

*Summer 1978*

# World Order

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Thinking of Children

Editorial

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Early Journalistic Reactions  
To the Bahá'í Faith

Margaret Dean-Deibert

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The Pilgrims of the Way

Mary Carman Rose

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The Quest

For the Metaphysical Jesus

William S. Hatcher

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Volume 12

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# World Order

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WORLD ORDER IS INTENDED TO STIMULATE, INSPIRE AND SERVE THINKING PEOPLE IN THEIR SEARCH TO FIND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

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# Thinking of Children

SOME 35 percent of the world's four and a half billion people are children. Four babies are born every second, constantly increasing the ratio of the young in the total population. Neither material nor human resources available for the nurture and education of these millions of children are adequate to this stupendous task. Neglect of the young, malnutrition, lack of education result in the perpetuation of the very conditions that beset the majority of mankind. To break the grip of poverty, disease, ignorance, and intolerance humanity must ensure that today's children grow up to be healthy, educated, and morally sound adults.

In December 1976 the United Nations proclaimed 1979 the International Year of the Child. The purpose of the I.Y.C. is to create worldwide concern for the welfare of children; to encourage member nations to examine the services they provide their children; to mobilize support for national and local programs of action, especially those of a realistic and achievable kind; to promote the recognition of the link between assistance to children and general economic and social progress. By stressing the need to focus on children the United Nations hopes to stimulate the struggle for the legal rights of children and to make large numbers of people aware of such scourges of the young as malnutrition, lack of parental care, and the absence of medical facilities.

The Bahá'ís salute the International Year of the Child. Their dedication to the construction of a just and humane society compels them to do everything in their power for those least able to take care of themselves. The strong emphasis placed in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh on the nurture and education of children, the high praise given those who adopt orphans, the repeated admonitions to impart high intellectual, artistic, moral, and spiritual values to the young, are the guiding principles that determine the attitude of Bahá'ís throughout the world toward children and childhood.

The Bahá'ís find it disappointing, though not surprising, that the numerous proclamations, statements, and position papers issued by various international agencies have maintained almost total silence on the subject of spiritual education and of religion itself. We believe that the problem of the welfare of children is itself fundamentally a religious question, for without religious commitment it is not possible to find the energy, the resources, and the determination necessary to change the fate of hundreds of millions of children or to agree on the goals and the direction such change should take. Unless the next generation is inspired by higher and purer values than those which have animated humanity until now, old problems will return to plague the world again and again. One may hope that the International Year of the Child will move large numbers of people, especially parents, to give serious thought to all the needs, spiritual as well as material, of the children of our planet.



## Interchange LETTERS FROM AND TO THE EDITOR

A MAGAZINE of about the same age as *WORLD ORDER* and having some of our purposes and attitudes has just come to our attention. It is a bilingual Canadian quarterly called *revue MONCHANIN journal*: the first two words are the French name, the last two words the English name of the journal. Each number is devoted to a particular problem—the social history and composition of Quebec, the encounter of cultures and religions in North America, the future of man in the world. Each article written in English is followed by a summary in French, and vice versa. It is not the official organ of any one religion or philosophy, but it is a place where all can find expression. There are articles (chosen at random) on the emerging myth of man (June-Dec. 1975), on the Blacks, the Jews, the native Indians in Quebec (July-Sept. 1978), and on native Indian religion, Buddhism, Islám, Hinduism, and Christianity from a point of view of the emerging unitary world. More information may be obtained by writing Centre Monchanin, 4917, St. Urbain, Montreal, Quebec H2T 2W1, Canada.

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Another publication about which we have known for several years is the *Index of American Periodical Verse*. It started in 1971 with the purpose of stimulating "the growth and development of literary and little magazines" in America and of providing "a valuable reference tool for

all those interested in contemporary poets." The main listing in each *Index* is an alphabetical directory of poets. Each poet entry contains an alphabetical list of that poet's published poems for the year; each poem title is followed by a complete bibliographic reference. Completing each *Index* is a listing of periodicals indexed, with editorial addresses and subscription information, and a cross index of poem titles (or first lines for untitled poems). In short, it is a poetry readers' guide, the only one of its kind.

Poems appearing in *WORLD ORDER*'s 1971 issue appeared in the 1971 *Index of American Periodical Verse* and have continued to appear each year since, along with poems from large periodicals such as *The New Yorker* and *Harper's* and from distinguished scholarly publications and significant little magazines like *Field*, *Southern Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*.

The guiding light behind the *Index* is Sander W. Zulauf, who now teaches English and creative writing at County College of Morris, New Jersey. His co-founder was Irwin H. Weiser, his current coeditor, Edward M. Cifelli. In 1974 Mr. Zulauf wrote that as long as he remained "in good health and of sound mind and strong eyesight" he would continue the index. We presume from the snappy new letterhead and the regular appearance of the volumes that the *Index of American Periodical Verse* is flourishing. The 1977 edition was expected in January 1978 and

may be obtained from The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Box 656, Metuchen, NJ 08840.

\* \* \*

The Bicentennial may have faded in the minds of many, but 1978 brings us another reminder of that historic year. We have received a copy of *Expansive Light: Commemorative Anthology of Poetry*, compiled by The Sacred Fire in honor of America's Bicentennial. Among the eleven poets featured in the volume are two of our contributors. Robert Hayden is identified in a biographical paragraph as the poetry editor of *WORLD ORDER*, "the Baha'i magazine," and it is noted that "the Baha'i Faith is an increasingly important influence on his poetry." Among his poems included in the anthology are "Baha'u'llah in the Garden of Ridwan" and "The Night-Blooming Cereus." William Stafford, a number of whose poems have appeared in *WORLD ORDER* over the years, is our second contributor appearing in the anthology. Among his poems is "Declaration for the New World: 1976," written for and published in *WORLD ORDER*'s Bicentennial issue, Winter 1975-76. Copies of *Expansive Light* may be obtained from The Sacred Fire, 150-55 87th Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11432.

#### WALTER HATKE'S ART

E. Christian Filstrup's article in the Fall 1977 issue entitled "The Alphabet of Things in

Walter Hatke's Art" would have been more suitable if confined to one of his own metaphorical poems than about Walter Hatke's artwork.

Who is Walter Hatke, and what has he got to say? We presume it must be significant.

Instead of one individual's subjective impressions of another man's work, why not let Hatke's art speak for itself along with the artist's *own* comments. The best interpreter in this case would have to be the artist himself—why the middleman? Is there a desirable mystique that has to be cultivated around the artist to create appeal? *Please*, they're hard enough to understand as it is.

I'm an artist of illustration and realism/abstraction myself, and in my opinion Mr. Filstrup's interpretation or *interpolation* (whichever) of Mr. Hatke's *method of language* by using naturalistic symbols is "larger than life."

If there is any depth or profoundness to the two paintings and one reference sketch presented with the article, it isn't apparent in Mr. Hatke's chosen method of execution.

Although Walter Hatke's realistic depictions have their limitations, Mr. Filstrup's hopeful imaginings do not. Though I do believe fine artists like Walter Hatke should be encouraged, I don't agree with the encouragement of illusory observations. In everything there is a standard for judgment, and art is no exception to the rule.

FRITZ A. MANN

Colorado Springs, Colorado

. . . Perhaps the major point of the article [E. Christian Filstrup's "The Alphabet of Things in Walter Hatke's Art," Fall 1977] was Filstrup's observation that the mundane world around us has an importance, a beauty, an order that may go beyond the obvious. Of course, to attempt to portray the Infinite is indeed impossible; it can only be implied. A possible implication of the Infinite is a mirror reflecting a

mirror, something which overawes children, because it goes on forever and becomes unknowable. There are elements of unity in all things. These elements (threads, beads, atoms, light, or what you will) one and all suggest possibilities of the Infinite, the Unknowable.

There is unspeakable beauty in the world. A glowing path of light can contain extraordinary power and beauty, as can the shadows produced by the light. Understatement is also a most powerful stuff. It is not that wise for an artist to try to make "religious" pictures—I myself made repeated attempts one time. Such attempts are most often self-conscious if not self-righteous; hence, the peril of overstatement. Shoghi Effendi often praised the essences of classical intentions. Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly stated it is better to truly know but a few or even one teaching well than to be able to recite volumes; words few but with depth and precise clarity. . . . A single choice gem magnified has far greater effect than lavishly displaying an entire trunk full of jewels, though each gem may be of great value.

Still, in a sense, I do consider all my paintings "religious"; they may be religious in possibilities, possibilities to be polished in the soul. I hope that doesn't sound too affected. We each find and observe different facets of truth. Overstatement reduces possibilities. It is better to present things in a more open manner to allow more possibilities for a viewer to ponder. . . .

WALTER HATKE  
Perry, Kansas

#### POET'S CORNER

It was refreshing to find in the Summer 1977 issue of WORLD ORDER evidence of diversification in the type of poetry you offer your readers. I shall know that the inclusion of Japanese-

influenced poetry was not a temporary lapse if I find the following lines of mine printed in the "Interchange" column of a subsequent issue—or should it be the purpose to persuade readers of this publication that Bahá'ís are uniformly, unwaveringly, relentlessly and grimly High-minded and Serious?

#### EVERYBODY'S WRITING HAIKU: WHY NOT YOU?

Haiku (also Hokku): Japanese poetic form of 17 syllables arranged in 3 lines of 5, 7 and 5 syllables each. *Britannica*

##### I

The white snowflake fell,  
landing with a thud. June: darned  
thing still not melted.

##### II

Limned in moonlight,  
peach boughs wave. I don't wave back.  
They give me heartburn.

##### III

A breeze sways the rose.  
The butterfly resting there  
is still. Drunk again?

##### IV

Aged willows bend,  
whisper to the eager stream  
warnings of oil slicks.

##### V

The mountain in spring  
wears flowers; in cold, ermine.  
Ostentatious fop.

