus eats of sweet-tasting plants, for nature so urges and guides it. Thus, as the animal eats things that are pleasing to its smell and taste, the sugar component increases and it regains its health.</p>
<p>It is, therefore, evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments and fruits; but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables, and by various waters, hot and cold in temperature.</p>	<p>It is therefore evident that it is possible to cure illnesses by means of fruits and other foods. But as the science of medicine has not yet been perfected, this fact has not been fully understood. When this science reaches perfection, treatments will be administered with fragrant fruits and plants as well as with other foods, and with hot and cold waters of various temperatures.</p>
<p>This discourse is brief; but, if God wills, at another time, when the occasion is suitable, this question will be more fully explained.</p>	<p>This is only a brief explanation. God willing, and the occasion permitting, we will provide a more detailed explanation another time.</p>
<p>MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS</p>	<p>Miscellaneous Subjects</p>
<p>THE NONEXISTENCE OF EVIL</p>	<p>On Good and Evil</p>
<p>The true explanation of this subject is very difficult. Know that beings are of two kinds: material and spiritual, those perceptible to the senses and those intellectual.</p>	<p>To explain the truth of this matter is difficult indeed. Know that created things are of two kinds: material and spiritual, sensible and intelligible. That is, some are perceptible to the senses while others are only perceived by the mind.</p>
<p>Things which are sensible are those which are perceived by the five exterior senses; thus those outward existences which the eyes see are called sensible. Intellectual things are those which have no outward existence but are conceptions of the mind. For example, mind itself is an intellectual</p>	<p>Sensible realities are those which are perceived by the five outer senses: so, for example, those outward things which the eye sees are called sensible. Intelligible realities are those which have no outward existence but are perceived by the mind. For example, the mind itself is an</p>

<p>thing which has no outward existence. All man's characteristics and qualities form an intellectual existence and are not sensible.</p>	<p>intelligible reality and has no outward existence. Likewise, all human virtues and attributes have an intelligible rather than a sensible existence, that is, they are realities that are perceived by the mind and not by the senses.</p>
<p>Briefly, the intellectual realities, such as all the qualities and admirable perfections of man, are purely good, and exist. Evil is simply their nonexistence. So ignorance is the want of knowledge; error is the want of guidance; forgetfulness is the want of memory; stupidity is the want of good sense. All these things have no real existence.</p>	<p>Briefly, intelligible realities such as the praiseworthy attributes and perfections of man are purely good and have a positive existence. Evil is simply their non-existence. So ignorance is the want of knowledge, error is the want of guidance, forgetfulness is the want of remembrance, foolishness is the want of understanding: all these are nothing in themselves and have no positive existence.</p>
<p>In the same way, the sensible realities are absolutely good, and evil is due to their nonexistence—that is to say, blindness is the want of sight, deafness is the want of hearing, poverty is the want of wealth, illness is the want of health, death is the want of life, and weakness is the want of strength.</p>	<p>As for sensible realities, these are also purely good, and evil is merely their non-existence — that is, blindness is the want of sight, deafness is the want of hearing, poverty is the want of wealth, illness is the want of health, death is the want of life, and weakness is the want of strength.</p>
<p>Nevertheless a doubt occurs to the mind—that is, scorpions and serpents are poisonous. Are they good or evil, for they are existing beings? Yes, a scorpion is evil in relation to man; a serpent is evil in relation to man; but in relation to themselves they are not evil, for their poison is their weapon, and by their sting they defend themselves. But as the elements of their poison do not agree with our elements—that is to say, as there is antagonism between these different elements, therefore, this antagonism is evil; but in reality as regards themselves they are good.</p>	<p>Now, a doubt comes to mind: Scorpions and snakes are poisonous; is this good or evil, for they have a positive existence? Yes, it is true that scorpions and snakes are evil, but only in relation to us and not to themselves, for their venom is their weapon and their sting their means of defense. But as the constituent elements of their venom are incompatible with those of our bodies, that is, as these constituent elements are mutually opposed, the venom is evil — or, rather, those elements are evil in relation to each other, while in their own reality they are both good.</p>
<p>The epitome of this discourse is that it is possible that one thing in relation to another may be evil, and at the same time within the limits of its proper being it may not be evil. Then it is proved that there is no evil in existence; all that God created He created good. This evil is nothingness; so death is the absence of life. When man no longer receives life, he dies. Darkness is the absence of light: when there is no light, there is darkness. Light is an existing thing, but darkness is nonexistent. Wealth is an existing thing, but poverty is nonexistent.</p>	<p>To summarize, one thing may be evil in relation to another but not evil within the limits of its own being. It follows therefore that there is no evil in existence: whatsoever God has created He has created good. Evil consists merely in non-existence. For example, death is the absence of life: when man is no longer sustained by the power of life, he dies. Darkness is the absence of light: when light is no more, darkness reigns. Light is a positively existing thing but darkness has no positive existence; it is merely its absence. Likewise wealth is a positively existing thing but poverty is merely its absence.</p>

Then it is evident that all evils return to nonexistence. Good exists; evil is nonexistent.	It is thus evident that all evil is mere non-existence. Good has a positive existence; evil is merely its absence.
TWO KINDS OF TORMENT	Two Kinds of Torment
Know that there are two kinds of torment: subtle and gross. For example, ignorance itself is a torment, but it is a subtle torment; indifference to God is itself a torment; so also are falsehood, cruelty and treachery. All the imperfections are torments, but they are subtle torments. Certainly for an intelligent man death is better than sin, and a cut tongue is better than lying or calumny.	Know that there are two kinds of torment: subtle and palpable. For example, ignorance is itself a torment, but it is a subtle torment; indifference to God is itself a torment; falsehood is itself a torment; iniquity and treachery are torments. Indeed all the human imperfections are torments, but they are subtle torments. A person endowed with a conscience will certainly prefer to be killed rather than to sin, and to have his tongue cut out rather than to slander and lie.
The other kind of torment is gross—such as penalties, imprisonment, beating, expulsion and banishment. But for the people of God separation from God is the greatest torment of all.	The other kind of torment is palpable and consists in physical punishments such as imprisonment, beating, expulsion and banishment. But for the people of God, to be veiled from Him is still more grievous than all these torments.
THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD	The Justice and Mercy of God
Know that to do justice is to give to everyone according to his deserts. For example, when a workman labors from morning until evening, justice requires that he shall be paid his wages; but when he has done no work and taken no trouble, he is given a gift: this is bounty. If you give alms and gifts to a poor man although he has taken no trouble for you, nor done anything to deserve it, this is bounty. So Christ besought forgiveness for his murderers: this is called bounty.	Know that justice consists in rendering each his due. For example, when a workman labours from morning till evening, justice requires that he be paid his wage, but bounty consists in rewarding him even when he has done no work and expended no effort. So when you give alms to a poor man who has made no effort and done nothing for your benefit to deserve it, this is bounty. Thus, Christ besought forgiveness for those responsible for His death: this is called bounty.
Now the question of the good or evil of things is determined by reason or by law. Some believe that it is determined by law; such are the Jews, who, believing all the commandments of the Pentateuch to be absolutely obligatory, regard them as matters of law, not of reason. Thus they say that one of the commandments of the Pentateuch is that it is unlawful to partake of meat and butter together because it is teref, and teref in Hebrew means unclean, as kosher means clean. This, they say, is a question of law and not of reason.	Now, the question of the excellence or baseness of things is determined either by reason or by religious law. Some believe that it is based on religious law: such is the case with the Jews, who believe that all the commandments of the Torah are binding and that they are matters of religious law rather than of reason. Thus they say that one of the commandments of the Torah is that meat and butter cannot be eaten together, for this is “trefah” (and “trefah” in Hebrew means unclean while “kosher” means clean). This they say is a question of religious law and not of reason.
But the theologians think that the good and evil of things depend upon both reason and law. The chief foundation of the prohibition of murder,	But the divine philosophers hold that the excellence or baseness of things depends upon both reason and religious law. Thus, the

<p>theft, treachery, falsehood, hypocrisy and cruelty, is reason. Every intelligent man comprehends that murder, theft, treachery, falsehood, hypocrisy and cruelty are evil and reprehensible; for if you prick a man with a thorn, he will cry out, complain and groan; so it is evident that he will understand that murder according to reason is evil and reprehensible. If he commits a murder, he will be responsible, whether the renown of the Prophet has reached him or not; for it is reason that formulates the reprehensible character of the action. When a man commits this bad action, he will surely be responsible.</p>	<p>prohibitions on murder, theft, treachery, falsehood, hypocrisy and iniquity are based on reason: every rational mind can grasp that these are all vile and reprehensible. For if you merely prick a man with a thorn he will cry out in pain: how well must he realize then that murder, according to reason, is vile and reprehensible. And were he to commit such a crime he would be held accountable for it whether the prophetic message had reached him or not, for reason itself grasps the reprehensible character of this deed. Thus, when such a person commits such base actions he will assuredly be held to account.</p>
<p>But in a place where the commands of a Prophet are not known, and where the people do not act in conformity with the divine instructions, such as the command of Christ to return good for evil, but act according to the desires of nature—that is, if they torment those who torment them—from the point of view of religion they are excused because the divine command has not been delivered to them. Though they do not deserve mercy and beneficence, nevertheless, God treats them with mercy and forgives them.</p>	<p>But if the prophetic injunctions have not reached a place, and the people fail as a result to act in conformity with the divine teachings, then they are not held accountable according to the laws of religion. For instance, Christ enjoined that cruelty should be met with kindness. If a person remains unaware of this injunction and acts according to the promptings of nature, that is, if he returns injury for injury, then he is not held accountable according to the laws of religion, for this divine injunction has not been conveyed to him. Although such a person is not deserving of divine bounty and favour, God will nevertheless deal with him in His mercy and grant him forgiveness.</p>
<p>Now vengeance, according to reason, is also blameworthy, because through vengeance no good result is gained by the avenger. So if a man strikes another, and he who is struck takes revenge by returning the blow, what advantage will he gain? Will this be a balm for his wound or a remedy for his pain? No, God forbid! In truth the two actions are the same: both are injuries; the only difference is that one occurred first, and the other afterward. Therefore, if he who is struck forgives, nay, if he acts in a manner contrary to that which has been used toward him, this is laudable.</p>	<p>Now, vengeance is reprehensible even according to reason, for it is of no benefit to the avenger. If a man strikes another, and the victim chooses to exact revenge by returning the blow, what advantage will he gain? Will this be a balm to his wound or a remedy for his pain? No, God forbid! In truth the two actions are the same: both are injuries; the only difference is that one preceded the other. Therefore, if the victim forgives, or better still, if he acts in the opposite manner, this is praiseworthy.</p>
<p>The law of the community will punish the aggressor but will not take revenge. This punishment has for its end to warn, to protect and to oppose cruelty and transgression so that other men may not be tyrannical.</p>	<p>As for the body politic, it punishes the aggressor but not to exact revenge. The purpose of this punishment rather is to deter and dissuade, and to oppose iniquity and aggression, so as to prevent others from extending their hand likewise in oppression. But if the victim chooses</p>

<p>But if he who has been struck pardons and forgives, he shows the greatest mercy. This is worthy of admiration.</p>	<p>to forgive and to show instead the greatest mercy, this is most approved in the sight of God.</p>
<p>THE RIGHT METHOD OF TREATING CRIMINALS</p>	<p>The Punishment of Criminals</p>
<p>Question.—Should a criminal be punished, or forgiven and his crime overlooked?</p>	<p>Question: Should a criminal be punished, or should he be forgiven and his crime overlooked?</p>
<p>Answer.—There are two sorts of retributory punishments. One is vengeance, the other, chastisement. Man has not the right to take vengeance, but the community has the right to punish the criminal; and this punishment is intended to warn and to prevent so that no other person will dare to commit a like crime. This punishment is for the protection of man’s rights, but it is not vengeance; vengeance appeases the anger of the heart by opposing one evil to another. This is not allowable, for man has not the right to take vengeance. But if criminals were entirely forgiven, the order of the world would be upset. So punishment is one of the essential necessities for the safety of communities, but he who is oppressed by a transgressor has not the right to take vengeance. On the contrary, he should forgive and pardon, for this is worthy of the world of man.</p>	<p>Answer: There are two kinds of retributive actions: one is revenge and retaliation and the other, punishment and requital. An individual has no right to seek revenge, but the body politic has the right to punish the criminal. Such punishment is intended to dissuade and deter others from committing similar crimes. It is for the protection of the rights of man and does not constitute revenge, for revenge is that inner gratification that results from returning like for like. This is not permissible, for no one has been given the right to seek revenge. And yet, if criminals were entirely left to their own devices, the order of the world would be disrupted. So while punishment is one of the essential requirements of the body politic, the wronged and aggrieved party has no right to seek revenge. On the contrary, he should show forgiveness and magnanimity, for this is that which befits the human world.</p>
<p>The communities must punish the oppressor, the murderer, the malefactor, so as to warn and restrain others from committing like crimes. But the most essential thing is that the people must be educated in such a way that no crimes will be committed; for it is possible to educate the masses so effectively that they will avoid and shrink from perpetrating crimes, so that the crime itself will appear to them as the greatest chastisement, the utmost condemnation and torment. Therefore, no crimes which require punishment will be committed.</p>	<p>The body politic, however, must punish the oppressor, the murderer, and the assailant, so as to dissuade and deter others from committing similar crimes. But that which is essential is to so educate the masses that no crimes will be committed in the first place; for a people can be so educated as to shrink entirely from any crime, and indeed regard the crime itself as the greatest chastisement and the most grievous torment and punishment. Thus no crimes would occur in the first place such that punishments would be required.</p>
<p>We must speak of things that are possible of performance in this world. There are many theories and high ideas on this subject, but they are not practicable; consequently, we must speak of things that are feasible.</p>	<p>We must speak only of that which is practically feasible in the world. There is indeed an abundance of lofty ideals and sentiments that cannot be put into effect. Therefore, we must confine ourselves to that which is practicable.</p>
<p>For example, if someone oppresses, injures and wrongs another, and the wronged man retaliates, this is vengeance and is censurable. If the son of ‘Amr kills the son of Zayd, Zayd has not the right to kill the son of ‘Amr; if he does so, this is</p>	<p>For example, if someone wrongs, injures and assaults another, and the latter retaliates in kind, this constitutes revenge and is blameworthy. If Peter kills the son of Paul, Paul has no right to kill the son of Peter. Were he to do so, it would be an</p>