##### VI

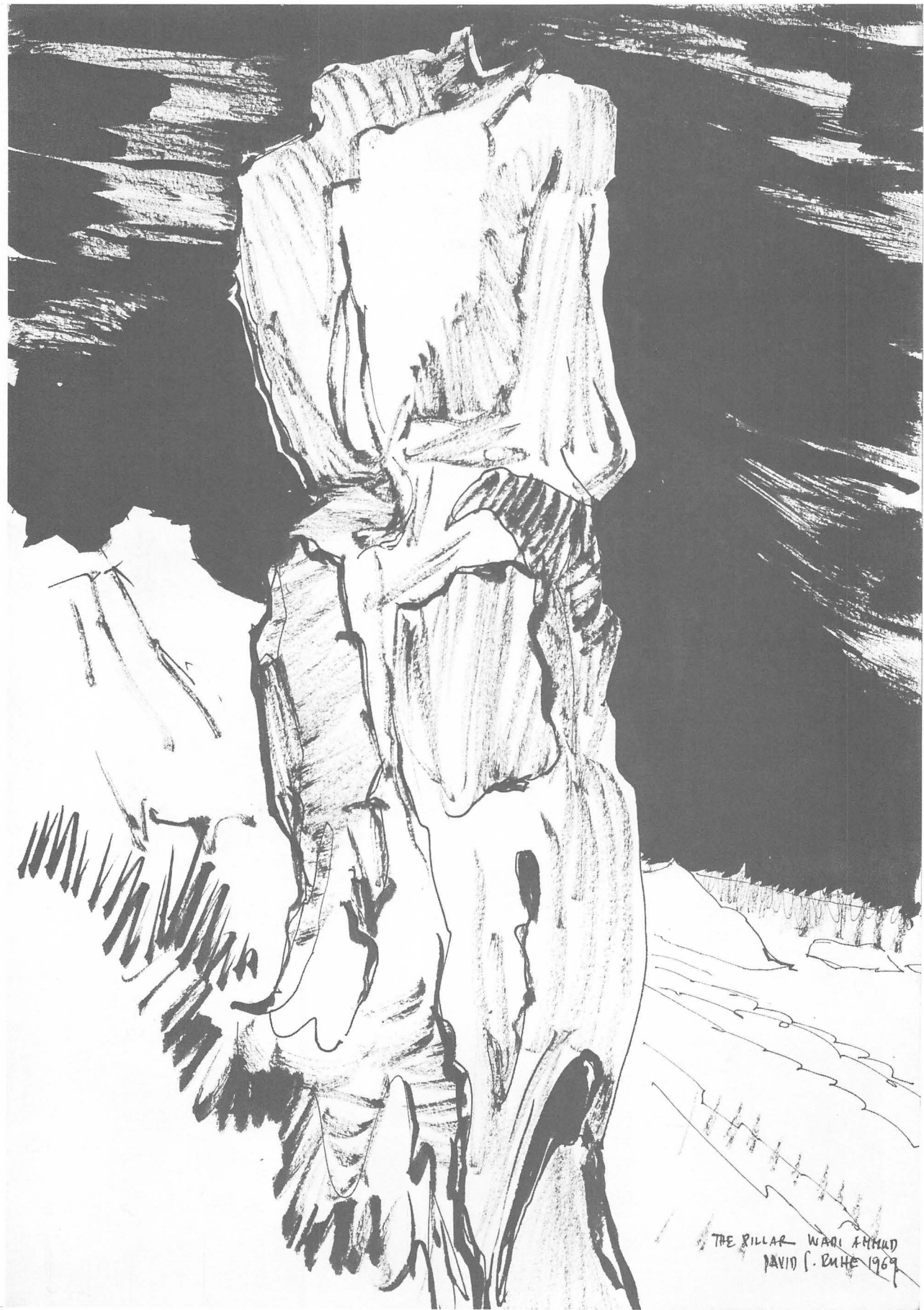
A gold harvest moon;  
blue plums on a clean white plate.  
I hanker for prunes.

What might the future hold: the sonnet? the limerick?

ROGER WHITE  
Haifa, Israel







THE PILLAR WAQI AHMAD  
DAVID C. BURKE 1969

# The Pilgrims of the Way

BY MARY CARMAN ROSE

TO ENGAGE in ecumenical activities is to endeavor to achieve sympathetic understanding of those whose religious commitments are different from one's own and to cooperate with them for the achievement of humanitarian goals. Among various metaphysicoreligious systems there are, however, resemblances and differences that may be misleading or confusing to those interested in ecumenism. Here I intend to illumine these resemblances and differences. My thesis is that it is possible to work out a fruitful interpretation of the relations among diverse views of man and reality and the diverse ways of life to which these views give rise. Fundamental to the development of this thesis is the distinction between, on the one hand, those views of man and reality declaring that man lives in a world that is in some sense given to him and, on the other hand, those views declaring that man in some sense structures his own world. The former I call *metaphysical realisms*, the latter, *metaphysical skepticisms*. For the metaphysical realist truth is an objective order and, whether in metaphysics, science, values, or religion, is either a discovery made by man or a revelation given to man. In any event, for the metaphysical realist, truth is not a human contrivance. For the metaphysical skeptic, how-

ever, all truth is a human contrivance, determined solely by cultural, community, or personal preferences, goals, or necessities.

Metaphysical realists may be divided into two classes. One group declares that reality has an axiological orientation by virtue of which what Martin Buber called the I-Thou relation has a metaphysical ground.<sup>1</sup> A second group declares either that reality does not possess that particular axiological orientation or that it possesses no axiological orientation (that is, no orientation toward values).<sup>2</sup> Those metaphysical realists who declare that the I-Thou relation has a metaphysical ground may also be subdivided. Some discern in the flux of human affairs a teleology that insures the ultimate triumph of the I-Thou relation. Others discern no such teleology in human affairs. Finally, those metaphysical realists who are confident of the ultimate triumph of the I-Thou relation may again be subdivided. There are those who believe that whatever his origin *qua* individual, each person is everlasting and intrinsically precious to the reality that, in some sense, has produced him. There are also those who believe that the individual is not intrinsically precious to reality and that with physical death he is annihilated.

The *philosophies of the Way* are those metaphysical realisms for which reality possesses an axiological orientation in which the I-Thou relation is central and will ultimately triumph and which see all persons as intended for everlasting life and intrinsically precious. All those persons who appropriate any one of the philosophies of the Way are *pilgrims of the Way*. The profound dynamic, axiologically oriented and teleological aspect of reality which is discerned by all philosophies of the Way and to which all pilgrims of the Way are committed is the *Way*.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribner, 1958).

2. Hobbes' view, expressed in his *Leviathan*, is that reality fosters in us, as in all forms of life, an aggressiveness and competitiveness incompatible with the cultivation of the I-Thou relation. A view of reality and man that may be interpreted as giving no axiological orientation to reality is found in Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* (New York: Liveright, 1939).

3. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).



It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to compile an exhaustive list of all the philosophies of the Way, for some views of man and reality, such as those of the ancient Gaels, which may be philosophies of the Way, are not well known to us. In this context, however, it is not necessary to provide an exhaustive list, because most ecumenical activity is carried on by pilgrims of the Way with whose beliefs and commitments we may easily become acquainted. At any rate, the philosophies of the Way include Judaism, Christianity, Islám, the Bahá'í Faith, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Taoism, Vedantism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and the views of Socrates and Plato.<sup>4</sup>

The philosophies of the Way differ among themselves, of course, in their views of the nature of man and reality and in their views of the manner in which metaphysicoreligious truth is achieved. Thus, the pantheism of Vedantism, the nontheism of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism, the humanism of Confucianism and Taoism, and the theism of Socrates and Plato each in its own way differs from the theism of Judaism, Christianity, Islám, the Bahá'í Faith, and Zoroastrianism. Also, each of the latter theisms accepts its insight into reality as fundamentally a divine revelation given to man. On the contrary, all the former philosophies of the Way see their insight into reality as a human achievement. These differences among the philosophies of the Way suggest that each may be interpreted as viewing reality from a distinctive perspective, as possessing a distinctive degree and

type of insight into reality, and as giving rise to a way of life which has its roots in and is the correlative of that perspective. This hypothesis respects and admits nonreductively the *de facto* differences among the philosophies of the Way and is an indispensable condition of any effort to find unity among them.

It follows that the quality of spiritual fulfillment offered by each philosophy of the Way is distinctive, being the correlative not only of its views on man and reality but also of the ethicoreligious disciplines and aspirations it fosters. Thus Taoist yoga disciplines are different from those of Hinduism and Platonism. The rationale and goals of the meditation of the followers of Zen who believes that he achieves spiritual fulfillment through his openness to the truth are different from the meditation practices of the Christian who waits upon the grace of God for spiritual development and for the peace which the world cannot give. Socrates' dictum "All wrong doing is ignorance" means that the individual who shares Socrates' perspective on reality not only comprehends the values that are grounded in reality but also is able to appropriate them.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the diverse disciplines and aspirations eventuate in diverse types of peace. Nirvana, satori, ānānada, the actionless activity of Confucianism and Taoism, and the joy of Christianity are not qualitatively the same experience.

It also follows that no one of the philosophies of the Way is able to illumine all the other philosophies of the Way. No one of them has the direct, full insights into reality and man that arise from perspectives on reality different from its own. The full existential import of the appropriation of a path and of the quality of spiritual maturity it offers are known thoroughly only by those who have appropriated that path. Thus nontheistic Buddhism does not provide an adequate perspective for the existential grasping of faithfulness to God. Christianity *per se* does not provide an adequate perspective or training for comprehending the Zen Buddhist experience of *prajñā*, which is the in-

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4. To be sure, virtually all aspects of the thought of Socrates and Plato are controversial. Further, it is unusual, perhaps, to interpret the teachings of Socrates and Plato as a way of life. I am here assuming that Plato's interpretation of Socrates is the most adequate picture of the life commitment of the latter and that Socrates as known in Plato's "Apology" is willingly accepting martyrdom for his way of life.

5. A prime instance of this aspect of Socratic thought is in "Timaeus," 86 (*The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. B. Jowett [New York: Random, 1937]).

tuitive grasping of the harmonious interrelatedness of all things.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, as I have indicated, the philosophies of the Way agree in giving the importance of the I-Thou relation a metaphysical ground and thus making the cultivation of that relation an ideal of human spiritual development. Further, it seems that the philosophies of the Way, if they do not enjoin or impose any specific actions on their followers, do call attention to the existence of those who are willing to manifest their love for others as sacrifice when occasion demands. Moreover, such philosophies emphasize that the community benefits spiritually as well as materially from the presence of these loving altruists in its midst, and point to their actions as a salutary example for others to follow.

To be sure, there are passages in the writings of some of the philosophies of the Way that when taken out of context seem not to be consistent with this interpretation. One thinks, for example, of Lao Tzu's "The sage treats the people like straw dogs."<sup>7</sup> Yet fundamental to the *Tao Te Ching* is the willingness of the sage to serve: "The sage benefits the people yet exacts no gratitude."<sup>8</sup> I suggest that it is only in the light of the deliberate self-giving of the sage that the former statement can be interpreted and that when it is so interpreted it is seen as pertaining to the unwillingness of the sage to foster error in those persons not yet ready to learn the truth about themselves and their relation to reality. Also, I suggest that an analogous approach will illumine the true import of the Buddhist eightfold path with its inculcation of honesty, universal kindness, and sobriety; the Vedantist's seeking the divine in all men; and the Confucian accomplishing of great

things in the community through respect, good will, and reverence. Certainly all these are equivalent to an emphasis on the I-Thou relation. This is true also of the "Love thy neighbor as thyself," which is common to both the Pentateuch and the New Testament and of the general spirit of mutual helpfulness and fellow feeling toward others that is the Third Pillar of Islám and a common element in the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and Zoroastrianism as well as those of Socrates and Plato.

Of course, it is important not to ignore an exclusiveness in many of the philosophies of the Way that undeniably exists along with the fostering of the I-Thou relation. This exclusiveness has at least two forms. First, it is by no means clear that the I-Thou relation is to be extended to those outside of one's religious community. The *Tao Te Ching* speaks disparagingly of the Confucians and others who do not accept the precepts of Lao Tzu, and the Old Testament talks about vengeance upon and rejection of enemies and some outsiders. Second, the claim of the exclusive possession of religiously significant truth occurs frequently among the philosophies of the Way. It is fruitful at the present time to see these two forms of exclusiveness as interrelated. The prevalence of the first form may be explained on the grounds that there are among the philosophies of the Way varying degrees of insight into the demands and the potential power of the I-Thou relation. The New Testament question, "who is my neighbor?" may be interpreted as indicating a readiness for new insight on this topic. Moreover, the current interest in ecumenism and the popularity of groups such as the Bahá'ís that are explicitly committed to fostering many paths of spiritual development indicates a readiness for overcoming the exclusiveness of the second type. Perhaps as a result of this ecumenism the exclusiveness will be supplanted by a widespread awareness of the fact that all philosophies of the Way offer some religiously significant truth; that each is a genuine path to spiritual development and commitment for those, but

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6. "The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind," Section II, in *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki*, ed. William Barrett (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956).

7. Lao Tzu, *The Tao Te Ching* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), I. 14.

8. *Ibid.*, I. 185.

only for those, to spiritual needs and talents it corresponds; and that much is to be gained by cooperation among those who accept one of these paths.

One corollary of the fact that each of the philosophies of the Way gives the I-Thou relation a metaphysical status is that each, in its own manner, makes of the individual believer a Thou who is in some sense precious to the reality that has produced him and from which the importance of the I-Thou relation derives. Hence, the philosophies of the Way do not ask the individual to cultivate the resignation of metaphysical naturalism according to which the universe has by chance created man and will by chance destroy him and all that he cherishes. Neither do they foster the resignation of Stoicism according to which the teleology of reality, being essentially totalitarian, does not value the individual per se. For not only does each philosophy of the Way teach that eternal well-being is a reward for commitment to the ideals grounded in reality, they also teach that the individual's expectation of life after death has great existential significance in this life.

Of course, the philosophies of the Way do not offer identical teachings about life after death. The Buddhist teaching of *no-self* contrasts with the Vedantist teaching of the individual's ultimate realization of his pantheistic ontological unity with Brahman, while both differ from the Western theisms that include the pagan theism of Socrates and Plato and that assert the "eternal validity" of the individual. It is to be expected that views of reality as diverse as the nontheism of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism, the personalistic transcendent theisms of the West, the systematized Jewish neo-Platonist immanent theism of the *Zohar*, and the pantheism of Vedanta will not illumine in the same way the relations between the self and the physi-

cal body, the mode of being that follows death, and the roles of religious discipline as preparation for life after death.

What matters in this context, however, is that each of the philosophies of the Way sees the individual as everlastingly possessing intrinsic value. Thus the Vedantist believes that he is fundamentally an eternal part of Brahman. The Christian believes that he is "alive for evermore." Socrates at the moment of his martyrdom hoped for opportunity to converse with the great souls who lived before him. Gautama Buddha looked forward to death as permanent release from the bonds of the physical. Confucianism cultivated a closeness to the ancestors who dwell in heaven. The Taoist sage refused to teach those who were not yet ready for spiritual development because of his conviction that each person had opportunities for learning in future incarnations until the achievement of spiritual enlightenment ends the necessity for embodiment. The psalmist (23:6) expected to "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The Qur'an (7:158) declares that God has dominion over heaven as well as earth.

OPPOSED to the philosophies of the Way are the metaphysical skepticisms. The first Western metaphysical skeptics were the Greek sophists whose opposition to all nonrelativist interpretations of truth and value and to all religious and metaphysical inquiry was made clear by Plato.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Plato may be interpreted as having delineated the position of total metaphysical skepticism in the view of Thrasymachus who declared that "justice is the power of the physically strongest person."<sup>10</sup> This declaration is a complete rejection of the philosophies of the Way because in Plato's thought *justice* names the ideal of human spiritual development, is essential to ideal human relations within the state, and has a metaphysical ground. Thus in the *Republic* Plato may be interpreted as teaching that any view that makes value depend on the fiat of the person with the greatest physical strength by implication gives

9. This is particularly clear in Plato's "Theaetetus," and is, of course, a sustained major theme of the *Dialogue*.

10. *The Republic*, Book I.



the same status to truth. Novel forms of metaphysical skepticism have been dominant in twentieth-century American and British thought. Like all such positions their distinctiveness lies in their modes of challenging metaphysical inquiry. Thus logical empiricism declares that the language in which metaphysical positions are articulated is literally meaningless. Critical realism declares that under no circumstances could man achieve a successful mode of metaphysical inquiry. Instrumentalism and secular existentialism, each in its own way, declares that metaphysical conclusions have no existential import.<sup>11</sup>

The diverse views of man and reality may be arranged in a continuum, which the philosophies of the Way at one end and the views totally rejecting them at the other. The point on the continuum occupied by any one position is determined by its stand on the several beliefs shared by the philosophies of the Way. Hence any one position may be closer to the latter in some respect than in others. For example, Nietzsche's thought is akin to skepticism because he declares that it is the superman who chooses what others will accept as truth and as moral and spiritual ideal and that Western religions have erred in teaching that a world with objective laws and objective values is given to man. I suggest, however, that Nietzsche is not totally lacking in insight into the Way. For he also teaches that the superman will be compassionate and helpful toward others. Also, Stoicism, like the philosophies of the Way, declares there is an objective reality that may be known by man and that has an axiological orientation the individual finds spiritual fulfillment in serving. Unlike the philosophies of the Way, however, Stoicism sees the individual as serving an end concerning which he possesses no insight and also as valued only instrumentally rather than intrinsically

by the pantheistic whole that has produced him. The views expressed by Bertrand Russell in "A Free Man's Worship" are akin to the philosophies of the Way only in their implicit metaphysical realism. They clearly differ from the philosophies of the Way in ascribing no axiological orientation to reality. Because A. N. Whitehead makes harmony a category of his metaphysics, he is properly interpreted as giving an axiological orientation to reality. He differs from the philosophies of the Way, however, in that he denies altogether that the individual in any sense survives physical death. Both Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus are close to the metaphysical skeptics in their rejection of all metaphysical and religious convictions. Yet the thought of neither is identical with the extreme of Thrasymachus' skepticism. For both are free from the will to dominance of others which is the correlative of the total destruction of the I-Thou relation.

The work of Immanuel Kant is of paramount importance in this inquiry. By virtue of its metaphysical agnosticism it is akin to metaphysical skepticism. Yet Kant declares that necessarily we all live in a world that we see as spatial, temporal, and consisting of entities having properties and being causally interrelated. Thus Kant performs the tremendously important function of illumining the common sense or everyday world that necessarily each of us shares with all forms of life as well as with other human beings. In doing so it is no small gift that Kant has given to the Western philosophical community that sometimes fails to come to terms with the facts of its shared experiences in and dependence upon the common sense interpretation of the world. Further, Kant's thought is akin to the philosophies of the Way by virtue of his declaration that for the fulfillment of his spiritual nature man is obliged to postulate the reality of eternal life and of God as guarantor that eternity will bring reward for faithfulness to duty. The latter for Kant is faithfulness to the categorical imperative that commands "So act as to treat another person as an end and never as a means" and that is

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11. This is expressed in terms of existential thought. *Mutatis mutandis*, this also applies to Instrumentalism.

correlative to the fostering of the I-Thou relation.<sup>12</sup> Further, perhaps Kant's ethics with its emphasis on reason and duty may profitably be seen as concerned with the *de facto* difficulties the individual encounters when, on the one hand, he wishes to appropriate the I-Thou relation but, on the other hand, he finds that his nature, as Kierkegaard expressed it, remains committed to ulterior ends.

Two additional conclusions follow from the foregoing. First, each philosophy of the Way illumines according to its own perspective what is lacking in the interpretations of man and reality that lie outside the Way. For example, each philosophy of the Way illumines in a distinctive manner what is lacking in the life informed by a metaphysical agnosticism—that is, by the denial that we possess any insight into reality. Also, each illumines the existential import of the metaphysical naturalism asserting that reality is valuationally neutral and thus misses altogether that firm ground given to values only when they are seen as having roots in reality. Each illumines the fact that metaphysical naturalism misses the existential import for the individual who serves values believing that, however long it may take, the good he serves will ultimately triumph.