<p>vengeance. If 'Amr dishonors Zayd, the latter has not the right to dishonor 'Amr; if he does so, this is vengeance, and it is very reprehensible. No, rather he must return good for evil, and not only forgive, but also, if possible, be of service to his oppressor. This conduct is worthy of man: for what advantage does he gain by vengeance? The two actions are equivalent; if one action is reprehensible, both are reprehensible. The only difference is that one was committed first, the other later.</p>	<p>act of vengeance and blameworthy in the extreme. Rather, he must act in the opposite manner and show forgiveness, and, if possible, even be of some assistance to his aggressor. This indeed is that which is worthy of man; for what advantage does one gain from revenge? The two actions are indeed one and the same: if one is reprehensible, so too is the other. The only difference is that one preceded the other.</p>
<p>But the community has the right of defense and of self-protection; moreover, the community has no hatred nor animosity for the murderer: it imprisons or punishes him merely for the protection and security of others. It is not for the purpose of taking vengeance upon the murderer, but for the purpose of inflicting a punishment by which the community will be protected. If the community and the inheritors of the murdered one were to forgive and return good for evil, the cruel would be continually ill-treating others, and assassinations would continually occur. Vicious people, like wolves, would destroy the sheep of God. The community has no ill-will and rancor in the infliction of punishment, and it does not desire to appease the anger of the heart; its purpose is by punishment to protect others so that no atrocious actions may be committed.</p>	<p>But the body politic has the right to preserve and to protect. It holds no grudge and harbours no enmity towards the murderer, but chooses to imprison or punish him solely to ensure the protection of others. The purpose is not revenge but a punishment through which the body politic is protected. Otherwise, were both the victim's heirs and the community to forgive and return good for evil, the wrongdoers would never cease their onslaught and a murder would be committed at every moment — nay, bloodthirsty individuals would, like wolves, entirely destroy the flock of God. The body politic is not prompted by ill-will in meting out its punishment; it acts without prejudice and does not seek to gratify a sense of vengeance: Its purpose in inflicting the punishment is to safeguard others and to prevent the future commission of such vile actions.</p>
<p>Thus when Christ said: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left one also," it was for the purpose of teaching men not to take personal revenge. He did not mean that, if a wolf should fall upon a flock of sheep and wish to destroy it, the wolf should be encouraged to do so. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, most certainly He would have prevented it.</p>	<p>Thus when Christ said: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the left one also," the purpose was to educate the people, not to imply that one should assist a wolf that has fallen upon a flock of sheep and is intent upon devouring them all. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, He most certainly would have prevented it.</p>
<p>As forgiveness is one of the attributes of the Merciful One, so also justice is one of the attributes of the Lord. The tent of existence is upheld upon the pillar of justice and not upon forgiveness. The continuance of mankind depends upon justice and not upon forgiveness. So if, at present, the law of pardon were practiced in all countries, in a short time the world would be disordered, and the foundations</p>	<p>Just as forgiveness is one of the attributes of God's mercy, so is justice one of the attributes of His lordship. The canopy of existence rests upon the pole of justice, and not of forgiveness, and the life of mankind depends on justice and not on forgiveness. Thus, if a decree of amnesty were to be enacted henceforth in all countries, the whole world would soon be thrown into disarray and the foundations of human life would be</p>

<p>of human life would crumble. For example, if the governments of Europe had not withstood the notorious Attila, he would not have left a single living man.</p>	<p>shattered. Likewise, if the powers of Europe had not resisted the notorious Attila, he would not have left a single soul alive.</p>
<p>Some people are like bloodthirsty wolves: if they see no punishment forthcoming, they will kill men merely for pleasure and diversion. One of the tyrants of Persia killed his tutor merely for the sake of making merry, for mere fun and sport. The famous Mutavakkil, the Abbasid, having summoned his ministers, councillors and functionaries to his presence, let loose a box full of scorpions in the assembly and forbade anyone to move. When the scorpions stung those present, he burst forth into boisterous laughter.</p>	<p>Some men are like bloodthirsty wolves: if they were to see no punishment ahead, they would kill others solely for the sake of their own pleasure and diversion. One of the tyrants of Persia killed his tutor for mere amusement. Mutawakkil, the famous Abbasid caliph, would summon his ministers, deputies and trustees to his presence, have a box full of scorpions let loose among them, and, forbidding anyone to move, would burst into boisterous laughter whenever one of them was stung.</p>
<p>To recapitulate: the constitution of the communities depends upon justice, not upon forgiveness. Then what Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that, when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children and relatives, and violate your honor, you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes and allow them to perform all their cruelties and oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals toward each other: if one person assaults another, the injured one should forgive him. But the communities must protect the rights of man. So if someone assaults, injures, oppresses and wounds me, I will offer no resistance, and I will forgive him. But if a person wishes to assault Siyyid Manshadí, certainly I will prevent him. Although for the malefactor noninterference is apparently a kindness, it would be an oppression to Manshadí. If at this moment a wild Arab were to enter this place with a drawn sword, wishing to assault, wound and kill you, most assuredly I would prevent him. If I abandoned you to the Arab, that would not be justice but injustice. But if he injure me personally, I would forgive him.</p>	<p>In sum, the proper functioning of the body politic depends upon justice and not forgiveness. So what Christ meant by forgiveness and magnanimity is not that if another nation were to assail you, burn your homes, plunder your possessions, assault your wives, children and kin, and violate your honour, you must submit to that tyrannical host and permit them to carry out every manner of iniquity and oppression. Rather, the words of Christ refer to private transactions between two individuals, stating that if one person assaults another, the injured party should forgive. But the body politic must safeguard the rights of man. Thus, if someone were to attack, injure, oppress and wound me, I would in no wise oppose him but would show forgiveness. But if someone were to attack Siyyid Manshadí here, I would of course prevent him. Although to the assailant non-interference would appear as kindness, it would be sheer oppression towards Manshadí. So if a savage Arab were to enter the room at this moment brandishing a sword and bent upon assaulting, wounding or killing you, I would of course prevent him. Were I to abandon you to that man, this would be oppression, not justice. But if he were to harm me personally, I would forgive him.</p>
<p>One thing remains to be said: it is that the communities are day and night occupied in making penal laws, and in preparing and organizing instruments and means of punishment. They build prisons, make chains and fetters, arrange places of exile and banishment,</p>	<p>One final point: The body politic is engaged day and night in devising penal laws and in providing for ways and means of punishment. It builds prisons, acquires chains and fetters, and ordains places of exile and banishment, of torment and hardship, seeking thereby to reform the criminal,</p>

<p>and different kinds of hardships and tortures, and think by these means to discipline criminals, whereas, in reality, they are causing destruction of morals and perversion of characters. The community, on the contrary, ought day and night to strive and endeavor with the utmost zeal and effort to accomplish the education of men, to cause them day by day to progress and to increase in science and knowledge, to acquire virtues, to gain good morals and to avoid vices, so that crimes may not occur. At the present time the contrary prevails; the community is always thinking of enforcing the penal laws, and of preparing means of punishment, instruments of death and chastisement, places for imprisonment and banishment; and they expect crimes to be committed. This has a demoralizing effect.</p>	<p>whereas in reality this only brings about the degradation of morals and the subversion of character. The body politic should instead strive night and day, bending every effort to ensure that souls are properly educated, that they progress day by day, that they advance in science and learning, that they acquire praiseworthy virtues and laudable manners, and that they forsake violent behaviour, so that crimes might never occur. At the present time the contrary prevails: The body politic is ever seeking to strengthen penal laws and securing means of punishment, instruments of death and chastisement, and places of imprisonment and exile, and then waiting for crimes to be committed. This has a most detrimental effect.</p>
<p>But if the community would endeavor to educate the masses, day by day knowledge and sciences would increase, the understanding would be broadened, the sensibilities developed, customs would become good, and morals normal; in one word, in all these classes of perfections there would be progress, and there would be fewer crimes.</p>	<p>But if the masses were educated so that knowledge and learning increased day by day, understanding was broadened, perceptions were refined, morals were rectified and manners reformed, in a word, that progress was made with respect to every degree of perfection, then the occurrence of crime would subside.</p>
<p>It has been ascertained that among civilized peoples crime is less frequent than among uncivilized—that is to say, among those who have acquired the true civilization, which is divine civilization—the civilization of those who unite all the spiritual and material perfections. As ignorance is the cause of crimes, the more knowledge and science increases, the more crimes will diminish. Consider how often murder occurs among the barbarians of Africa; they even kill one another in order to eat each other’s flesh and blood! Why do not such savageries occur in Switzerland? The reason is evident: it is because education and virtues prevent them.</p>	<p>Experience has shown that crime is less prevalent among civilized peoples — that is, among those who have acquired true civilization. And true civilization is divine civilization, the civilization of those who combine material and spiritual perfections. As ignorance is the root cause of crime, the more knowledge and learning advance the less crime will be committed. Consider the lawless tribes of Africa: how often they kill one another and even consume each other’s flesh and blood! Why do such savageries not take place in Switzerland? The reason, clearly, is education and virtue.</p>
<p>Therefore, the communities must think of preventing crimes, rather than of rigorously punishing them.</p>	<p>Therefore, the body politic must seek to prevent crimes from being committed in the first place, rather than devise harsh punishments and penalties.</p>
<p>STRIKES</p>	<p>Strikes</p>
<p>You have questioned me about strikes. This question is and will be for a long time the subject of great difficulties. Strikes are due to two causes.</p>	<p>You have asked about strikes. Great difficulties have arisen and will continue to arise from this issue. The origin of these difficulties is twofold:</p>

<p>One is the extreme greed and rapacity of the manufacturers and industrialists; the other, the excesses, the avidity and intransigence of the workmen and artisans. It is, therefore, necessary to remedy these two causes.</p>	<p>one is the excessive greed and rapacity of the factory owners, and the other is the gratuitous demands, the greed and the intransigence of the workers. One must therefore seek to address both.</p>
<p>But the principal cause of these difficulties lies in the laws of the present civilization; for they lead to a small number of individuals accumulating incomparable fortunes, beyond their needs, while the greater number remain destitute, stripped and in the greatest misery. This is contrary to justice, to humanity, to equity; it is the height of iniquity, the opposite to what causes divine satisfaction.</p>	<p>Now, the root cause of these difficulties lies in the law of nature that governs present-day civilization, for it results in a handful of people accumulating vast fortunes that far exceed their needs, while the greater number remain naked, destitute, and helpless. This is at once contrary to justice, to humanity and to fairness; it is the very height of inequity and runs counter to the good pleasure of the All-Merciful.</p>
<p>This contrast is peculiar to the world of man: with other creatures—that is to say, with nearly all animals—there is a kind of justice and equality. Thus equality exists in a shepherd’s flock and in a herd of deer in the country. Likewise, among the birds of the prairie, of the plain, of the hills or of the orchard, and among every kind of animal some kind of equality prevails. With them such a difference in the means of existence is not to be found; so they live in the most complete peace and joy.</p>	<p>This disparity is confined to the human race: among other creatures, that is, among the animals, a certain kind of justice and equality prevails. Thus there is equality within a shepherd’s flock, or within a herd of deer in the wilderness, or among the songbirds that dwell in the mountains, plains and orchards. The animals of every species enjoy a measure of equality and do not differ greatly from one another in their means of existence, and thus they live in perfect peace and joy.</p>
<p>It is quite otherwise with the human species, which persists in the greatest error, and in absolute iniquity. Consider an individual who has amassed treasures by colonizing a country for his profit: he has obtained an incomparable fortune and has secured profits and incomes which flow like a river, while a hundred thousand unfortunate people, weak and powerless, are in need of a mouthful of bread. There is neither equality nor benevolence. So you see that general peace and joy are destroyed, and the welfare of humanity is negated to such an extent as to make fruitless the lives of many. For fortune, honors, commerce, industry are in the hands of some industrialists, while other people are submitted to quite a series of difficulties and to limitless troubles: they have neither advantages, nor profits, nor comforts, nor peace.</p> <p>Then rules and laws should be established to regulate the excessive fortunes of certain private individuals and meet the needs of millions of the</p>	<p>It is quite otherwise with the human race, where the greatest oppression and injustice are to be found. Thus you can observe, on the one hand, a single person who has amassed a fortune, made an entire country his personal dominion, acquired immense wealth and secured an unceasing flow of gains and profits, and, on the other, a hundred thousand helpless souls, weak, powerless, and wanting even a mouthful of bread. There is neither equality here nor benevolence. Observe how as a result general peace and happiness have become so wanting and the welfare of humanity so undermined that the lives of a vast multitude have been rendered fruitless! For all the wealth, power, commerce and industry are concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, while all others toil under the burden of endless hardships and difficulties, are bereft of advantages and benefits, and remain deprived of comfort and peace. One must therefore enact such laws and regulations as will moderate the excessive fortunes of the few and meet the basic needs of the myriad millions of</p>