Yet a view lying outside the Way may be valuable by virtue of its concentration on and creative contribution to whatever truth concerning man and reality is of central importance to it. Such concentration and creativity may not have occurred within the philosophies of the Way because of their more extensive concerns. Thus by virtue of their concentration on the physical world, twentieth-century metaphysical naturalisms have provided novel, valuable philosophies of nature that are useful for creative work on the

part of pilgrims of the Way. Examples are the speculative metaphysical positions of Samuel Alexander and Alfred North Whitehead. Charles Hartshorne's metaphysical position is not a metaphysical naturalism, but by virtue of his limited theism and his rejection of personal immortality his view of reality is not one of the philosophies of the Way. Nonetheless, his work on the loci of creativity within nature cannot but enrich philosophies of nature worked out by pilgrims of the Way.<sup>13</sup>

FINALLY, perhaps most concern for ecumenical cooperation and most significant leadership therein will come from the pilgrims of the Way. Not only are they committed to the cultivation of respect for others and their beliefs, but they also have hope for the ultimate triumph of the ideals of the I-Thou relation. This brings us to the fact that among the philosophers of the Way there are two interpretations of how the individual is related to the values of the Way. On the one hand, there is the view that all insight into these values is a human achievement, the result of following a particular spiritual discipline. This view is shared by Confucianism, Taoism, Vendantism, Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism and by the pagan Greeks, Socrates and Plato. On the other hand, there is the view that insight into these values is a divine revelation, a view shared by Judaism, Christianity, Islám, Zoroastrianism, and the Bahá'í Faith.

The former view is summed up in Socrates' dictum, "All wrong doing is ignorance," which is a corollary of the view that, if the individual has achieved the intellectual and spiritual development by virtue of which he can discern these values, he is also possessed of the moral and spiritual power to act in terms of these values. In theory, at least, such an individual would know no temptation. His spirit-nature would have become commensurate with the demands of the metaphysically grounded values which he discerns and to which he gives assent. It also follows that the free will-determinism problem, which has

12. See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Thomas K. Abbott (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1949), pp. 70–72.

13. Charles Hartshorne, *Born to Sing* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973).

been a perennial concern of the Western philosophical community, is not intrinsic to classical Chinese, Indian, or Platonist views of man.<sup>14</sup> For on these views the comprehension of the values, the desire to appropriate them, and the ability to appropriate them are all one.

The free will-determinism problem is, however, intrinsic to the philosophies of the Way that have a divine revelation. For in each of these the fact of the axiological orientation is part of that revelation. These views offer their teaching concerning the moral law and values directly and democratically. Clearly an individual can be convinced of the soundness and importance of the revelation concerning these and yet find that his moral and spiritual capacities are not commensurate with the demands of the law and the values. A failure to keep the law one has accepted whether from inability or a momentary unwillingness is seen in Moses' disobedience to God; in John's "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"; and in the prayer with which the Qur'án begins: "to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us on the straight path. . . ."<sup>15</sup>

On whatever grounds, however, the pilgrims of the Way accept the ideal of cultivating the I-Thou relation, they share a distinctive approach to all ecumenical activity and, in fact, to all search for truth and goodness, whether in philosophy, science, religion, or

technology. For all the pilgrims of the Way have entered upon a particular path of life that fulfills their spiritual needs and talents.

Through their appropriation of its precepts, values, and disciplines, their insight into the teachings of their path increases. A corollary is that their intellects work with other aspects of their spirit, receiving from them data, insights, and convictions which the intellect cannot by itself supply and without which it cannot adequately function. By virtue of their commitment to and sustained experience with a particular philosophy of the Way, these individuals are provided with experience as well as with knowledge of values and beliefs concerning man and reality that are essential to the use of the intellect in responsible thinking about the particular perspective on man and reality. Thus Christian aspiration to remain faithful to Christ, Vedantist experience of oneness with Brahman, Zen Buddhist *prajñā*-intuition, and Taoist experience of the triumph of the Way—each of these offers valuable insight into and experience concerning both man and reality that cannot be supplied by the intellect alone. Needless to say, this interpretation of the roles of the intellect in all activities involves no insult to the intellect and does not foster an irrationalism or nonrationalism. Rather it is the view that ideally the intellect will in all things work harmoniously with other aspects of the personality, giving to them its own clarity and guidance and taking from them experience and commitment to ideals. The general acceptance of this ecumenism can but enrich our view of all humane endeavors. It will primarily be a gift derived from knowledge of the Way and offered to all by the pilgrims of the Way.

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14. See, for example, D. T. Suzuki, Erich Fromm, and Richard De Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 9.

15. Deut. 4:27; 1 John 2:1; and Qur'án 1:1.





# Early Journalistic Reactions To the Bahá'í Faith: 1845-1912

BY MARGARET DEAN-DEIBERT

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the Bahá'í dispensation the lives and teachings of the Central Figures of the Faith came to the attention of the reading public in Great Britain and North America through articles published in the newspapers and magazines of the day. Most of the early articles on the Bábí/Bahá'í Faith relied on two sources for information—the Comte de Gobineau and E. G. Browne. Browne's work also drew heavily from Gobineau at first, but he added more information through his own research and travel. Neither of these authors was a follower of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh; and their work, while often sympathetic, was also colored by political and cultural interpretation. Much of their information was gathered from political and religious enemies of the Faith; the resulting misinterpretation of much of the early history of the Bahá'í Faith echoes through the articles of other authors who relied on Gobineau and Browne for information. However, some of the accounts were presented as objectively and factually as was possible, given the information available to their authors. A few of the articles were passionate in their praise of the new religion. Others were just as passionate in their denunciation of it.

This article is concerned with coverage of the Bahá'í Faith in popular American and British magazines between the years 1845 and 1912. The Faith was also discussed in newspapers of the time, sometimes in detail. An example is the coverage of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States in Palo Alto, California, newspaper, which reported in detail the Master's visit to Stanford and ran full texts of His talks at the university and at the church in town. Newspapers sometimes quoted from magazines, and the magazine articles sometimes quoted from newspapers. Except for quotations from newspapers found in magazine articles this discussion is limited to articles published in popular magazines.

The earliest mention of the Bahá'í Faith in an English language periodical of which I am aware is an article entitled "Mahometan Schism" in the *Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, Etc.* for Saturday, November 15, 1845, p. 757. It was reprinted from a newspaper article entitled "Persia" printed in the *London Times* on November 1, 1845; it has been discussed in articles by Robert Cadwalader and Denis MacEoin.<sup>1</sup>

In 1865 the Comte de Gobineau's important work *Les religions et les philosophies dans L'Asie Centrale* was published in Paris. It was primarily through the influence of this book that the life and mission of the Báb and the sufferings of his followers became known in Europe. Many of the articles

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1. Robert Cadwalader, "'Persia': An Early Mention of the Báb," *World Order*, 11, No. 2 (Winter 1976-77), 30-34. Denis MacEoin, "Oriental Scholarship and the Bahá'í Faith," *World Order*, 8, No. 4 (Summer 1974), 9-21.

that appeared in English periodicals between the mid-1860s and the early 1890s relied heavily on this work for their information about the Bábí religion.

James T. Bixby wrote a short article in 1866 entitled "A New Religion," in which he gave a history, inaccurate in many ways, of the Bábí religion.<sup>2</sup> His source of information was an article concerning the work of Gobineau in a French journal. He also referred briefly to Ernest Renan's *Les Apôtres*. Bixby mentioned some of the teachings of the Báb and expressed the opinion that Babism was "more in harmony with the subtle and imaginative genius of the Persian people than the Shiite Mohammedanism" (p. 795).

A longer and more detailed article entitled the "Bab and Babism", by E. P. Evans, was published in the January 1869 issue of the magazine *Hours at Home* (pp. 210-222). The author found it remarkable that the Faith drew followers "not merely from the poor and ignorant populace but chiefly from the highest and most intelligent classes of society, priests, philosophers, nobles, men of wealth and education; and that, nevertheless, Christendom should have remained almost as ignorant of this great event as if it had taken place in the moon or among the inhabitants of another planet" (p. 210). Evans further stated that the Bábí Faith had, by 1869, "passed through all the phases of the other great historic religions" and was "entitled henceforth to a place by the side of them" (p. 210). The article gave a reasonably sympathetic, albeit distorted, view of the origins and early history of the Bábí Faith. The author cited as his sources the works of Gobineau, Mirza Kazem Beg, and Michel Nicolas. It was recently pointed out to me by a Bahá'í friend and scholar that many of the Christian authors who wrote of the Bábí Faith in a favorable or sympathetic tone during this period considered it to be more "Western" in its teachings than Islám and, therefore, helpful in the preparation of the "oriental mind" for the acceptance of Christianity. Evans presented this idea in the conclusion of his article: "There can be no doubt that its [Bábism's] development is due in some measure to the influence of European thought on the Eastern mind, a fresh breeze from the West breaking the Dead Sea of Oriental quietism into billows. It is certainly an interesting problem presenting itself for solution, an important factor that must be henceforth taken into account in the work of civilizing and Christianizing Asia" (p. 222).

In August of 1869 there appeared in *Contemporary Review* the first part of a two-part article entitled "The Bab and Babeism" by Robert K. Arbuthnot (Vol. 11, pp. 581-601). Arbuthnot's sources were the works of Gobineau and Mirza Kazem Beg. The article dealt primarily with the history of the Bábí Faith. The second part of the article was published in October of the same year (Vol. 12, pp. 245-66). Arbuthnot dwelt at length on the sieges at Fort Tabarsi and Zanján, the heroism of the Bábí martyrs, and the execution of the Báb. The Teachings of the Báb were presented as a confusing and unoriginal blend of Oriental mysticism and numerology, and "Western" concepts of the elevation of women and the importance of the family. Although he did not speak of the Bábí Faith as a bridge to the Christianizing of the Islamic peoples, he did see it as a potential force for bringing the East and West into closer communication: "there is no doubt that if Babeism ever became dominant it

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2. James T. Bixby, "A New Religion," *Nation*, 2 (June 22, 1866), 793-95.



would change the whole state of society. The form and expression of the belief are framed to suit the Eastern mind, but the spirit which underlies it is of a very different temper from that which has prevailed in the Mohammedan empire for so many centuries, and would bring the nations of the East into a closer relation with the spirit of Western civilization and Christianity" (p. 266).