<p>poor masses; thus a certain moderation would be obtained.</p>	<p>the poor, that a degree of moderation may be achieved.</p>
<p>However, absolute equality is just as impossible, for absolute equality in fortunes, honors, commerce, agriculture, industry would end in disorderliness, in chaos, in disorganization of the means of existence, and in universal disappointment: the order of the community would be quite destroyed. Thus difficulties will also arise when unjustified equality is imposed. It is, therefore, preferable for moderation to be established by means of laws and regulations to hinder the constitution of the excessive fortunes of certain individuals, and to protect the essential needs of the masses. For instance, the manufacturers and the industrialists heap up a treasure each day, and the poor artisans do not gain their daily sustenance: that is the height of iniquity, and no just man can accept it. Therefore, laws and regulations should be established which would permit the workmen to receive from the factory owner their wages and a share in the fourth or the fifth part of the profits, according to the capacity of the factory; or in some other way the body of workmen and the manufacturers should share equitably the profits and advantages. Indeed, the capital and management come from the owner of the factory, and the work and labor, from the body of the workmen. Either the workmen should receive wages which assure them an adequate support and, when they cease work, becoming feeble or helpless, they should have sufficient benefits from the income of the industry; or the wages should be high enough to satisfy the workmen with the amount they receive so that they may themselves be able to put a little aside for days of want and helplessness.</p>	<p>However, absolute equality is just as untenable, for complete equality in wealth, power, commerce, agriculture and industry would result in chaos and disorder, disrupt livelihoods, provoke universal discontent, and undermine the orderly conduct of the affairs of the community. For unjustified equality is also fraught with peril. It is preferable then that some measure of moderation be achieved; and by moderation is meant the enactment of such laws and regulations as would prevent the unwarranted concentration of wealth in the hands of the few and satisfy the essential needs of the many. For instance, the factory owners reap a fortune every day, but the wage the poor workers are paid cannot even meet their daily needs: this is most unfair, and assuredly no just man can accept it. Therefore, laws and regulations should be enacted which would grant the workers both a daily wage and a share in a fourth or fifth of the profits of the factory in accordance with its means, or which would have the workers equitably share in some other way in the profits with the owners. For the capital and the management comes from the latter and the toil and labour from the former. The workers could either be granted a wage that adequately meets their daily needs as well as a right to a share in the revenues of the factory when they are injured, incapacitated, or unable to work, or else a wage could be set that allows the workers to both satisfy their daily needs and to save a little for times of weakness and incapacity.</p>
<p>When matters will be thus fixed, the owner of the factory will no longer put aside daily a treasure which he has absolutely no need of (for, if the fortune is disproportionate, the capitalist succumbs under a formidable burden and gets into the greatest difficulties and troubles; the administration of an excessive fortune is very difficult and exhausts man's natural strength). And the workmen and artisans will no longer be in the greatest misery and want; they will no</p>	<p>If matters were so arranged, neither would the factory owners amass each day a fortune which is absolutely of no use to them — for should one's fortune increase beyond measure, one would come under a most heavy burden, become subject to exceeding hardships and troubles, and find the administration of such an excessive fortune to be most difficult and to exhaust one's natural powers — nor would the workers endure such toil and hardship as to become</p>

<p>longer be submitted to the worst privations at the end of their life.</p>	<p>incapacitated and to fall victim, at the end of their lives, to the direst need.</p>
<p>It is, then, clear and evident that the repartition of excessive fortunes among a small number of individuals, while the masses are in need, is an iniquity and an injustice. In the same way, absolute equality would be an obstacle to life, to welfare, to order and to the peace of humanity. In such a question moderation is preferable. It lies in the capitalists' being moderate in the acquisition of their profits, and in their having a consideration for the welfare of the poor and needy—that is to say, that the workmen and artisans receive a fixed and established daily wage—and have a share in the general profits of the factory.</p>	<p>It is therefore clearly established that the appropriation of excessive wealth by a few individuals, notwithstanding the needs of the masses, is unfair and unjust, and that conversely absolute equality would also disrupt the existence, welfare, comfort, peace and orderly life of the human race. Such being the case, the best course is therefore to seek moderation, which is for the wealthy to recognize the advantages of moderation in the acquisition of profits and to show regard for the welfare of the poor and the needy, that is, to fix a daily wage for the workers and also to allot them a share of the total profits of the factory.</p>
<p>It would be well, with regard to the common rights of manufacturers, workmen and artisans, that laws be established, giving moderate profits to manufacturers, and to workmen the necessary means of existence and security for the future. Thus when they become feeble and cease working, get old and helpless, or leave behind children under age, they and their children will not be annihilated by excess of poverty. And it is from the income of the factory itself, to which they have a right, that they will derive a share, however small, toward their livelihood.</p>	<p>In brief, insofar as the mutual rights of the factory owners and the workers are concerned, laws must be enacted that would enable the former to make reasonable profits and the latter to be provided with their present necessities and their future needs, so that if they become incapacitated, grow old, or die and leave behind small children, they or their children will not be overcome by dire poverty but will receive a modest pension from the revenues of the factory itself.</p>
<p>In the same way, the workmen should no longer make excessive claims and revolt, nor demand beyond their rights; they should no longer go out on strike; they should be obedient and submissive and not ask for exorbitant wages. But the mutual and reasonable rights of both associated parties will be legally fixed and established according to custom by just and impartial laws. In case one of the two parties should transgress, the court of justice should condemn the transgressor, and the executive branch should enforce the verdict; thus order will be reestablished, and the difficulties, settled.</p>	<p>For their part, the workers should not make excessive demands, be recalcitrant, ask for more than they deserve, or go on strike. They should obey and comply and make no demands for exorbitant wages. Rather, the mutual and equitable rights of both parties should be officially fixed and established according to the laws of justice and compassion, and any party that violates them should be condemned after a fair hearing and be subject to a definitive verdict enforced by the executive branch, so that all affairs may be appropriately ordered and all problems adequately resolved.</p>
<p>The interference of courts of justice and of the government in difficulties pending between manufacturers and workmen is legal, for the reason that current affairs between workmen and manufacturers cannot be compared with ordinary affairs between private persons, which do not concern the public, and with which the</p>	<p>The intervention of the government and the courts in the problems arising between owners and workers is fully warranted, since these are not such particular matters as are ordinary transactions between two individuals, which do not concern the public and in which the government should have no right to interfere. For</p>

<p>government should not occupy itself. In reality, although they appear to be private matters, these difficulties between the two parties produce a detriment to the public; for commerce, industry, agriculture and the general affairs of the country are all intimately linked together. If one of these suffers an abuse, the detriment affects the mass. Thus the difficulties between workmen and manufacturers become a cause of general detriment.</p> <p>The court of justice and the government have, therefore, the right of interference.</p>	<p>problems between owners and workers, though they may appear to be a private matter, are detrimental to the common good, since the commercial, industrial and agricultural affairs, and even the general business of the nation, are all intimately linked together: An impairment to one is a loss to all. And since the problems between owners and workers are detrimental to the common good, the government and the courts have therefore the right to intervene.</p>
<p>When a difficulty occurs between two individuals with reference to private rights, it is necessary for a third to settle the question. This is the part of the government. Then the problem of strikes—which cause troubles in the country and are often connected with the excessive vexations of the workmen, as well as with the rapacity of manufacturers—how could it remain neglected?</p>	<p>Even in the case of differences that arise between two individuals with regard to particular rights, a third party, namely the government, is needed to resolve the dispute. How, then, can the problem of strikes, which entirely disrupt the country — whether they arise from the inordinate demands of the workers or the excessive greed of the factory owners — remain neglected?</p>
<p>Good God! Is it possible that, seeing one of his fellow-creatures starving, destitute of everything, a man can rest and live comfortably in his luxurious mansion? He who meets another in the greatest misery, can he enjoy his fortune? That is why, in the Religion of God, it is prescribed and established that wealthy men each year give over a certain part of their fortune for the maintenance of the poor and unfortunate. That is the foundation of the Religion of God and is binding upon all.</p> <p>And as man in this way is not forced nor obliged by the government, but is by the natural tendency of his good heart voluntarily and radiantly showing benevolence toward the poor, such a deed is much praised, approved and pleasing.</p>	<p>Gracious God! How can one see one's fellow men hungry, destitute and deprived and yet live in peace and comfort in one's splendid mansion? How can one see others in the greatest need and yet take delight in one's fortune? That is why it has been decreed in the divine religions that the wealthy should offer up each year a portion of their wealth for the sustenance of the poor and the assistance of the needy. This is one of the foundations of the religion of God and is an injunction binding upon all. And since in this regard one is not outwardly compelled or obliged by the government, but rather aids the poor at the prompting of one's own heart and in a spirit of joy and radiance, such a deed is most commendable, approved, and pleasing.</p>
<p>Such is the meaning of the good works in the Divine Books and Tablets.</p>	<p>This is the meaning of the righteous deeds mentioned in the heavenly books and scriptures. Salutations!</p>
<p>THE REALITY OF THE EXTERIOR WORLD</p>	<p>The Reality of the World of Being</p>
<p>Certain sophists think that existence is an illusion, that each being is an absolute illusion which has no existence—in other words, that the existence of beings is like a mirage, or like the reflection of</p>	<p>The sophists hold that all existence is illusory, indeed, that each and every being is an absolute illusion that has no existence whatsoever — in other words, that the existence of created things</p>

<p>an image in water or in a mirror, which is only an appearance having in itself no principle, foundation or reality.</p>	<p>is like a mirage, or like the reflection of an image in water or in a mirror, which is merely an appearance devoid of any basis, foundation or ascertainable reality.</p>
<p>This theory is erroneous; for though the existence of beings in relation to the existence of God is an illusion, nevertheless, in the condition of being it has a real and certain existence. It is futile to deny this. For example, the existence of the mineral in comparison with that of man is nonexistence, for when man is apparently annihilated, his body becomes mineral; but the mineral has existence in the mineral world. Therefore, it is evident that earth, in relation to the existence of man, is nonexistent, and its existence is illusory; but in relation to the mineral it exists.</p>	<p>This notion is false, for although the existence of things is an illusion compared to the existence of God, yet in the contingent world it is established, proven, and undeniable. For example, the existence of the mineral is non-existence compared to that of man — since man’s body becomes mineral when he physically dies — but the mineral indeed exists within the mineral realm. It is therefore clear that dust is non-existent or has an illusory existence compared to that of man, but that within the mineral realm it exists.</p>
<p>In the same manner the existence of beings in comparison with the existence of God is but illusion and nothingness; it is an appearance, like the image reflected in a mirror. But though an image which is seen in a mirror is an illusion, the source and the reality of that illusory image is the person reflected, whose face appears in the mirror. Briefly, the reflection in relation to the person reflected is an illusion.</p> <p>Then it is evident that although beings in relation to the existence of God have no existence, but are like the mirage or the reflections in the mirror, yet in their own degree they exist.</p>	<p>In like manner, the existence of created things is sheer illusion and utter non-existence compared to that of God and consists in a mere appearance, like an image seen in a mirror. But although this image is an illusion, its source and reality is the person reflected, whose image has appeared in the mirror. Briefly, the reflection is an illusion compared to that which is reflected. It is therefore evident that although created things have no existence compared to that of God, being instead like a mirage or an image reflected in a mirror, yet in their own degree they exist.</p>
<p>That is why those who were heedless and denied God were said by Christ to be dead, although they were apparently living; in relation to the people of faith they were dead, blind, deaf and dumb. This is what Christ meant when He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.”</p>	<p>That is why Christ referred to those who were heedless of God and denied His truth as dead, even though to outward seeming they were alive; for in relation to the faithful they were indeed dead, blind, deaf and dumb. That is what Christ meant when He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.”</p>
<p>REAL PREEXISTENCE</p>	<p>Pre-existence and Origination</p>
<p>Question.—How many kinds of preexistence and of phenomena are there?</p>	<p>Question: How many kinds of pre-existence and origination are there?</p>
<p>Answer.—Some sages and philosophers believe that there are two kinds of preexistence: essential preexistence and preexistence of time. Phenomena are also of two kinds, essential phenomena and that of time.</p>	<p>Answer: Certain sages and philosophers hold that there are two kinds of pre-existence, essential and temporal, and that there are likewise two kinds of origination, essential and temporal.</p>