Mary F. Wilson's "The Story of the Bab" was published in *Contemporary Review* in December 1885 (pp. 809–29) and republished in *Littell's Living Age*, January 16, 1886 (pp. 151–63). Her source was Gobineau, the tone of her article, heroic. She presented the history of the early years of the Bábí Faith as a drama of faith and courage, and reflected in her article the emotion that Gobineau's work inspired in so many of his European readers. Wilson described Gobineau's book as presenting "a picture of steadfast adherence to truth (as they held it), of self-denial, of joyful constancy in the face of bitterest suffering, torture and death, as vivid and touching as any that are found in the records of the heroic days of old" (p. 808). Heroism aside, Wilson, like other nineteenth-century Christian writers, ascribed the Báb's teachings regarding the elevation of women and tenderness to children to his adoption of some Western ideals and Christian principles. Regarding the Báb's teachings she wrote: "Some of these innovations were probably the result of his study of European books. But the considerate kindness of all his rules for women, and his invariable tenderness in everything that concerned children, must have had a deeper source. One can hardly fail to see that in these respects he had imbibed something of the spirit of the Gospel; and the regret arises irresistibly, that where he had seen and appreciated so much, he had not grasped the whole" (p. 811). Generally, Wilson took Gobineau's history and recast it in the style of historical fiction. She occasionally drew parallels between the suffering of the Báb and his followers and the suffering of the Christ and his followers, but she was careful to stress that the parallel was with respect to the events only. In commenting on the effect of the martyrdom of the Bábís to the spread of the Bábí Faith, she said toward the end of the article: "Whatever may be the errors and delusions of the system, it has been true in respect to it, as to a purer and more enlightened faith, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church" (pp. 828–29).

Gobineau's book inspired the young orientalist Edward Granville Browne to turn his attention to the Bábí religion, and to write a number of books and articles about the Faith. He published several scholarly articles about Bábí history and Teachings in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.<sup>3</sup> Browne's

3. Edward Granville Browne, "The Bábís of Persia. I. Sketch of Their History, and Personal Experiences Amongst Them," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 21 (July 1889), 485–526; Edward Granville Browne, "The Bábís of Persia. II. Their Literature and Doctrines," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 21 (Oct. 1889), 881–1009; E. G. Browne, "Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí Manuscripts," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24 (July and October 1892), 433–99, 637–710; Edward G. Browne, "Some Remarks on the Bábí Texts Edited by Baron Victor Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint-Petersbourg," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24 (1892), 259–335; Edward G. Browne, "Personal Reminiscences of the Bábí Insurrection at Zanjan in 1850, written in Persian by

interest in the Bahá'í Faith and the circumstances surrounding his researches into the Faith are well documented in H. M. Balyuzi's excellent book.<sup>4</sup> Browne's scholarly works will not be treated here as this article is confined to more popular journals. His books that deal with the Faith include the translation of *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb*, published in 1891; *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 1893; the translation of *The Táríkh-i-Jadíd or New History of Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad the Báb*, 1893; his edition of the *Kitáb-i-Nuqtatu'l-Káf*, 1910; and *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, 1918. The reviews of Browne's works that appeared in various magazines are an interesting source of information concerning public response to the Faith, as well as to the work of Browne as an author.

BROWNE's translation of *A Traveller's Narrative* was reviewed in the *Spectator* of April 23, 1892 (pp. 560–61). The reviewer also mentioned Browne's article "The Babis of Persia" (*JRAS*, Vol. XXI) as a source of information. The author viewed the Báb, Mírzá Yaḥyá, and Bahá'u'lláh as "eager social reformers, possessed with the modern spirit, and anxious above all things to burst the trammels of a stationary civilisation" (p. 560). He briefly described the historical origin of the Bábí Faith and said that the Báb's Teachings "appealed most strongly to those, and they are numerous in Persia, who were filled with longings for freedom from iron dogma, and for a more humane social order" (p. 560). He said the Báb taught "a dreamy humanitarian liberalism which delighted his disciples and shocked the orthodox teachers" (p. 560). The review quoted a portion of Bahá'u'lláh's letter to the Pope (p. 561) and described Browne's meeting with Bahá'u'lláh by quoting the famous passage from the introduction that begins "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it" (p. 561). The reviewer stated that, although Browne felt that Bábism may become one of the great religions of the world, in his opinion the Faith was "an essentially transitional and transitory phase of belief,—a variety of Sufism with a strong practical bias" (p. 561).

A second reviewer of *A Traveller's Narrative* also quoted extensively from Browne's abovementioned description of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as his description of Mírzá Yaḥyá.<sup>5</sup> In describing the book itself this reviewer stated: "From a literary point of view the work merits attention and examination, and is the evident outcome of a high order of Oriental scholarship" (p. 691).

Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians* was an account of his travels in Persia and was published in 1893. In two reviews of the book only passing mention was made of Browne's treatment of the Bábí Faith.<sup>6</sup> The review of the book in *The Nation*, on the contrary (April 26, 1894, pp. 317–18), de-

Āqā 'Abdu'l-Aḥad-i-Zanjānī, and translated into English," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 29 (Oct. 1897), 761–827.

4. H. M. Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, (London: George Ronald, 1970).

5. Rev. of "A Traveller's Narrative Written To Illustrate the Episode of the Báb," by Edward G. Browne, *Athenaeum*, 99 (May 28, 1892), 690–91.

6. Rev. of "A Year amongst the Persians," by Edward G. Browne, *Critic*, 24 (n.s. 21) (Jan. 13, 1894), 16. Rev. of "A Year among the Persians," by Edward G. Browne, *Athenaeum*, 103 (Jan. 20, 1894), 76–78.

voted the better part of a paragraph to the Bábí Faith, stating that it represented "a reaction against the degeneracy of Persian Mohammedanism. . . ." The reviewer described the disciples of the Báb as exhibiting "splendid courage" and "purity of life," and found it curious that "the great majority of them regard the Bab himself . . . as only a John the Baptist, while they accept as their real lord his disciple Beha, who lives at Acre in Syria" (p. 317). A fourth review of *A Year Amongst the Persians* appeared in the *Spectator*; it was biting in its criticism of Browne's writing style and various details of the work.<sup>7</sup> The only reference to Browne's chapters on the Bábí Faith followed a criticism of Browne for speaking harshly of the Sháh. Apparently Browne had condemned the Sháh for the persecution of the Bábís after the abortive attempt on the Sháh's life by some disturbed followers of the Báb. The reviewer speculated: "An extraordinary infatuation for the Babis, a sect of Islam who sorely tried the Shah's patience by endeavouring to assassinate him, appears to be the cause of the invective" (p. 560).

In 1893 Browne published *The Tárikh-i-Jadid or New History of Mirzá 'Alí Muḥammad the Báb*. A brief review of that work appeared in *The Spectator*, August 11, 1894 (p. 185), and made the following comment regarding the Bábí Faith: "This movement, to make a very rough comparison indeed, may be said to have been somewhat like the revolt of Buddhism in India, with an element, it might be said, of the Gnostic variations on Christianity" (p. 185).

Several Western authors wrote about the Bahá'í Faith between the late 1890s and the years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visits to Europe and the United States, 1911-13. J. D. Rees and James T. Bixby both wrote general informational articles about the Faith in the late 1890s using a format similar to a number of the historical articles that had been written earlier.<sup>8</sup> The history of the Bábí Faith was discussed, the persecutions of the Babis were noted and remarked upon, the Teachings of the Báb were described, and speculations were offered regarding the future of the Faith. The sources used were primarily Gobineau and Browne.

E. Denison Ross, Professor of Persian in University College, London, wrote an article entitled "Babism," which appeared in the *North American Review* in April 1901 (pp. 606-22). It contained a well-written account of the origin and history of the Bábí Faith. Ross dwelt on the dispute between the 'Azalís and the Bahá'ís and spoke of the dwindling number of 'Azalís. He further suggested that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh be called something other than Bábís. "It would, in reality, be more accurate to speak of the vast Bābi community which looks to Acre for guidance as Behaís rather than as Bābis; for, in many respects, their beliefs bear a relation to the teaching of the Bāb very similar to that of Christianity to the Old Testament; for the Revelation of Beha practically abrogated that of the Bab" (p. 619). In referring to the Bábí

7. "Mr. Browne in Persia," rev. of "A Year amongst the Persians," by E. G. Browne, *Spectator*, 72 (April 28, 1894), 559-60.

8. J. D. Rees, "The Bab and Babism," *Nineteenth Century*, 40 (July 1896), 56-66. Reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, 210 (Aug. 22, 1896), 451-58. James T. Bixby, "Babism and the Bab," *New World*, 6 (Dec. 1897), 722-50.

(Bahá'í) Faith in non-Muslim countries, Ross said its spread was confined to the United States where there were perhaps three thousand followers.

BEFORE the turn of the century the articles on the Bábí Faith in Western magazines had been fairly objective in their treatment of the Faith, within the limits of the information sources most generally used—namely, Gobineau and Browne. After 1901 articles began to appear that attacked the Faith in one way or another. The authors were often Christian clergymen who seemed to feel that the Bábí Faith was in some way a threat to Christianity. Some of the authors in this category were Henry Harris Jessup, Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky, and Samuel G. Wilson.

Earlier it was mentioned that some Western writers, such as E. P. Evans in 1869, considered the Bábí Faith a promising stepping-stone in the preparation of the Eastern mind for the acceptance of Christianity. Henry Harris Jessup's article "Babism and the Babites" opens with the realization that this was not the case.<sup>9</sup> "Ever since the first Babite reform movement in Persia in 1845, the Christian world has hoped that some of its liberal tenets might lead the Persian people to Christianity. But thus far the hope has not been realized" (p. 771). Jessup then proceeded to give a highly inaccurate account of Bábí history and teachings. A paragraph of his account is given here as a vivid example of the author's tone and direction:

Mirza Ali Mohammed appeared in Shiraz in 1845, a pupil of Sheik Ahmed Zein ed Din, who taught a mixture of Sufism, mystic philosophy, and Moslem Shi'ite law, and said that the absent Mahdi, now in a spiritual world called Jabalka and Jabersa, would soon appear, and that he was the Bab or Door of the Mahdi. He then made up a system composed of Moslem, Nasairiyeh, Jewish, and heathen doctrines, and then claimed to be Bab ed Din, and afterward the Nukta or Center and Creator of truth, and then that he was Deity personified; then that he was the prophet Mohammed, and produced a new book called the Beyān, which is the Babite Bible, in twenty thousand verses, Arabic and Persian. Complaint was made of its bad grammar, and that this is a sign of imperfection. He explained the ungrammatical Arabic by the fact that the words and letters rebelled and sinned in a previous world, then transmigrated to this world, and, as a punishment for sin in a previous existence, were put under grammatical rules; but he in mercy forgave all sinners, even to the letters of the alphabet, and released them, and now they can go as they please! (p. 771)

Jessup continued the article in this vein with regard to the teachings, and also mentioned Dr. Ibrahim Khayru'lláh and his split with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The author described a meeting with 'Abdul-Bahá in Haifa and concluded that, though 'Abdu'l-Baha was a good enough man, he pretended to be both Muslim and Christian, accepting both, denying neither. "He prays with the Moslems, 'There is no God but God', and expounds the Gospels as an incarnation of the Son of God" (p. 775). His concluding paragraph reflected anger that the teaching of the Bahá'í Faith was taking place in America:

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9. Henry Harris Jessup, "Babism and the Babites," *Missionary Review of the World*, 25 (Oct. 1902), 771-75. Condensed from *Outlook*, 68 (June 22, 1901), 451-56.



It is difficult to regard without indignation the Babite proselytism now being carried on in the United States. One American woman who passed through Beirut recently, en route for the Abbas Effendi shrine, stated that she was at first agnostic and found that a failure; then she tried theosophy, and found that too thin; then she tried Christian Science and obtained a diploma authorizing her to heal the sick and raise the dead, and found that a sham, and now she was on her way to see what Abbas Effendi had to offer! Surely that woman has found out what it is to feed on ashes. (p. 775)

One of the most vituperative attacks on the Bahá'í Faith published in a Western magazine surely must be Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky's "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America: The Origin, History, Character, and Esoteric Doctrines of the Truth-Knowers."<sup>10</sup> Vatralsky based much of his article on the questionable teaching methods used by Ibrahim Khayru'lláh in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The author stated: "of all the strange cults, oriental vagaries, theosophic maunderings, and morbid hallucinations that have of late years invaded this country, perhaps the most curious, and certainly the most pernicious, is that of the Babists, a secret Mohammedan sect which I discovered some time ago in Wisconsin, and since then in Chicago, under the name of 'Truth-Knowers'" (p. 58). It is not necessary here to go into detail about the article, but a few of Vatralsky's concerns were interesting. He called the Bábí Faith "Mohammedan Gnosticism" and described it as a secret sect of Islám. Islám itself he viewed in a very negative light as the following quotation indicates: "It [Islám] is a hybrid religion, strongly influenced by Jewish and Christian elements, gathered and garbled by the illiterate Arabian from hearsay, and, therefore, misconceived, misstated, and misapplied" (p. 59). Bahá'u'lláh was portrayed as a shrewd and clever usurper of the Báb's authority who used his position to amass great wealth and power, and the Bábís or "Truth-Knowers" were termed "a more pernicious cult than Mormonism" (p. 73). Vatralsky's intent appears to have been to warn Christians of this dangerous and secretive cult that was growing in the United States.

The Reverend S. G. Wilson, who was to write much against the Bábí Faith, published a two-part article in 1904 entitled "Babism: A Failure."<sup>11</sup> He established the tone of the series in the following manner:

Babism, or Bahaism, proclaims itself a new revelation, and has been heralded by some as a great reform. What has it revealed either of truth or of law? What has it proposed or accomplished in the way of reform? An examination of Babism will show that neither as a revelation nor as a reform does it deserve a high place among the world's religions. (p. 91)

Wilson then went on to describe the Bábí Faith as a chaotic set of doctrines having for its leaders crafty and power-hungry men. In this and later writings he expended a great deal of energy in attacking and denying the validity of the Bábí Faith, for he considered it to be a dangerous development that needed

10. Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky, "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America: The Origin, History, Character, and Esoteric Doctrines of the Truth-Knowers," *American Journal of Theology*, 6 (January 1902), 57-78.

11. S. G. Wilson, "Babism: A Failure—I," *Missionary Review of the World*, 27 (Feb. 1904), 91-97; S. G. Wilson, "Babism: A Failure—II," *Missionary Review World*, 27 (Mar. 1904), 207-11.

to be halted before it exerted further influence.

THE EVENT that precipitated the greatest amount of attention to the Bahá'í Faith on the part of Western journalists was the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas to Europe and the United States, from August, 1911 to June 1913. Prior to his speaking tour few magazine articles in the West spoke of the Bahá'í Faith, although, as mentioned before, E. Denison Ross suggested the use of the term as early as 1901.<sup>12</sup> The name of Bahá'u'lláh had been mentioned in various articles before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey to the West, but the followers were more often called Bábís (Babees, Babists, Babites) than Bahá'ís (Beha'is, Behaiists).

In March 1912 an article by Harrold Johnson entitled "Bahaism: The Birth of a World Religion" was published in *Contemporary Review* (Vol. 101, pp. 391-401). It dealt favorably with the Bahá'í Faith, treating its history and teachings and stressing the universal character of the religion. Although it was not about 'Abdu'l-Baha or his recent visit to Europe, it was significant in that it was directly followed by a brief article by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself entitled "A Short Summary of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah" (Vol. 101, pp. 401-02). In the article, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sketched some of Bahá'u'lláh's major Teachings, mentioned the suffering that Bahá'u'lláh underwent to bring these Teachings to mankind, and explained that it was the desire of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh to put these Teachings into practice for the betterment of humanity.

Constance E. Maud's article ("Abdul Baha") based on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's first visit to England was published in *Fortnightly Review*, April 1, 1912, pp. 707-15. In the account she briefly described the history of the Faith and then related the teachings of the Faith as given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His talks. She included some interesting descriptions of the many visitors received by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and some of His advice to them. Toward the beginning of the article, Maud stated:

Rudyard Kipling, voicing the feeling of most of his countrymen, sang:  
 "East is East and West is West,  
 and never the twain shall meet."

Abbas Effendi . . . has come to us with another song:

"East and West, North and South, men and women, all must join hands in one great brotherhood, uniting their voices in prayer to the Abba (*sic*) Father, before the human race can rise to the divine heights and grow to the perfect stature to which the All-Father has destined it." (p. 707)

A short untitled article by Irene Earle appeared in *The Survey*, April 27, 1912 (pp. 178-79), in which the author mentioned that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had recently arrived in America. She mentioned the origin of the Faith and claimed

12. An exception is Jean Masson's article "The Baha'i Revelation: Its Western Advance," *American Review of Reviews*, 39 (Feb. 1909), 214-16, an article written on the occasion of the consecration of the site for a Bahá'í temple on the outskirts of Chicago. Also, in an article written after meeting with and interviewing 'Abdu'l-Baha in Palestine (E. S. Stevens, "Abbas Effendi: His Personality, Work, and Followers," *Fortnightly Review*, 95 (June 1911), 1067-84), E. S. Stevens speaks of "the Babi movement, or the Bahai movement, as it is now almost universally called" (p. 1068).

its adherents to number three million. The aim of the Faith was said to be "to furnish to the world a personal leader and a framework for unified action which shall express the best in all systems of reform and antagonize none" (p. 179). The author further stated that Bahá'ís are "back of or within every progressive movement" in Persia and that the "Bahai movement is a leavening movement, not an organization. Baha'is by thousands, unlabelled, are pushing the various peace organizations of different countries" (p. 179). She closed by stating that educated persons in Europe who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá "marvel at his wisdom and common-sense knowledge of world conditions, questioning how he can meet them on their own level when he has been a political prisoner for forty years" (p. 179).

The *Literary Digest* published an article in their "Personal Glimpses" column entitled "A Prophet From the East," May 4, 1912, pp. 955-57. Its opening paragraph is worthy of quotation since it expressed the position and tone of a number of magazine and newspaper articles of this period:

The exposure of fake leaders of Oriental cults in this country has had the effect of making most of us suspicious of a majority of the founders and advocates of new sects with extravagant claims, but it is not a sufficient reason for condemning without a hearing all religious thinkers who come to us from the Far East. We are sure beforehand that what even the greatest of them tell us is not going to have an alarming effect upon the hold of Christianity, and we are, as a rule, willing to listen to what they have to say, provided their personal integrity is above reproach and their followings at home are large enough to command attention; which fact accounts for the friendly welcome given Abbas Effendi, the prophet of Bahaism, who recently came to this country to lecture in many of the principal cities. (p. 955)

The article quoted extensively from an editorial in the *Detroit Free Press* regarding the history of the Faith and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States. It concluded (still quoting from the *Detroit Free Press*) that it "is not necessary to accept Abbas Effendi as a veritable prophet, or to fall at his feet in adoration, in order to recognize in him one of the great religious thinkers and teachers of the time" (p. 957).

Earlier in the same article the 1866 and 1897 articles of James T. Bixby were mentioned. Forty-six years after his first article, Bixby wrote yet another article entitled "What is Behaism" that was published in the *North American Review* for June 1912, pp. 833-46. Bixby called 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival "One of the recent noteworthy events in the religious and philanthropic world. . . ." (p. 833). He met 'Abdu'l-Bahá and described him as follows: "Abbas has impressed me as a man of great mental ability, tact and persuasive power; friendly in disposition, affable in his manners, and amiable and progressive in his spirit. . . . Moreover, he has practically exemplified these principles in his own pacific conduct and charitable activities" (p. 834). Bixby went on to give an inaccurate history of the Faith from the early days of the Báb and dwelt at length on the conflict between Bahá'u'lláh and Subḥ-i-'Azal. It is noteworthy that Bixby appears to have been far more interested in and attracted to the personality and history of the Báb than those of Bahá'u'lláh and regarded Bahá'u'lláh as a usurper of the authority of the Báb and the position of Subḥ-i-'Azal as the leader of the Bábís. He called the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh "Neo-Babi

doctrines" (p. 839) and described His death as follows: "In the year 1892, at the age of seventy-five, however, his supreme divinity failed any longer to protect Beha against the attacks of fleshly maladies, and, like any other mortal, he paid the usual debt to Nature" (p. 840). Bixby spoke of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with dignity and respect but gave a garbled and inaccurate account of the Teachings of the Faith in his article. He concluded by speculating on the future of the Bahá'í Faith. Bixby said that if the Bahá'ís could combine the zeal and unhesitating faith of the Bábís with a practical prudence that the Bábís did not exhibit they might go far. However, he felt that the Bahá'í Faith had little future in Europe and America, where, "if religion survive at all, it will continue to reign under that sign of the cross above which Constantine read the inspiring motto, 'In this symbol conquer'" (p. 846).