<p>Essential preexistence is an existence which is not preceded by a cause, but essential phenomena are preceded by causes. Preexistence of time is without beginning, but the phenomena of time have beginnings and endings; for the existence of everything depends upon four causes—the efficient cause, the matter, the form and the final cause. For example, this chair has a maker who is a carpenter, a substance which is wood, a form which is that of a chair, and a purpose which is that it is to be used as a seat. Therefore, this chair is essentially phenomenal, for it is preceded by a cause, and its existence depends upon causes. This is called the essential and really phenomenal.</p>	<p>Essential pre-existence is an existence which is not preceded by a cause; essential origination is preceded by a cause. Temporal pre-existence has no beginning; temporal origination has both a beginning and an end. For the existence of each and every thing depends upon four causes: the efficient cause, the material cause, the formal cause and the final cause. So this chair has a creator who is a carpenter, a matter which is wood, a form which is that of a chair, and a purpose which is to serve as a seat. Therefore, this chair is essentially originated, for it is preceded by, and its existence is conditioned upon, a cause. This is called essential or intrinsic origination.</p>
<p>Now this world of existence in relation to its maker is a real phenomenon. As the body is sustained by the spirit, it is in relation to the spirit an essential phenomenon. The spirit is independent of the body, and in relation to it the spirit is an essential preexistence. Though the rays are always inseparable from the sun, nevertheless, the sun is preexistent and the rays are phenomenal, for the existence of the rays depends upon that of the sun. But the existence of the sun does not depend upon that of the rays, for the sun is the giver and the rays are the gift.</p>	<p>The world of existence, in relation to its Creator, is intrinsically originated. Likewise, since the body depends upon and is sustained by the spirit, it is, in relation to the spirit, essentially originated. Conversely, the spirit can dispense with the body and is therefore essentially pre-existent in relation to the body. Although the rays are always inseparable from the sun, the sun is pre-existent and the rays are originated, for the existence of the rays depends upon that of the sun, but the converse does not hold true: the sun is the bestower of grace and the rays are the grace itself.</p>
<p>The second proposition is that existence and nonexistence are both relative. If it be said that such a thing came into existence from nonexistence, this does not refer to absolute nonexistence, but means that its former condition in relation to its actual condition was nothingness. For absolute nothingness cannot find existence, as it has not the capacity of existence. Man, like the mineral, is existing; but the existence of the mineral in relation to that of man is nothingness, for when the body of man is annihilated it becomes dust and mineral. But when dust progresses into the human world, and this dead body becomes living, man becomes existing. Though the dust—that is to say, the mineral—has existence in its own condition, in relation to man it is nothingness. Both exist, but the existence of dust and mineral, in relation to man, is nonexistence and nothingness; for when</p>	<p>The second consideration is that existence and non-existence are both relative. If it be said that a certain thing was brought forth from non-existence, the intent is not absolute non-existence; rather it is meant that the former condition was non-existence in relation to the present one. For absolute non-existence cannot become existence, as it lacks the very capacity to exist. Man exists, and the mineral likewise exists, but the existence of the mineral is non-existence in relation to that of man: for when the body of man is destroyed it becomes dust and mineral; and when dust progresses into the human world, and that inanimate body of matter becomes living, man comes into existence. Though the dust — the mineral — enjoys existence in its own station, yet in relation to man it is non-existence. Our meaning is that both exist, but the existence of dust and mineral, in relation to man, is non-</p>

man becomes nonexistent, he returns to dust and mineral.	existence, for when man dies he becomes dust and mineral.
Therefore, though the world of contingency exists, in relation to the existence of God it is nonexistent and nothingness. Man and dust both exist, but how great the difference between the existence of the mineral and that of man! The one in relation to the other is nonexistence. In the same way, the existence of creation in relation to the existence of God is nonexistence.	Therefore, although the contingent world exists, in relation to the existence of God it is non-existence and nothingness. Man and dust both exist, but how great the difference between the existence of the mineral and that of man! The one in relation to the other is non-existence. Likewise, the existence of creation is non-existence in relation to that of God. Thus, even though the universe has existence, in relation to God it is non-existence.
Thus it is evident and clear that although the beings exist, in relation to God and to the Word of God they are nonexistent. This is the beginning and the end of the Word of God, Who says: "I am Alpha and Omega"; for He is the beginning and the end of Bounty. The Creator always had a creation; the rays have always shone and gleamed from the reality of the sun, for without the rays the sun would be opaque darkness. The names and attributes of God require the existence of beings, and the Eternal Bounty does not cease. If it were to, it would be contrary to the perfections of God.	Thus it is clear and evident that although created things exist, in relation to God and to His Word they are non-existent. This is the firstness and the lastness of the Word of God, Who says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," for He is both the source of grace and its ultimate goal. The Creator has ever had a creation, and the rays have ever emanated and shone forth from the Sun of Truth, for a lightless sun would be impenetrable darkness. The names and attributes of God require the existence of things, and no cessation in the outpouring of God's ancient grace can ever be contemplated, for this would be contrary to the divine perfections.
REINCARNATION	Reincarnation
Question.—What is the truth of the question of reincarnation, which is believed by some people?	Question: What is to be said about reincarnation, which is a belief upheld by the followers of certain religions?
Answer.—The object of what we are about to say is to explain the reality—not to deride the beliefs of other people; it is only to explain the facts; that is all. We do not oppose anyone's ideas, nor do we approve of criticism.	Answer: Our purpose in what we are about to say is to express the truth and not to denigrate the beliefs of others: it is merely to explain the facts of the matter and nothing more. Otherwise, we are neither inclined to dispute anyone's deeply held beliefs, nor do we sanction such conduct.
Know, then, that those who believe in reincarnation are of two classes: one class does not believe in the spiritual punishments and rewards of the other world, and they suppose that man by reincarnation and return to this world gains rewards and recompenses; they consider heaven and hell to be restricted to this world and do not speak of the existence of the other world. Among these there are two further divisions. One division thinks that man sometimes returns to this world in the form of an	Know, then, that the reincarnationists are of two kinds. The first do not believe in spiritual rewards and punishments in the next world. They hold instead that man receives his punishment or recompense through reincarnation and return to this world; they regard heaven and hell to be confined to this material realm; and they do not believe in the world beyond. This group is itself divided in two: One division holds that, as a severe punishment, man may at times assume an animal form in returning to this world, and that

<p>animal in order to undergo severe punishment and that, after enduring this painful torment, he will be released from the animal world and will come again into the human world; this is called transmigration. The other division thinks that from the human world one again returns to the human world, and that by this return rewards and punishments for a former life are obtained; this is called reincarnation. Neither of these classes speak of any other world besides this one.</p>	<p>after enduring this painful torment he proceeds from the animal realm into the human world, and this they call transmigration. The other division holds that man returns to the same human world whence he departed, and that the rewards and punishments of the former life are experienced in his return, and this they call reincarnation. Neither of these divisions believe in a world beyond this one.</p>
<p>The second sort of believers in reincarnation affirm the existence of the other world, and they consider reincarnation the means of becoming perfect—that is, they think that man, by going from and coming again to this world, will gradually acquire perfections, until he reaches the inmost perfection. In other words, that men are composed of matter and force: matter in the beginning—that is to say, in the first cycle—is imperfect, but on coming repeatedly to this world it progresses and acquires refinement and delicacy, until it becomes like a polished mirror; and force, which is no other than spirit, is realized in it with all the perfections.</p>	<p>The second group of reincarnationists believe in the next world and see reincarnation as the means of becoming perfect, in that man gradually acquires perfections by departing from and returning again to this world until he attains to the very heart of perfection. That is, man is composed of matter and energy: In the beginning, or in the first cycle, the matter is imperfect, but upon returning repeatedly to this world it progresses and acquires refinement and subtlety until it becomes like a polished mirror; and then the energy, which consists in the spirit, is fully realized therein with all its perfections.</p>
<p>This is the presentation of the subject by those who believe in reincarnation and transmigration. We have condensed it; if we entered into the details, it would take much time. This summary is sufficient. No logical arguments and proofs of this question are brought forward; they are only suppositions and inferences from conjectures, and not conclusive arguments. Proofs must be asked for from the believers in reincarnation, and not conjectures, suppositions and imaginations.</p>	<p>Such is a brief account of the beliefs of the reincarnationists and transmigrationists. Were we to enter into the details, much time would be lost — this summary will suffice. Such persons have no rational proofs or arguments for their belief, which is based on mere conjecture and circumstantial inference and not on conclusive proofs. It is proofs that one must demand from the reincarnationists and not inference, conjecture and presentiment.</p>
<p>But you have asked for arguments of the impossibility of reincarnation. This is what we must now explain. The first argument for its impossibility is that the outward is the expression of the inward; the earth is the mirror of the Kingdom; the material world corresponds to the spiritual world. Now observe that in the sensible world appearances are not repeated, for no being in any respect is identical with, nor the same as, another being. The sign of singleness is visible and apparent in all things. If all the granaries of the world were full of grain, you would not find two grains absolutely alike, the same and identical without any distinction. It is certain that</p>	<p>But you have asked me for proofs and arguments of the impossibility of reincarnation, and we must therefore explain the reasons for its impossibility. The first proof is that the outward is the expression of the inward; the earthly realm is the mirror of the heavenly kingdom; and the material world is in accordance with the spiritual world. Now observe that in the sensible world the divine appearances are not repeated, for no created thing can be identical with another in every way. The sign of Divine Unity is present and visible in all things. If all the granaries of the world were filled with grain, you would be hard pressed to find two grains that are absolutely identical and</p>

there will be differences and distinctions between them. As the proof of uniqueness exists in all things, and the Oneness and Unity of God is apparent in the reality of all things, the repetition of the same appearance is absolutely impossible. Therefore, reincarnation, which is the repeated appearance of the same spirit with its former essence and condition in this same world of appearance, is impossible and unrealizable. As the repetition of the same appearance is impossible and interdicted for each of the material beings, so for spiritual beings also, a return to the same condition, whether in the arc of descent or in the arc of ascent, is interdicted and impossible, for the material corresponds to the spiritual.

indistinguishable in every respect: some difference or distinction is bound to remain between them. Now, as the proof of the Divine Unity exists within all things, and the oneness and singleness of God is visible in the realities of all beings, the recurrence of the same divine appearance is in no wise possible. Therefore, reincarnation, which is the repeated manifestation in this world of the same spirit with its former essence and conditions, would be the self-same appearance and is thus impossible. And since the recurrence of the same divine appearance is impossible for material beings, the repeated assumption of the same station, whether on the arc of descent or on the arc of ascent, is likewise impossible for spiritual beings, for the material world corresponds to the spiritual world.

Nevertheless, the return of material beings with regard to species is evident; so the trees which during former years brought forth leaves, blossoms and fruits in the coming years will bring forth exactly the same leaves, blossoms and fruits. This is called the repetition of species. If anyone makes an objection saying that the leaf, the blossom and the fruit have been decomposed, and have descended from the vegetable world to the mineral world, and again have come back from the mineral world to the vegetable world, and, therefore, there has been a repetition—the answer is that the blossom, the leaf and the fruit of last year were decomposed, and these combined elements were disintegrated and were dispersed in space, and that the particles of the leaf and fruit of last year, after decomposition, have not again become combined, and have not returned. On the contrary, by the composition of new elements, the species has returned. It is the same with the human body, which after decomposition becomes disintegrated, and the elements which composed it are dispersed. If, in like manner, this body should again return from the mineral or vegetable world, it would not have exactly the same composition of elements as the former man. Those elements have been decomposed and dispersed; they are dissipated in this vast space. Afterward, other particles of elements

With respect to the species, however, return and recurrence are plainly visible in material realities; that is, the trees which in years past bore leaves, blossoms and fruits will in the years to come bear the same leaves, blossoms and fruits. This is called recurrence of species. Were anyone to object that the leaf, the blossom and the fruit have decomposed, have descended from the vegetable to the mineral world, and have returned again to the former, and that there has thus been a recurrence, we would reply that the blossom, the leaf and the fruit of last year were decomposed, and their component elements were disintegrated and dispersed. It is not that the same particles of last year's leaf and fruit that had decomposed have recombined and returned, but that the essence of the species has returned through the combination of new elements. Likewise, the human body is fully disintegrated after the decomposition and dispersion of its constituent parts. Were this body to return from the mineral or vegetable world, it would not comprise the self-same constituents as the former person, for its elements were decomposed, disintegrated and dispersed in space. Afterwards other elemental constituents were combined and another body was formed. And while it may be the case that certain constituents of the former body entered into the composition of the latter, those constituents