An article entitled "The Universal Gospel that Abdul Baha Brings Us" was published in *Current Literature*, June 1912, pp. 676-78. It described 'Abdu'l-Bahá as "the pioneer of an eclectic gospel" (p. 676). The article emphasized the Bahá'í teachings of unity of religion and world peace and quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's summary of His message to America, which was given in response to a question from a *New York Times* reporter. The article then quoted appreciations of the Faith from the *Portland Oregonian* and the *Boston Congregationalist*, as well as an objection raised in the *New York Churchman* that 'Abdu'l-Bahá should not be invited to speak in a Christian church since he is not a Christian. The article quoted further objections to the Bahá'í Faith but concluded that as long as the Faith teaches universal peace, universal education, and universal brotherhood its influence should not be feared. A large photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was included in the article.

Numerous other magazine articles were published during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the West, articles with such titles as "Will Bahaism Unite All Religious Faiths?"<sup>13</sup>; "Bahai Movement"<sup>14</sup>; "Can There Be a Universal Religion"<sup>15</sup>; "A Modern Prophet"<sup>16</sup>; "The Persian Prophet"<sup>17</sup>; and "A Ray From the East: Bahaism, A World-Religion."<sup>18</sup>

On September 12, 1912, the *Independent* (pp. 606-09) published an article entitled "America and World Peace," by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas. In it 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded to questions through an interpreter and explained: "I am here in this country making an appeal on behalf of universal peace, unity, love and brotherhood" (p. 606). He spoke of the unity of religion, the equality of men and women, and the need for world peace. After the formal questions, the article included a section with the heading "Some Sayings of Abdul Baha" and quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá on various topics. The concluding quotation stated: "To

13. "Will Bahaism Unite All Religious Faiths?" *Review of Reviews*, 45 (June 1912), 748-50.

14. "Bahai Movement," *Outlook*, 101 (June 15, 1912), 326-27.

15. "Can There Be a Universal Religion" *World's Work*, 24 (July 1912), 273.

16. Elbert Hubbard, "A Modern Prophet," *Hearst's Magazine*, 22 (July 1912), 49-51.

17. "The Persian Prophet," *Independent*, 73 (July 18, 1912), 159-60. (author not named)

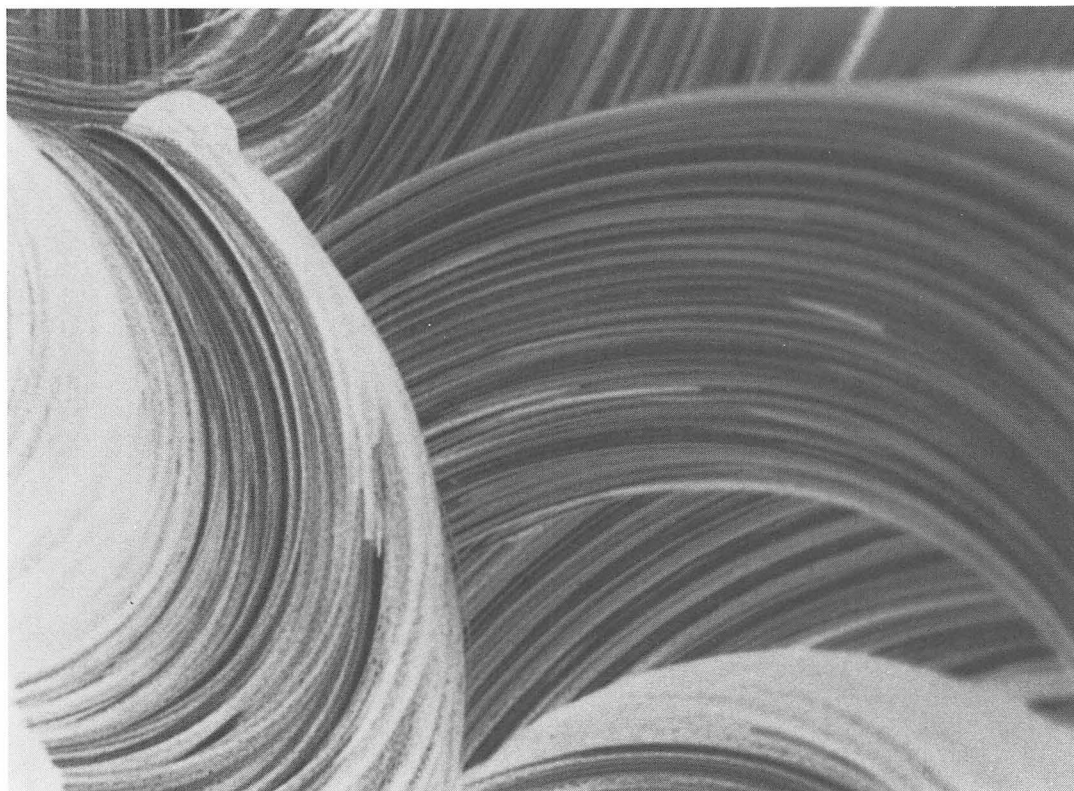
18. C. Johnston, "A Ray from the East: Bahaism, A World-Religion," *Harper's Weekly*, 56 (July 20, 1912), 9.



be a Bahai simply means to love all the world, to love humanity and try to save it; to work for the universal peace and the universal brotherhood" (p. 609).

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, universal in its message and widespread in its acceptance, began in nineteenth-century Persia and emerged as an independent religion from the cultural matrix of Islám. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that many of the early Western writers considered it to be a reform movement within Islám. 'A reaction against the degeneracy of Persian Mohammedanism'; "a reformed Muhammadanism of a pronounced adventist and theophanic type"; "a variety of Sufism with a strong practical bias"; "Mohammedan Gnosticism"—these descriptions of the Bahá'í Faith are only a few from the articles we have examined. Besides being considered a sect of Islám, the Bahá'í Faith has also been described in the popular press of this period as Nihilism, heresy, Occultism, "a dreamy humanitarian liberalism," and "somewhat like the revolt of Buddhism in India, with an element . . . of the Gnostic variations on Christianity."

With the vast improvements in communication during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, information (as well as misinformation) has been available to people far removed from the physical and cultural cradle of the Bahá'í Faith almost from its inception. Popular documentation provides the student of religion with a fascinating opportunity to study the public impact of this new revelation and to examine the changing perceptions of the Faith held by both the casual observer and various religious leaders over the years.



# Juliet Remembers Gibran

AS TOLD TO MARZIEH GAIL

On Saturday, December 8, 1956, the *Paris Herald* reported that "Miss Julia (*sic*) H. Thompson, a portrait painter for nearly half a century, who painted such notables as President Woodrow Wilson and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, died Tuesday." Some of us, then living as Bahá'í pioneers in Salzburg, Austria, learned in this way of Juliet's passing, at home in New York.

Juliet, a Virginian by birth, was related to Edward Fitzgerald, translator of *The Rubáiyát*. Her father, Ambrose White Thompson, was a close friend of Lincoln. Both a serious artist and a great beauty, Juliet was well known in Washington society and was listed in the Social Register, although, as she pointed out, as a junior.

For many years Juliet and Daisy Pumphelly Smythe, also an artist, shared a house in Greenwich Village, at 48 West 10th Street. They made their home a famous gathering place for people of many races and religions; and visits there, and fireside meetings, were almost continual. They especially welcomed members of the black race, often quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words that unless America healed black-white tensions her streets would run with blood. Juliet's friend and companion, Helen James, a black woman, also shared the

house. So close did Juliet feel to the black race that, shortly before her death, she asked that her funeral cortège be led through Harlem, and this was done.

Many guests stayed there at "48," some for days or weeks. At one time Dimitri Marianoff, the former son-in-law of Albert Einstein, was writing a Bahá'í book on the third floor, Juliet herself was revising her "I, Mary Magdalen" (a story inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Whom she visited, as told in her Diary, in the Holy Land, Switzerland, and New York City) on the floor below, while I was in the basement sitting room, finishing "Persia and the Victorians."

Every room of the old house had been blessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Juliet said that He particularly approved of her studio-room. He said it was eclectic—part Eastern, part Western, and that He would like to build a similar one. In a corner of the downstairs living room, with a cord across it, stood the fragile antique arm chair in which He used to sit.

It was on April 6, 1943, in her studio-room, upstairs at the front of the house, that Juliet shared with me and a few other guests, these memories of Kahlil Gibran.

Marzieh Gail

HE lived across the street from here," said Juliet Thompson, "at 51 West 10th. He was neither poor nor rich—in between. Worked on an Arab newspaper; free to paint and write.<sup>1</sup> His health was all right in the early years. He was terribly sad in the later years, because of cancer. He died at

forty-nine. He knew his life was ending too soon.

"His drawings were more beautiful than his paintings. These were very misty, lost things—mysterious and lost. Very poetic.

"A Syrian brought him to see me—can't even remember his name. Kahlil always said I was his first friend in New York. We became very, very great friends, and all of his books—*The Madman*, *The Forerunner*, *The Son of Man*, *The Prophet*—I heard in manu-

1. For more data on the life of Gibran see recent publications.

script. He always gave me his books. I liked *The Prophet* best. I don't believe that there was any connection between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and *The Prophet*. But he told me that when he wrote *The Son of Man* he thought of 'Abdu'l-Bahá all through. He said that he was going to write another book with 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the center and all the contemporaries of 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaking. He died before he wrote it. He told me definitely that *The Son of Man* was influenced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"He wrote his books in the studio across the street. Then he would call me up and say come over and hear a chapter.

"He was from an old Syrian family. His grandfather was one of the Bishops. I think he always remained a Greek Christian.

"I've seen Armenians and Syrians kiss his hand and call him Master. It was very bad for Kahlil. He had hundreds of followers. He kept that place closed to all except his intimate friends and his work.

"He was in love with a friend of mine—but he just loved me, and I loved him—but it wasn't that kind of love. He just wasn't a lover. He wasn't that kind of a man.

"He had a high, delicate voice and an almost shyly modest manner, until he came out with something thundering. I don't know how to describe him except to say he was the spitting image of Charlie Chaplin. I used to tell him so. It made him frightfully mad.

"How Gibran got in touch with the Bahá'í

Cause: I'll just frankly tell you the story, just as it was. I hastened to tell him; he listened. He got hold of some of the Arabic of Bahá'u'lláh. He said it was the most stupendous literature that ever was written, and that He even coined words. That there was no Arabic that even touched the Arabic of Bahá'u'lláh.

"And then Kahlil, "The Master," got a following. He told me that he belonged to the Illuminati in Persia. He would rise up and say, What do we need a Manifestation of God for? Each one of us can come into direct contact with God. I am in direct contact with God.