<p>have been combined, and a second body has been formed; it may be that one of the particles of the former individual has entered into the composition of the succeeding individual, but these particles have not been conserved and kept, exactly and completely, without addition or diminution, so that they may be combined again, and from that composition and mingling another individual may come into existence. So it cannot be proved that this body with all its particles has returned; that the former man has become the latter; and that, consequently, there has been repetition; that the spirit also, like the body, has returned; and that after death its essence has come back to this world.</p>	<p>have not been exactly and completely conserved, without any addition or diminution, so as to be composed again and to give rise through their composition and combination to another individual. One cannot deduce, then, that this body has returned with all its constituent parts; that the former individual has become the latter; and hence that a recurrence has taken place, that the very same spirit, like the body, has returned, and that after death its essence has regained this world.</p>
<p>If we say that this reincarnation is for acquiring perfections so that matter may become refined and delicate, and that the light of the spirit may be manifest in it with the greatest perfection, this also is mere imagination. For, even supposing we believe in this argument, still change of nature is impossible through renewal and return. The essence of imperfection, by returning, does not become the reality of perfection; complete darkness, by returning, does not become the source of light; the essence of weakness is not transformed into power and might by returning, and an earthly nature does not become a heavenly reality. The tree of Zaqqúm, no matter how frequently it may come back, will not bring forth sweet fruit, and the good tree, no matter how often it may return, will not bear a bitter fruit. Therefore, it is evident that returning and coming back to the material world does not become the cause of perfection. This theory has no proofs nor evidences; it is simply an idea. No, in reality the cause of acquiring perfections is the bounty of God.</p>	<p>And were we to claim that reincarnation is intended to bring about perfection, so that matter might gain in purity and refinement and that the light of the spirit might appear therein with the utmost perfection, this too would be mere imagination. For even if we granted such an assumption, the renewal of an object's existence cannot bring about the transformation of its essence. For the substance of imperfection, by returning, will not become the reality of perfection, total darkness will not become a source of light, abject weakness will not become power and strength, and an earthly essence will not become a heavenly reality. However often it may return, the infernal tree will never bring forth a sweet fruit, nor will the good tree bear a bitter one. It is thus clear that recurrence and return to the material world are not the means of attaining perfection, and that this supposition rests on no proof or evidence; it is merely a conjecture. No, the attainment of perfection is in reality dependent upon the grace of God.</p>
<p>The Theosophists believe that man on the arc of ascent will return many times until he reaches the Supreme Center; in that condition matter becomes a clear mirror, the light of the spirit will shine upon it with its full power, and essential perfection will be acquired. Now, this is an established and deep theological proposition, that the material worlds are terminated at the end of the arc of descent, and that the condition of man is at the end of the arc of descent, and at</p>	<p>The Theosophists believe that man will return time and again on the arc of ascent until he reaches the Supreme Centre, where matter becomes as a spotless mirror, the light of the spirit shines forth in the plenitude of its power, and essential perfection is attained. However, those who have thoroughly investigated the questions of divinity know of a certainty that the material worlds terminate at the end of the arc of descent; that the station of man lies at the end of</p>

<p>the beginning of the arc of ascent, which is opposite to the Supreme Center. Also, from the beginning to the end of the arc of ascent, there are numerous spiritual degrees. The arc of descent is called beginning, and that of ascent is called progress. The arc of descent ends in materialities, and the arc of ascent ends in spiritualities. The point of the compass in describing a circle makes no retrograde motion, for this would be contrary to the natural movement and the divine order; otherwise, the symmetry of the circle would be spoiled.</p>	<p>the arc of descent and the beginning of the arc of ascent, which is opposite the Supreme Centre; and that from the beginning to the end of the arc of ascent the degrees of progress are of a spiritual nature. The arc of descent is called that of “bringing forth” and the arc of ascent that of “creating anew.” The arc of descent ends in material realities and the arc of ascent in spiritual realities. The point of the compass in describing a circle does not reverse its motion, for this would be contrary to the natural movement and the divine order and would disrupt the regularity of the circle.</p>
<p>Moreover, this material world has not such value or such excellence that man, after having escaped from this cage, will desire a second time to fall into this snare. No, through the Eternal Bounty the worth and true ability of man becomes apparent and visible by traversing the degrees of existence, and not by returning. When the shell is once opened, it will be apparent and evident whether it contains a pearl or worthless matter. When once the plant has grown it will bring forth either thorns or flowers; there is no need for it to grow up again. Besides, advancing and moving in the worlds in a direct order according to the natural law is the cause of existence, and a movement contrary to the system and law of nature is the cause of nonexistence. The return of the soul after death is contrary to the natural movement, and opposed to the divine system.</p>	<p>Moreover, this material world is not of such worth or advantage that one who has been freed from its cage should seek once again to be caught in its snare. No: Through God’s eternal grace the true capacity and receptivity of the human reality is made clear and manifest through traversing the degrees of existence and not through recurrence and return. When the shell is opened but once, it is made plain and clear whether it conceals a shining pearl or worthless matter. When a plant has grown but once, it puts forth either flowers or thorns: it need not grow again. Apart from this, advancing and moving through the worlds in a direct line and according to the natural order is the cause of existence, and moving against the natural order and arrangement of things is the cause of extinction. The return of the spirit after death is incompatible with the natural movement and contrary to the divine order.</p>
<p>Therefore, by returning, it is absolutely impossible to obtain existence; it is as if man, after being freed from the womb, should return to it a second time. Consider what a puerile imagination this is which is implied by the belief in reincarnation and transmigration. Believers in it consider the body as a vessel in which the spirit is contained, as water is contained in a cup; this water has been taken from one cup and poured into another. This is child’s play. They do not realize that the spirit is an incorporeal being, and does not enter and come forth, but is only connected with the body as the sun is with the mirror. If it were thus, and the spirit by returning to this material world could pass through the degrees and attain to essential perfection, it</p>	<p>Thus it is in no wise possible to attain existence through returning: it is as if man, after being freed from the world of the womb, were to return to it. Consider how unfounded the conceptions of the reincarnationists and transmigratonists are! They conceive of the body as a vessel and the spirit as its contents, like water and cup, with the water being emptied from one cup and poured into another. This is indeed a childish notion: They do not reflect deeply enough to realize that the spirit is an entirely incorporeal thing, that it does not enter or exit, and that at most it is connected with the body as the sun is with the mirror. If the spirit could indeed traverse all the degrees and attain to essential perfection by repeatedly returning to</p>

<p>would be better if God prolonged the life of the spirit in the material world until it had acquired perfections and graces; it then would not be necessary for it to taste of the cup of death, or to acquire a second life.</p>	<p>the material world, then it would have been better if God had prolonged the life of the spirit in this material world in order for it to acquire virtues and perfections, and hence there would be no need for it to taste of the cup of death and enter this life a second time.</p>
<p>The idea that existence is restricted to this perishable world, and the denial of the existence of divine worlds, originally proceeded from the imaginations of certain believers in reincarnation; but the divine worlds are infinite. If the divine worlds culminated in this material world, creation would be futile: nay, existence would be pure child's play. The result of these endless beings, which is the noble existence of man, would come and go for a few days in this perishable dwelling, and after receiving punishments and rewards, at last all would become perfect. The divine creation and the infinite existing beings would be perfected and completed, and then the Divinity of the Lord, and the names and qualities of God, on behalf of these spiritual beings, would, as regards their effect, result in laziness and inaction! "Glory to thy Lord, the Lord Who is sanctified from all their descriptions."</p>	<p>This idea has its origin in the fact that certain reincarnationists imagine existence to be confined to this fleeting world, and deny the other worlds of God, whereas in reality the latter are infinite. If the worlds of God were to culminate in this material world, then all creation would be in vain and existence itself would be a childish game. For the ultimate result of this endless universe, the most noble reality of man, would go hither and thither for a few days in this ephemeral abode and receive his rewards and punishments. In the end, all would attain perfection, the creation of God with its infinite beings would be completed and consummated, and thus the Divinity of the Lord and the names and attributes of God would cease to have any effect and influence upon the spiritual beings which now exist. "Far from the glory of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him!"</p>
<p>Such were the limited minds of the former philosophers, like Ptolemy and the others who believed and imagined that the world, life and existence were restricted to this terrestrial globe, and that this boundless space was confined within the nine spheres of heaven, and that all were empty and void. Consider how greatly their thoughts were limited and how weak their minds. Those who believe in reincarnation think that the spiritual worlds are restricted to the worlds of human imagination. Moreover, some of them, like the Druzes and the Nusayris, think that existence is restricted to this physical world. What an ignorant supposition! For in this universe of God, which appears in the most complete perfection, beauty and grandeur, the luminous stars of the material universe are innumerable! Then we must reflect how limitless and infinite are the spiritual worlds, which are the essential foundation. "Take heed ye who are endued with discernment."</p>	<p>The limited minds of the philosophers of old, such as Ptolemy and others, held that the realm of life and existence was confined to this terrestrial globe and imagined that this infinite space was contained within the nine celestial spheres, all of which were void and empty. Witness how limited were their thoughts and how deficient their reasoning! The reincarnationists likewise imagine the spiritual worlds to be confined to those realms that the human mind can conceive. Some of them, such as the Druze and the Nusayris, even imagine existence to be confined to this material world. What an ignorant supposition this is! For in this universe of God's, which appears in the utmost perfection, beauty and grandeur, the luminous bodies of the material universe are infinite. Pause to infer, then, how infinite and unbounded the spiritual realms of God, which are the very foundation, must be! "Take ye good heed, O people of insight!"</p>

<p>But let us return to our subject. In the Divine Scriptures and Holy Books “return” is spoken of, but the ignorant have not understood the meaning, and those who believed in reincarnation have made conjectures on the subject. For what the divine Prophets meant by “return” is not the return of the essence, but that of the qualities; it is not the return of the Manifestation, but that of the perfections. In the Gospel it says that John, the son of Zacharias, is Elias. These words do not mean the return of the rational soul and personality of Elias in the body of John, but rather that the perfections and qualities of Elias were manifested and appeared in John.</p>	<p>But let us return to our original theme. In the holy books and sacred scriptures there is mention of a “return,” but the ignorant have failed to grasp its meanings and have imagined it to refer to reincarnation. For what the Prophets of God meant by “return” is not the return of the essence but of the attributes; it is not the return of the Manifestation Himself but of His perfections. In the Gospel it is said that John the son of Zacharias is Elijah. By these words is not meant the return of the rational soul and personality of Elijah in the body of John, but rather that the perfections and attributes of Elijah became plain and manifest in him.</p>
<p>A lamp shone in this room last night, and when tonight another lamp shines, we say the light of last night is again shining. Water flows from a fountain; then it ceases; and when it begins to flow a second time, we say this water is the same water flowing again; or we say this light is identical with the former light. It is the same with the spring of last year, when blossoms, flowers and sweet-scented herbs bloomed, and delicious fruits were brought forth; next year we say that those delicious fruits have come back, and those blossoms, flowers and blooms have returned and come again. This does not mean that exactly the same particles composing the flowers of last year have, after decomposition, been again combined and have then come back and returned. On the contrary, the meaning is that the delicacy, freshness, delicious perfume and wonderful color of the flowers of last year are visible and apparent in exactly the same manner in the flowers of this year. Briefly, this expression refers only to the resemblance and likeness which exist between the former and latter flowers. The “return” which is mentioned in the Divine Scriptures is this: it is fully explained by the Supreme Pen in the Kitáb-i-Íqán. Refer to it, so that you may be informed of the truth of the divine mysteries.</p> <p>Upon you be greetings and praise.</p>	<p>A lamp was lit in this room last night: when another lamp is lit tonight, we say that the light of last night is shining again. When the water that had ceased to flow from a fountain flows a second time, we say that it is the same water flowing once again; or we say that this light is the same as the former light. Likewise, last spring flowers and sweet-scented herbs bloomed and delicious fruits were produced; next year we say that those delicious fruits and those blossoms, flowers and sweet herbs have returned. It is not that the very same constituents of last year’s flowers, after decomposing, have recombined and returned. No, the meaning is that the same freshness and delicacy, the same pleasing fragrance and wondrous colour that characterized last year’s flowers are to be exactly found in the flowers of this year. Briefly, the point is the resemblance and similarity between the former and the latter flowers. This is the “return” which is mentioned in the heavenly scriptures. It is fully explained by Bahá’u’lláh in the Book of Certitude: Refer to it, that you may be informed of the truth of the divine mysteries. Upon you be greetings and praise.</p>
<p>PANTHEISM</p>	<p>The Unity of Existence</p>
<p>Question.—How do the Theosophists and the Sufís understand the question of pantheism?</p>	<p>Question: What is the nature of the “unity of existence” propounded by the Theosophists and</p>

<p>What does it mean, and how nearly does it approximate to the truth?</p>	<p>the Sufis, and what in reality do they intend by it? Is this belief true or not?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that the subject of pantheism is ancient. It is a belief not restricted to the Theosophists and the Sufís; on the contrary, some of the sages of Greece believed in it, like Aristotle, who said, “The simple truth is all things, but it is not any one of them.” In this case, “simple” is the opposite of “composed”; it is the isolated Reality, which is purified and sanctified from composition and division, and which resolves Itself into innumerable forms. Therefore, Real Existence is all things, but It is not one of the things.</p>	<p>Answer: Know that the idea of the unity of existence is ancient and is not restricted to the Theosophists and the Sufis alone. Indeed, it was espoused by some of the Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle, who said: “The uncompounded Reality is all things, but it is not any single one of them.” “Uncompounded” stands here in contrast to “composed” — that is to say, that solitary Reality, which is sanctified and exalted above composition and division, has resolved itself into countless forms. Thus, real Existence is all things, but it is not any single one of them.</p>
<p>Briefly, the believers in pantheism think that Real Existence can be compared to the sea, and that beings are like the waves of the sea. These waves, which signify the beings, are innumerable forms of that Real Existence; therefore, the Holy Reality is the Sea of Preexistence, and the innumerable forms of the creatures are the waves which appear.</p>	<p>The proponents of the unity of existence hold that real Existence is even as the sea, and that all created things are like unto its waves. These waves, which signify the created things, are the countless forms which that real Existence assumes. Hence, that sanctified Reality is the pre-existent sea, and the countless forms of created things are its originated waves.</p>
<p>Likewise, they compare this theory to real unity and the infinitude of numbers; the real unity reflects itself in the degrees of infinite numbers, for numbers are the repetition of the real unity. So the number two is the repetition of one, and it is the same with the other numbers.</p>	<p>Likewise, they compare this to the One and the infinite numbers, in that the former has manifested itself in the degrees of the latter; for numbers are the repetition of the One. Thus two is the repetition of one, and so on with the other numbers.</p>
<p>One of their proofs is this: all beings are things known of God; and knowledge without things known does not exist, for knowledge is related to that which exists, and not to nothingness. Pure nonexistence can have no specification or individualization in the degrees of knowledge. Therefore, the realities of beings, which are the things known of God the Most High, have the existence which knowledge has, since they have the form of the Divine Knowledge, and they are preexistent, as the Divine Knowledge is preexistent. As knowledge is preexistent, the things known are equally so, and the individualizations and the specifications of beings, which are the preexistent knowledges of the Essence of Unity, are the Divine Knowledge itself. For the realities of the Essence of Unity, knowledge, and the things known, have an absolute unity which is real and established. Otherwise, the Essence of Unity would become</p>	<p>Among the proofs they adduce is this: All created things are the objects of the divine knowledge, and no knowledge can be realized without objects of knowledge, since knowledge pertains to something that exists, not to that which is non-existent. Indeed, how can utter non-existence attain specification and individuation in the mirror of knowledge? It follows that the realities of all created things, which are the objects of the knowledge of the Most High, had an intelligible existence, for they were the forms of the divine knowledge, and that they are pre-existent, for the divine knowledge is pre-existent. As long as the knowledge is pre-existent, so must be its objects. And the specifications and individuations of created things, which are the objects of the pre-existent knowledge of the divine Essence, are identical to the divine knowledge itself. The reason for this is that the reality, the knowledge, and the objects of the knowledge of the divine</p>

<p>the place of multiple phenomena, and the multiplicity of preexistences would become necessary, which is absurd.</p>	<p>Being must be realized in a state of absolute unity. Otherwise, the divine Essence would become the seat of multiple phenomena, and a plurality of pre-existences would become necessary, which is absurd.</p>
<p>So it is proved that the things known constitute knowledge itself, and knowledge the Essence itself—that is to say, that the Knower, the knowledge and the things known are one single reality. And if one imagines anything outside of this, it necessitates coming back to the multiplicity of preexistences and to enchainment; and preexistences end by becoming innumerable. As the individualization and the specification of beings in the knowledge of God were the Essence of Unity itself, and as there was not any difference between them, there was but one veritable Unity, and all the things known were diffused and included in the reality of the one Essence—that is to say, that, according to the mode of simplicity and of unity, they constitute the knowledge of God the Most High, and the Essence of the Reality. When God manifested His glory, these individualizations and these specifications of beings which had a virtual existence—that is to say, which were a form of the Divine Knowledge—found their existence substantiated in the external world; and this Real Existence resolved itself into infinite forms. Such is the foundation of their argument.</p>	<p>Thus, they reason, it is established that the objects of knowledge are identical with the knowledge itself, and that the knowledge is in turn identical with the Essence, which is to say that the knower, the knowledge, and the objects of knowledge are one single reality. Any other conception would necessarily lead to a plurality of pre-existences and to an infinite regress, and indeed to countless pre-existences. And since the individuations and specifications of created things in the knowledge of God were identical to and completely indistinguishable from His Essence, true unity prevailed, and all the objects of knowledge were comprised and incorporated, in an uncompounded and undivided manner, in the reality of the divine Essence. In other words they were, in an uncompounded and undivided manner, the objects of the knowledge of the Most High and identical with His Essence. And through the manifestational appearance of God these individuations and specifications, which had an intelligible existence — that is, which were the forms of the divine knowledge — found actual existence in the external world; and thus that real Existence became resolved into countless forms. Such is the basis of their argument.</p>
<p>The Theosophists and the Súfís are divided into two branches: one, comprising the mass, who, simply in the spirit of imitation, believe pantheism without comprehending the meaning of their renowned savants; for the mass of the Súfís believe that the signification of Being is general existence, taken substantively, which is comprehended by the reason and the intelligence—that is to say, that man comprehends it.</p>	<p>The Theosophists and the Sufis comprise two groups. One group consists of the generality, who believe in the unity of existence out of sheer imitation and who have not grasped the true intent of the teachings of their renowned leaders. For the generality of the Sufis understand by “Existence” that common existence which is conceived by the mind and intellect of man; that is, which man can comprehend.</p>
<p>Instead of that, this general existence is one of the accidents which penetrate the reality of beings, and the qualities of beings are the essence. This accidental existence, which is dependent on beings, is like other properties of</p>	<p>This common existence, however, is only one accident among others that enter upon the realities of created things, while the essences of beings are the substance. This accidental existence, which is dependent upon things in the same way that the properties of things are</p>

<p>things which depend on them. It is an accident among accidents,</p>	<p>dependent upon them, is but one accident among many.</p>
<p>and certainly that which is the essence is superior to that which is the accident. For the essence is the origin, and the accident is the consequence; the essence is dependent on itself, and the accident is dependent on something else—that is to say, it needs an essence upon which to depend.</p>	<p>Now, the substance is undoubtedly superior to the accident, for the substance is primary and the accident secondary; the substance subsists through itself while the accident subsists through something else; that is, it needs a substance through which it can subsist.</p>
<p>In this case, God would be the consequence of the creature. He would have need of it, and it would be independent of Him.</p>	<p>In this case, God would be secondary to and in need of His creation, and the creation could dispense entirely with Him.</p>
<p>For example, each time that the isolated elements combine conformably to the divine universal system, one being among beings comes into the world. That is to say, that when certain elements combine, a vegetable existence is produced; when others combine, it is an animal; again others combine, and they produce different creatures. In this case, the existence of things is the consequence of their reality: how could it be that this existence, which is an accident among accidents, and necessitates another essence upon which it depends, should be the Preexistent Essence, the Author of all things?</p>	<p>To illustrate further, whenever individual elements combine in accordance with the universal divine order, a certain being comes into the world of existence. That is, when certain elements are combined, a vegetable existence is produced; when others are combined, an animal existence is produced; when yet others combine, other things come into being. In each case, the existence of things is a consequence of their realities. How then could such an existence, which is an accident among others and which requires a substance through which it can subsist, be essentially pre-existent and the Begetter of all things?</p>
<p>But the initiated savants of the Theosophists and Sufís, who have studied this question, think there are two categories of existence. One is general existence, which is understood by the human intelligence; this is a phenomenon, an accident among accidents, and the reality of the things is the essence. But pantheism does not apply to this general and imaginary existence, but only to the Veritable Existence, freed and sanctified from all other interpretation; through It all things exist, and It is the Unity through which all things have come into the world, such as matter, energy and this general existence which is comprehended by the human mind. Such is the truth of this question according to the Theosophists and the Sufís.</p>	<p>But the truly learned among the Theosophists and Sufis have concluded, after deep consideration of this matter, that there are two kinds of existence. One kind is this common existence which is conceived by the mind of man. This existence is originated and is an accident among others, whereas the realities of things are the substances. But what is meant by unity of existence is not this commonly perceived existence, but that real Existence which is sanctified and exalted above all expression, an Existence through which all things are realized. This Existence is one; it is that One through which all things — such as matter, energy and that common existence which is conceived by the human mind — have come to exist. This is the truth behind what the Theosophists and the Sufis believe.</p>
<p>Briefly, with regard to this theory that all things exist by the Unity, all are agreed—that is to say, the philosophers and the Prophets. But there is a</p>	<p>In brief, the Prophets and the philosophers are in agreement on one point, namely that the cause through which all things are realized is but one.</p>

<p>difference between them. The Prophets say, The Knowledge of God has no need of the existence of beings, but the knowledge of the creature needs the existence of things known; if the Knowledge of God had need of any other thing, then it would be the knowledge of the creature, and not that of God. For the Preexistent is different from the phenomenal, and the phenomenal is opposed to the Preexistent; that which we attribute to the creature—that is, the necessities of the contingent beings—we deny for God; for purification, or sanctification from imperfections, is one of His necessary properties.</p>	<p>The difference is that the Prophets teach that God’s knowledge does not require the existence of created things, whereas the knowledge of the creatures requires the existence of objects of knowledge. If the divine knowledge stood in need of aught else, then it would be like the knowledge of the creatures and not that of God, for the Pre-existent is incommensurate with the originated and the originated is opposite to the Pre-existent. That which we affirm for creation to be among the requirements of origination we deny in God, for to be sanctified and exalted above all imperfections is one of the characteristics of the Necessary Being.</p>
<p>So in the phenomenal we see ignorance; in the Preexistent we recognize knowledge. In the phenomenal we see weakness; in the Preexistent we recognize power. In the phenomenal we see poverty; in the Preexistent we recognize wealth. So the phenomenal is the source of imperfections, and the Preexistent is the sum of perfections. The phenomenal knowledge has need of things known; the Preexistent Knowledge is independent of their existence. So the preexistence of the specification and of the individualization of beings which are the things known of God the Most High does not exist; and these divine and perfect attributes are not so understood by the intelligence that we can decide if the Divine Knowledge has need of things known or not.</p>	<p>For instance, in the originated we see ignorance; in the Pre-existent we affirm knowledge. In the originated we see weakness; in the Pre-existent we affirm power. In the originated we see poverty; in the Pre-existent we affirm wealth. Hence the originated is the source of all imperfections and the Pre-existent is the sum of all perfections. And since the knowledge of the originated is in need of objects of knowledge, the knowledge of the Pre-existent must be independent of their existence. It follows that the specifications and individuations of created things, which are the objects of the divine knowledge, are not pre-existent. Moreover, the attributes of divine perfection are not so yielding to the exertions of the human mind as to enable us to determine whether the divine knowledge is in need of objects or not.</p>
<p>Briefly, this is the principal argument of the Súfís; and if we wished to mention all their proofs and explain their answers, it would take a very long time. This is their decisive proof and their plain argument—at least, of the savants of the Súfís and the Theosophists.</p>	<p>Briefly, that which was mentioned earlier is the foremost proof of the Sufis, and if we were to mention all of their arguments and respond to them, it would take a very long time. However, what was said represents the most decisive proof and the clearest argument that the learned among the Sufis and the Theosophists have advanced.</p>
<p>But the question of the Real Existence by which all things exist—that is to say, the reality of the Essence of Unity through which all creatures have come into the world—is admitted by everyone. The difference resides in that which the Súfís say, “The reality of the things is the manifestation of the Real Unity.” But the Prophets say, “it emanates from the Real Unity”; and great is the</p>	<p>The real Existence through which all things are realized, that is, the reality of the divine Essence through which all things have come to exist, is acknowledged by all. The difference resides in the fact that the Sufis maintain that the realities of all things are the manifestation of the One, whereas the Prophets say that they emanate therefrom. And great indeed is the difference</p>

difference between manifestation and emanation. The appearance in manifestation means that a single thing appears in infinite forms. For example, the seed, which is a single thing possessing the vegetative perfections, which it manifests in infinite forms, resolving itself into branches, leaves, flowers and fruits: this is called appearance in manifestation; whereas in the appearance through emanation this Real Unity remains and continues in the exaltation of Its sanctity, but the existence of creatures emanates from It and is not manifested by It. It can be compared to the sun from which emanates the light which pours forth on all the creatures; but the sun remains in the exaltation of its sanctity. It does not descend, and it does not resolve itself into luminous forms; it does not appear in the substance of things through the specification and the individualization of things; the Preexistent does not become the phenomenal; independent wealth does not become enchained poverty; pure perfection does not become absolute imperfection.

To recapitulate: the Sūfīs admit God and the creature, and say that God resolves Himself into the infinite forms of the creatures, and manifests like the sea, which appears in the infinite forms of the waves. These phenomenal and imperfect waves are the same thing as the Preexistent Sea, which is the sum of all the divine perfections. The Prophets, on the contrary, believe that there is the world of God, the world of the Kingdom, and the world of Creation: three things. The first emanation from God is the bounty of the Kingdom, which emanates and is reflected in the reality of the creatures, like the light which emanates from the sun and is resplendent in creatures; and this bounty, which is the light, is reflected in infinite forms in the reality of all things, and specifies and individualizes itself according to the capacity, the worthiness and the intrinsic value of things. But the affirmation of the Sūfīs requires that the Independent Wealth should descend to the degree of poverty, that the Preexistent should confine itself to phenomenal forms, and that Pure Power should be restricted to the state of weakness, according to the limitations of contingent beings. And this is an

between manifestation and emanation. Appearance through manifestation means that a single thing becomes manifest in infinite forms. For example, when the seed, which is a single thing endowed with the perfections of the vegetable kingdom, manifests itself, it becomes resolved into the infinite forms of the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. This is called manifestational appearance; whereas in appearance through emanation the One remains transcendent in the heights of its sanctity, but the existence of the creatures is obtained from it through emanation, not manifestation. It can be compared to the sun: The rays emanate from it and shine forth upon all things, but the sun remains transcendent in the heights of its sanctity. It does not descend; it does not resolve itself into the form of the rays; it does not appear in the identity of things through specification and individuation: The Pre-existent does not become the originated; absolute wealth does not fall captive to poverty; unqualified perfection is not transformed into utter imperfection.

In summary, the Sufis speak only of God and creation, and believe that God has resolved Himself into, and manifested Himself through, the infinite forms of His creation, even as the sea which appears in the infinite forms of its waves. These originated and imperfect waves are identical to the pre-existent Sea, which is the sum of all the divine perfections. The Prophets, however, hold that there is the world of God, the world of the Kingdom, and the world of creation: three things. The first emanation is the outpouring grace of the Kingdom, which has emanated from God and has appeared in the realities of all things, even as the rays emanating from the sun are reflected in all things. And that grace — the rays — appears in infinite forms in the realities of all things, and is specified and individuated according to their capacity, receptivity, and essence. But the assertion of the Sufis would require that absolute wealth descend into poverty, that the Pre-existent be confined to originated forms, and that the very quintessence of power be reflected in the mirror of powerlessness and be subjected to the inherent limitations of the contingent world. And this is a

<p>evident error. Observe that the reality of man, who is the most noble of creatures, does not descend to the reality of the animal, that the essence of the animal, which is endowed with the powers of sensation, does not abase itself to the degree of the vegetable, and that the reality of the vegetable, which is the power of growth, does not descend to the reality of the mineral.</p>	<p>self-evident error: for we observe that the reality of man, who is the noblest of all creatures, cannot descend to the reality of the animal; that the essence of the animal, which is endowed with the power of sensation, does not abase itself to the degree of the plant; and that the reality of the plant, which is the power of growth, does not degrade itself to the reality of the mineral.</p>
<p>Briefly, the superior reality does not descend nor abase itself to inferior states; then how could it be that the Universal Reality of God, which is freed from all descriptions and qualifications, notwithstanding Its absolute sanctity and purity, should resolve Itself into the forms of the realities of the creatures, which are the source of imperfections? This is a pure imagination which one cannot conceive.</p> <p>On the contrary, this Holy Essence is the sum of the divine perfections; and all creatures are favored by the bounty of resplendency through emanation, and receive the lights, the perfection and the beauty of Its Kingdom, in the same way that all earthly creatures obtain the bounty of the light of the rays of the sun, but the sun does not descend and does not abase itself to the favored realities of earthly beings.</p>	<p>In brief, superior realities do not descend or abase themselves to the degree of inferior realities. How, then, could the universal Reality of God, which transcends all descriptions and attributes, resolve itself, notwithstanding its absolute sanctity and holiness, into the forms and realities of the contingent world, which are the very source of imperfections? This is pure fantasy and untenable conjecture. On the contrary, that Essence of sanctity is the sum of all divine and lordly perfections, and all creatures receive illumination from His emanational appearance and partake of the lights of His celestial perfection and beauty, in the same way that all earthly creatures acquire the grace of light from the rays of the sun, without any descent or abasement of the latter into the recipient realities of these earthly beings.</p>
<p>After dinner, and considering the lateness of the hour, there is no time to explain further.</p> <p>Salutations.</p>	<p>After dinner, and considering the lateness of the hour, there is no time to explain further.</p> <p>Salutations!</p>
<p>THE FOUR METHODS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>The Four Criteria of Comprehension</p>
<p>There are only four accepted methods of comprehension—that is to say, the realities of things are understood by these four methods.</p>	<p>There are only four accepted criteria of comprehension, that is, four criteria whereby the realities of things are understood.</p>
<p>The first method is by the senses—that is to say, all that the eye, the ear, the taste, the smell, the touch perceive is understood by this method. Today this method is considered the most perfect by all the European philosophers: they say that the principal method of gaining knowledge is through the senses; they consider it supreme, although it is imperfect, for it commits errors. For example, the greatest of the senses is the power of sight. The sight sees the mirage as water, and it sees images reflected in mirrors as real and</p>	<p>The first criterion is that of the senses, that is, all that the eye, the ear, the taste, the smell, and the touch perceive is called “sensible”. At present all the European philosophers hold this to be the most perfect criterion. They claim that the greatest of all criteria is that of the senses and they regard it as sacrosanct. And yet the criterion of the senses is defective, as it can err. For example, the greatest of the senses is the power of vision. The vision, however, sees a mirage as water and reckons images reflected in mirrors as</p>

<p>existent; large bodies which are distant appear to be small, and a whirling point appears as a circle. The sight believes the earth to be motionless and sees the sun in motion, and in many similar cases it makes mistakes. Therefore, we cannot trust it.</p>	<p>real and existing; it sees large bodies as small, perceives a whirling point as a circle, imagines the earth to be stationary and the sun to be in motion, and is subject to many other errors of a similar nature. One cannot therefore rely implicitly upon it.</p>
<p>The second is the method of reason, which was that of the ancient philosophers, the pillars of wisdom; this is the method of the understanding. They proved things by reason and held firmly to logical proofs; all their arguments are arguments of reason. Notwithstanding this, they differed greatly, and their opinions were contradictory. They even changed their views—that is to say, during twenty years they would prove the existence of a thing by logical arguments, and afterward they would deny it by logical arguments—so much so that Plato at first logically proved the immobility of the earth and the movement of the sun; later by logical arguments he proved that the sun was the stationary center, and that the earth was moving. Afterward the Ptolemaic theory was spread abroad, and the idea of Plato was entirely forgotten, until at last a new observer again called it to life. Thus all the mathematicians disagreed, although they relied upon arguments of reason.</p>	<p>The second criterion is that of the intellect, which was the principal criterion of comprehension for those pillars of wisdom, the ancient philosophers. They deduced things through the power of the mind and relied on rational arguments: all their arguments are based upon reason. But despite this, they diverged greatly in their opinions. They would even change their own views: for twenty years they would deduce the existence of something through rational arguments, and then afterwards they would disprove the same, again through rational arguments. Even Plato at first proved through rational arguments the immobility of the earth and the movement of the sun, and then subsequently established, again through rational arguments, the centrality of the sun and the movement of the earth. Then the Ptolemaic theory became widespread and Plato's theory was entirely forgotten until a modern astronomer revived it. Thus have the mathematicians disagreed among themselves, even though they all relied on rational arguments.</p>
<p>In the same way, by logical arguments, they would prove a problem at a certain time, then afterward by arguments of the same nature they would deny it. So one of the philosophers would firmly uphold a theory for a time with strong arguments and proofs to support it, which afterward he would retract and contradict by arguments of reason.</p>	<p>Likewise, at one time they would establish a thing by rational arguments and disprove it at another, again by rational arguments. So a philosopher would firmly uphold a view for a time and adduce a range of proofs and arguments to support it, and afterward he would change his mind and contradict his former position by rational arguments.</p>
<p>Therefore, it is evident that the method of reason is not perfect, for the differences of the ancient philosophers, the want of stability and the variations of their opinions, prove this. For if it were perfect, all ought to be united in their ideas and agreed in their opinions.</p>	<p>It is therefore evident that the criterion of reason is imperfect, as proven by the disagreements existing between the ancient philosophers as well as by their want of consistency and their propensity to change their own views. For if the criterion of intellect were perfect, all should have been united in their thoughts and agreed in their opinions.</p>
<p>The third method of understanding is by tradition—that is, through the text of the Holy Scriptures—for people say, “In the Old and New</p>	<p>The third criterion is that of tradition, that is, the text of the sacred scriptures, when it is said, “God said thus in the Torah,” or “God said thus in the</p>

<p>Testaments, God spoke thus.” This method equally is not perfect, because the traditions are understood by the reason. As the reason itself is liable to err, how can it be said that in interpreting the meaning of the traditions it will not err, for it is possible for it to make mistakes, and certainty cannot be attained. This is the method of the religious leaders; whatever they understand and comprehend from the text of the books is that which their reason understands from the text, and not necessarily the real truth; for the reason is like a balance, and the meanings contained in the text of the Holy Books are like the thing which is weighed. If the balance is untrue, how can the weight be ascertained?</p>	<p>Gospel.” This criterion is not perfect either, because the traditions must be understood by the mind. As the mind itself is liable to error, how can it be said that it will attain to perfect truth and not err in comprehending and inferring the meaning of the traditions? For it is subject to error and cannot lead to certitude. This is the criterion of the leaders of religion. What they comprehend from the text of the Book, however, is that which their minds can understand and not necessarily the truth of the matter; for the mind is like a balance, and the meanings contained in the texts are like the objects to be weighed. If the balance is untrue, how can the weight be ascertained?</p>
<p>Know then: that which is in the hands of people, that which they believe, is liable to error. For, in proving or disproving a thing, if a proof is brought forward which is taken from the evidence of our senses, this method, as has become evident, is not perfect; if the proofs are intellectual, the same is true; or if they are traditional, such proofs also are not perfect. Therefore, there is no standard in the hands of people upon which we can rely.</p>	<p>Know, therefore, that what the people possess and believe to be true is liable to error. For in proving or disproving a thing a proof drawn from the evidence of the senses is advanced, this criterion is clearly imperfect; if a rational proof is adduced the same holds true; and likewise if a traditional proof is given. Thus it is clear that man does not possess any criterion of knowledge that can be relied upon.</p>
<p>But the bounty of the Holy Spirit gives the true method of comprehension which is infallible and indubitable. This is through the help of the Holy Spirit which comes to man, and this is the condition in which certainty can alone be attained.</p>	<p>But the grace of the Holy Spirit is the true criterion regarding which there is no doubt or uncertainty. That grace consists in the confirmations of the Holy Spirit which are vouchsafed to man and through which certitude is attained.</p>
<p>THE NECESSITY OF FOLLOWING THE TEACHINGS OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS</p>	<p>Good Deeds and their Spiritual Prerequisites</p>
<p>Question.—Those who are blessed with good actions and universal benevolence, who have praiseworthy characteristics, who act with love and kindness toward all creatures, who care for the poor, and who strive to establish universal peace—what need have they of the divine teachings, of which they think indeed that they are independent? What is the condition of these people?</p>	<p>Question: Those who do good works, who are well-wishers of all mankind, who have a praiseworthy character, who show forth love and kindness to all people, who care for the poor, and who work for universal peace — what need do they have of the divine teachings, with which they believe they can well afford to dispense? What is the condition of such people?</p>
<p>Answer.—Know that such actions, such efforts and such words are praiseworthy and approved, and are the glory of humanity. But these actions alone are not sufficient; they are a body of the greatest loveliness, but without spirit. No, that</p>	<p>Answer: Know that such ways, words and deeds are to be lauded and approved, and they redound to the glory of the human world. But these actions alone are not sufficient: they are a body of the greatest beauty, but without a spirit.</p>

<p>which is the cause of everlasting life, eternal honor, universal enlightenment, real salvation and prosperity is, first of all, the knowledge of God. It is known that the knowledge of God is beyond all knowledge, and it is the greatest glory of the human world. For in the existing knowledge of the reality of things there is material advantage, and through it outward civilization progresses; but the knowledge of God is the cause of spiritual progress and attraction, and through it the perception of truth, the exaltation of humanity, divine civilization, rightness of morals and illumination are obtained.</p>	<p>No, that which leads to everlasting life, eternal honour, universal enlightenment, and true success and salvation is, first and foremost, the knowledge of God. It is clear that this knowledge takes precedence over every other knowledge and constitutes the greatest virtue of the human world. For the understanding of the reality of things confers a material advantage in the realm of being, and brings about the progress of outward civilization, but the knowledge of God is the cause of spiritual progress and attraction, true vision and insight, the exaltation of humanity, the appearance of divine civilization, the rectification of morals, and the illumination of the conscience.</p>
<p>Second, comes the love of God, the light of which shines in the lamp of the hearts of those who know God; its brilliant rays illuminate the horizon and give to man the life of the Kingdom. In truth, the fruit of human existence is the love of God, for this love is the spirit of life, and the eternal bounty. If the love of God did not exist, the contingent world would be in darkness; if the love of God did not exist, the hearts of men would be dead, and deprived of the sensations of existence; if the love of God did not exist, spiritual union would be lost; if the love of God did not exist, the light of unity would not illuminate humanity; if the love of God did not exist, the East and West, like two lovers, would not embrace each other; if the love of God did not exist, division and disunion would not be changed into fraternity; if the love of God did not exist, indifference would not end in affection; if the love of God did not exist, the stranger would not become the friend. The love of the human world has shone forth from the love of God and has appeared by the bounty and grace of God.</p>	<p>Second comes the love of God. The light of this love is kindled, through the knowledge of God, in the lamp of the heart, and its spreading rays illumine the world and bestow upon man the life of the Kingdom. And in truth the fruit of human existence is the love of God, which is the spirit of life and grace everlasting. Were it not for the love of God, the contingent world would be plunged in darkness. Were it not for the love of God, the hearts of men would be bereft of life and deprived of the stirrings of conscience. Were it not for the love of God, the perfections of the human world would entirely vanish. Were it not for the love of God, no real connection could exist between human hearts. Were it not for the love of God, spiritual union would be lost. Were it not for the love of God, the light of the oneness of mankind would be extinguished. Were it not for the love of God, the East and the West would not embrace as two lovers. Were it not for the love of God, discord and division would not be transmuted into fellowship. Were it not for the love of God, estrangement would not give way to unity. Were it not for the love of God, the stranger would not become the friend. Indeed, love in the human world is a ray of the love of God and a reflection of the grace of His bounty.</p>
<p>It is clear that the reality of mankind is diverse, that opinions are various and sentiments different; and this difference of opinions, of thoughts, of intelligence, of sentiments among the human species arises from essential necessity; for the differences in the degrees of</p>	<p>It is clear that human realities differ one from another, that opinions and perceptions vary, and that this divergence of thoughts, opinions, understandings and sentiments among individuals is an essential requirement. For differences of degree in creation are among the</p>

<p>existence of creatures is one of the necessities of existence, which unfolds itself in infinite forms. Therefore, we have need of a general power which may dominate the sentiments, the opinions and the thoughts of all, thanks to which these divisions may no longer have effect, and all individuals may be brought under the influence of the unity of the world of humanity. It is clear and evident that this greatest power in the human world is the love of God. It brings the different peoples under the shadow of the tent of affection; it gives to the antagonistic and hostile nations and families the greatest love and union.</p>	<p>essential requirements of existence, which is resolved into countless forms. We stand therefore in need of a universal power which can prevail over the thoughts, opinions and sentiments of all, which can annul these divisions and bring all souls under the sway of the principle of the oneness of humanity. And it is clear and evident that the greatest power in the human world is the love of God. It gathers diverse peoples under the shade of the tabernacle of oneness and fosters the greatest love and fellowship among hostile and contending peoples and nations.</p>
<p>See, after the time of Christ, through the power of the love of God, how many nations, races, families and tribes came under the shadow of the Word of God. The divisions and differences of a thousand years were entirely destroyed and annihilated. The thoughts of race and of fatherland completely disappeared. The union of souls and of existences took place; all became true spiritual Christians.</p>	<p>Observe how numerous were the diverse nations, races, clans and tribes who, after the advent of Christ, gathered through the power of the love of God under the shadow of His Word. Consider how the differences and divisions of a thousand years were entirely abolished, how the delusion of the superiority of race and nation was dispelled, how the unity of souls and sentiments was attained, and how all became Christians in truth and in spirit.</p>
<p>The third virtue of humanity is the goodwill which is the basis of good actions. Certain philosophers have considered intention superior to action, for the goodwill is absolute light; it is purified and sanctified from the impurities of selfishness, of enmity, of deception. Now it may be that a man performs an action which in appearance is righteous, but which is dictated by covetousness. For example, a butcher rears a sheep and protects it; but this righteous action of the butcher is dictated by desire to derive profit, and the result of this care is the slaughter of the poor sheep. How many righteous actions are dictated by covetousness! But the goodwill is sanctified from such impurities.</p>	<p>The third virtue of humanity is goodly intention, which is the foundation of all good deeds. Some seekers after truth have held intention to be superior to action, for a goodly intention is absolute light and is entirely sanctified from the least trace of malice, scheming, or deception. Now, one can perform an action which appears to be righteous but which is in reality prompted by self-interest. For example, a butcher raises a sheep and guards its safety; but this good deed of the butcher is motivated by the hope of profit, and the end result of all this care will be the slaughter of the poor sheep. How many are the goodly and righteous deeds that are in reality prompted by self-interest! But the pure intention is sanctified above such faults.</p>
<p>Briefly, if to the knowledge of God is joined the love of God, and attraction, ecstasy and goodwill, a righteous action is then perfect and complete. Otherwise, though a good action is praiseworthy, yet if it is not sustained by the knowledge of God, the love of God, and a sincere intention, it is imperfect. For example, the being of man must unite all perfections to be perfect. Sight is extremely precious and appreciated, but it must</p>	<p>Briefly, good deeds become perfect and complete only after the knowledge of God has been acquired, the love of God has been manifested, and spiritual attractions and goodly motives have been attained. Otherwise, though good deeds be praiseworthy, if they do not spring from the knowledge of God, from the love of God, and from a sincere intention, they will be imperfect. For example, human existence must encompass</p>

<p>be aided by hearing; the hearing is much appreciated, but it must be aided by the power of speech; the faculty of speech is very acceptable, but it must be aided by the power of reason, and so forth. The same is true of the other powers, organs and members of man; when all these powers, these senses, these organs, these members exist together, he is perfect.</p>	<p>all perfections in order to be complete. The power of sight is highly prized and precious, but it must be aided by that of hearing; the hearing is highly prized, but it must be aided by the power of speech; the power of speech is highly prized, but it must be aided by that of reason, and so on with the other powers, organs and members of man. When all these powers, senses, parts and organs are combined together, perfection is attained.</p>
<p>Now, today, we meet with people in the world who, in truth, desire the universal good, and who according to their power occupy themselves in protecting the oppressed and in aiding the poor: they are enthusiastic for peace and the universal well-being. Although from this point of view they may be perfect, if they are deprived of the knowledge and love of God, they are imperfect.</p>	<p>In the world today we meet with souls who sincerely desire the good of all people, who do all that lies in their power to assist the poor and succour the oppressed, and who are devoted to universal peace and well-being. Yet, however perfect they may be from this perspective, they remain deprived of the knowledge and the love of God and as such are imperfect.</p>
<p>Galen, the physician, in his book in which he comments on the treatise of Plato on the art of government, says that the fundamental principles of religion have a great influence upon a perfect civilization because “the multitude cannot understand the connection of explanatory words; so it has need of symbolical words announcing the rewards and punishments of the other world; and that which proves the truth of this affirmation,” he says, “is that today we see a people called Christians who believe in rewards and punishments; and this sect show forth beautiful actions like those which a true philosopher performs. So we all see clearly that they do not fear death, that they expect and desire nothing from the multitude but justice and equity, and they are considered as true philosophers.”</p>	<p>Galen the physician wrote in his commentary on Plato’s treatise on the art of governance that religious beliefs exert a profound influence on true civilization, the proof being that “most people cannot grasp a sequence of logical arguments, and stand therefore in need of symbolic allusions heralding the rewards and punishments of the next world. The proof of this is that we see today a people called Christians who believe in the rewards and punishments of the next world and who show forth goodly deeds that are like those of a true philosopher. Thus we all plainly see that they have no fear of death and that they are, by virtue of their ardent yearning for justice and equity, to be regarded as though they were true philosophers.”</p>
<p>Now observe what was the degree of the sincerity, the zeal, the spiritual feeling, the obligation of friendship, and the good actions of a believer in Christ, so that Galen, the philosophical physician, although he was not of the Christian religion, should yet bear witness to the good morals and the perfections of these people, to the point of saying that they were true philosophers. These virtues, these morals, were obtained not only through good actions, for if virtue were only a matter of obtaining and giving forth good, as this lamp is lighted and illuminates</p>	<p>Now observe closely how great the sincerity, the self-abnegation, the spiritual emotions, the pure intentions and the good deeds of the Christian believers must have been for Galen — a philosopher and physician who was not himself a Christian — to attest to the morals and the perfections of these people and call them true philosophers. Such virtues and qualities cannot be attained through good deeds alone. If virtue only meant that some good be obtained and bestowed, then why do we not praise this burning lamp which lights the room, even though</p>

the house—without doubt this illumination is a benefit—then why do we not praise the lamp? The sun causes all the beings of the earth to increase, and by its heat and light gives growth and development: is there a greater benefit than that? Nevertheless, as this good does not come from goodwill and from the love and knowledge of God, it is imperfect.

When, on the contrary, a man gives to another a cup of water, the latter is grateful and thanks him. A man, without reflecting, will say, “This sun which gives light to the world, this supreme bounty which is apparent in it, must be adored and praised. Why should we not be grateful and thankful to the sun for its bounty, when we praise a man who performs a simple act of kindness?” But if we look for the truth, we see that this insignificant kindness of the man is due to conscious feelings which exist; therefore, it is worthy of praise, whereas the light and heat of the sun are not due to the feelings and consciousness; therefore, they are not worthy of eulogy or of praise and do not deserve gratitude or thanks.

In the same way, when a person performs a good action, although it is praiseworthy, if it is not caused by the love and knowledge of God, it is imperfect.

Moreover, if you reflect justly, you will see that these good actions of other men who do not know God are also fundamentally caused by the teachings of God—that is to say, that the former Prophets led men to perform these actions, explained their beauty to them, and declared their splendid effects; then these teachings were diffused among men and reached them successively, one after the other, and turned their hearts toward these perfections. When men saw that these actions were considered beautiful, and became the cause of joy and happiness for mankind, they conformed to them.

Wherefore these actions also come from the teachings of God. But justice is needed to see this, and not controversy and discussion.

its light is without a doubt a good thing? The sun nurtures all earthly things and fosters their growth and development by its heat and light — what greater good is there than this? Nonetheless, since this good does not flow from goodly motives and from the love and knowledge of God, it does not impress in the least. But when someone offers a cup of water to another, he is shown appreciation and gratitude. An unthinking person might say, “This sun which gives light to the world and manifests this great bounty must surely be praised and glorified. For why should we praise a man for such a modest gift and not yield thanks to the sun?” But if we were to gaze with the eye of truth, we would see that the modest gift bestowed by this person stems from the stirrings of conscience and is therefore praiseworthy, whereas the light and heat of the sun are not due to this and thus are not worthy of our praise and gratitude. In like manner, while those who perform good deeds are to be lauded, if these deeds do not flow from the knowledge and love of God they are assuredly imperfect.

Aside from this, if you consider the matter with fairness you will see that these good deeds of the non-believers also have their origin in the divine teachings. That is, the Prophets of old exhorted men to perform them, explained their advantages and expounded their positive effects; these teachings then spread among mankind, successively reaching the non-believing souls and inclining their hearts toward these perfections; and when they found these actions to be laudable and to bring about joy and happiness among men, they too conformed to them. Thus these actions also arise from the divine teachings. But to see this a measure of fair-mindedness is called for and not dispute and controversy.

Praise be to God, you have been to Persia, and you have seen how the Persians, through the holy breezes of Bahá'u'lláh, have become benevolent toward humanity. Formerly, if they met anyone of another race, they tormented him and were filled with the utmost enmity, hatred and malevolence; they went so far as to throw dirt at him. They burned the Gospel and the Old Testament, and if their hands were polluted by touching these books, they washed them. Today the greater number of them recite and chant, as is suitable, the contents of these two Books in their reunions and assemblies, and they expound their esoteric teaching. They show hospitality to their enemies. They treat the bloodthirsty wolves with gentleness, like gazelles in the plains of the love of God. You have seen their customs and habits, and you have heard of the manners of former Persians. This transformation of morals, this improvement of conduct and of words, are they possible otherwise than through the love of God? No, in the name of God. If, by the help of science and knowledge, we wished to introduce these morals and customs, truly it would take a thousand years, and then they would not be spread throughout the masses.

Praise be to God, you have visited Persia and have witnessed the loving-kindness which, through the sanctified breezes of Bahá'u'lláh, Persians have come to show forth to all humanity. Formerly, if they chanced upon a follower of another religion, they would set upon him, display the utmost enmity, hatred and malice, and even regard him as impure. They would burn the Gospel and the Torah and would wash their hands if they had been soiled by touching these books. But now, most of them recite and interpret, as required by the occasion, from the contents of these two books in their assemblies and gatherings, and expound and elucidate their inner meanings and mysteries. They show kindness to their enemies and treat bloodthirsty wolves with tender care, as they would the gazelles of the meadows of God's love. You have seen their conduct and character, and you have heard of the morals which the Persians had in former times. Can this transformation of morals and this rectification of speech and conduct be brought about other than through the love of God? No, by God! If we undertook to spread such morals and manners merely by means of knowledge and learning, a thousand years would pass and still they would not have been achieved among the masses.

Today, thanks to the love of God, they are arrived at with the greatest facility.

In this day, thanks to the love of God, this has been achieved with the greatest ease. Take heed, then, O ye of understanding heart!

Be admonished, O possessors of intelligence!