"I wouldn't say anything. I'd just let him talk.

"He wore American business clothes. Had lots of black hair, wavy.

"Time passed. I told him the Master was coming. He asked me if I would request the Master to sit for him. The Master gave him one hour at 6:30 one morning. He made an outstanding head. It doesn't look like the Master—very faint likeness. Great power through the shoulders. A great radiance in the face. It's not a portrait of the Master, but it's the work of a great artist. I do consider him a great artist.<sup>2</sup>

"He was very modest and retiring in his personal life. He'd never met the Master before, and that began his friendship. He simply adored the Master. He was with Him whenever he could be. He would come over here to this house (48 West 10th) to see the Master. In Boston, he was often with the Master. All that's sort of blurred because it's so long ago. He told me two stories that I thought priceless: One day when he was driving with the Master in Boston, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'Why do they build their houses with flat roofs?' Kahlil didn't answer for a moment, and then the Master answered Himself: 'Because they themselves are domeless.' Another time he was with the Master when two women came in. They were women of fashion, and they asked trifling questions. One of them wanted to know whether she was going to be married again. The Master was pacing the floor. Drawing in His breath,

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2. Barbara Young, in *This Man from Lebanon: A Study of Kahlil Gibran* (New York: Knopf, 1945), p. 68, has written: "In his later years he liked to talk about the years in Paris and the early years in New York, of his first studio, which he called 'my little cage,' and then the spacious one, higher up in the building, a great room where he felt a new freedom, where he said, 'I can spread my wings.'

"It was in this studio that the drawing was made of the revered Abdul Baha in 1912. The saintly man had indicated that seven in the morning was the hour at which we would consent to sit for his portrait. Telling about it, Gibran said, 'I remained awake all night, for I knew I should never have an eye or a hand to work with if I took my sleep.'"



expelling it, His eyes turning from side to side. When they left, 'Gilded dirt!' He said.

"The Master went away and Kahlil settled down into writing his books. But he often talked of Him, most sympathetically and most lovingly. But the only thing was, He couldn't accept an intermediary for himself. He wanted his direct contact.<sup>3</sup>

"Then one night, years afterward, the Master's motion picture was going to be shown at the Bahá'í Center. . . . He sat beside me on the front row and he saw the Master come to life again for him in that picture. And he began to sob. We had asked him to speak a few words that night. When the time came for him to speak, he controlled himself and jumped up on the platform and then, my dear, still weeping before us all he said: 'I declare that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Manifestation of God for this day!' Of course he got it wrong—but. . . .<sup>4</sup> He was weeping and he didn't say anything more. He got down and he sat beside me, and he kept on sobbing and sobbing and sobbing. Seeing the picture—it brought it all back. He took my two hands and said, 'You have opened for me a door tonight.' Then he fled the hall.

"I never heard anything about it again. He never referred to it again.

"Poor Kahlil! The end isn't so good. I was away. When I came back he was very sick. He asked me if I wouldn't come every day to see him. He was in bed. These were his last days. I want to give you all I can while I can. He would pour out the story of his life. So much of it was evaporated.

3. The Bahá'í teaching, like the Christian is that the Manifestation of God is the way to God. Jesus said, "I am the door. . . ." (John 10:7).

4. Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb are the two Manifestation of God for today. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Exemplar and Interpreter of the Bahá'í Faith.

"He told me: 'When snow begins to fall it always wakes me up. One time at three in the morning I decided I'd like to go out and walk in the snow and get my thoughts together. So I went up to Central Park. I was walking with a little notebook in my hand. I was finishing *The Earth Gods* (an early book but his last). I was writing in my notebook in the snow. A big policeman came along.'

" 'Whatcha doin'?' "

" 'Writing.' "

" 'Writing? Are you an Englishman?' "

" 'No.' "

" 'Are you a Frenchman?' "

" 'No.' "

" 'What are you?' "

" 'A Syrian.' "

" 'Oh. Know anything about that Syrian—think his name is Kayleel Guibran—fellow who writes books?' "

" 'I think so.' "

" 'Well, since he came into the life of our home there's never been any peace in it. I used to have a good wife. Now she don't do nuthin all day long but read that Kayleel Guibran. . . .'

"Those last days he just wept and wept and wept. His head on my shoulder. He never said he was dying. He never said a word. Except that one thing: 'I want to give you all I can while I can. So come every day.' His followers stayed with him. He's quite a cult. Buried in Boston.

"Large, tragic brown eyes. The eye was very important in his face. His forehead was broad—very high—very broad, and he had almost a shock of black hair. Short, slender, five foot two or three. Very sensitive mouth—drooped a little at the corners. Very sad man who had a reason for it. Little black moustache, like Charlie Chaplin."

## The Witch of Devil's Canyon

Tom Wolf lay on his back and looked up  
At the Falls, dreaming of glory  
And angels, his eyes focusing  
On the shadow of the Witch playing  
Over the canyon wall—but not seeing,  
Saw only the greenness of the canyon  
Floor, the brook laughing by his side,  
The Falls towering over everything.

Every day Tom Wolf, son of an Indian  
Chief, came to pray, came early  
As the canyon walls quickly pre-empted  
The Sun. The Witch came early too,  
Or why would one see her shadow? Tom  
Did not see the Sun catching the Witch's  
Shadow, saw only those for whom he  
Prayed, those who had climbed  
To the upper Falls and were unable  
To find their way back again, those  
Who had tasted of white man's peyote.

Tom Wolf did not believe in the curse  
Of Tah-quish, the Spirit who sits  
And glowers atop the highest mountain  
Peak. For twelve days it was said  
The good Chief had suffered fever,  
And on the thirteenth day became  
Changed, left his tribe,  
Became the Evil One.

The eyes of the Indian boy scaled  
The canyon wall, saw a girl  
With fire in her hair.

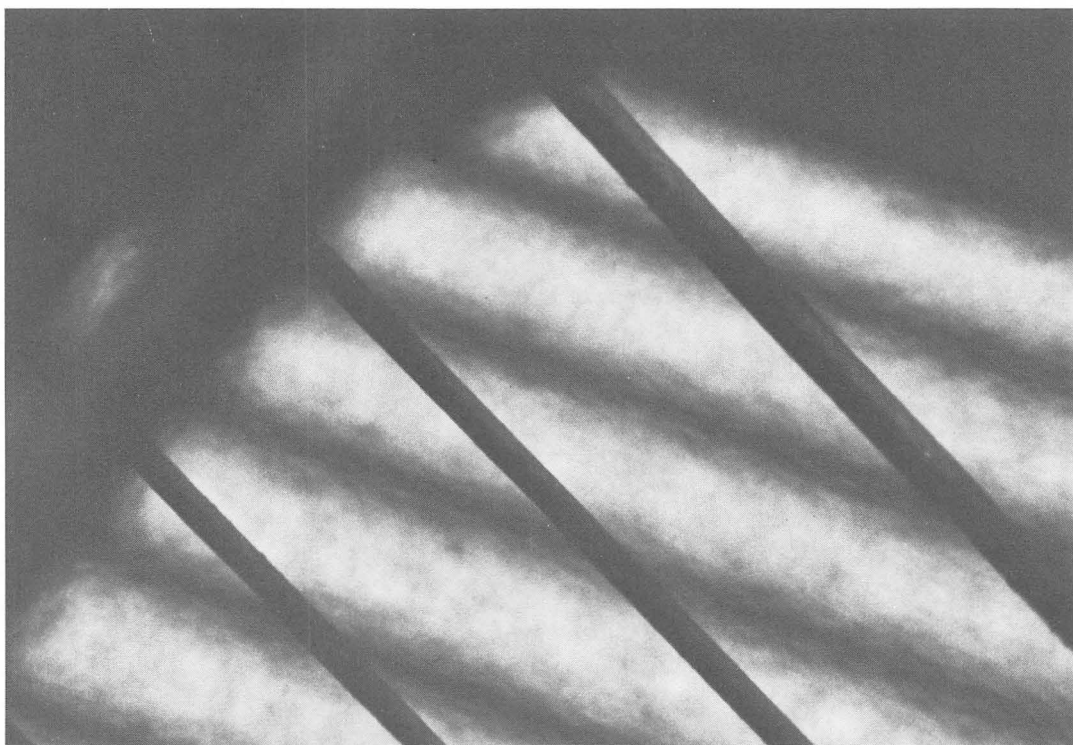
Tom Wolf climbed up the mountain  
To the first Falls and rescued  
The girl with hair the color of autumn.  
"Why did you bother?" the girl asked  
When they reached the canyon floor,  
"Because you believe in the Evil One?"

"No," Tom replied, "I do not believe  
In the Evil One. There is no evil—  
Only the absence of light."

"Then most of the day the canyon  
Is evil because there is no light!  
But what of the Witch? Her shadow  
Appears only when there is light,  
Is it not so?" asked the girl.

"Of course," said the Indian boy.  
"The early morning light strikes  
The crevices in the canyon wall,  
And you see the outline of a Witch.  
I rescued you because you believed  
In her. The shadow in your mind  
Proves the existence of light.  
Without light there would be  
No shadow, no Witch."

—Joan Imig Taylor





# The Quest for the Metaphysical Jesus

A REVIEW OF UDO SCHAEFER'S *THE Light Shineth in Darkness:*

*Five Studies in Revelation After Christ*, TRANS. HELENE MOMTAZ NERI

AND OLIVER COBURN (OXFORD: GEORGE RONALD, 1977)

XII + 186 PAGES, BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY WILLIAM S. HATCHER

*The Light Shineth in Darkness* is a collection of five essays by Udo Schaefer, a German Bahá'í scholar. The essays are directed primarily to Europeans of Christian background. Two of the essays deal with Islám, one in relation to the Bahá'í Faith and the other in relation to Western scholarship. Of the three remaining essays, one is a brief discussion of the contemporary religious scene with a view to showing how the Bahá'í Faith represents a satisfactory answer to present-day secularism and unbelief, while the second is a somewhat longer exposition of basic Bahá'í teachings. The third, entitled "Answer to a Theologian", is a still longer essay (the longest in the collection) and, in many ways, constitutes the heart of the collection. It is presumably the one which has chiefly inspired the title of the work.<sup>1</sup> Hence the present review will be mainly devoted to a discussion of it.

All of the essays are cogently written. In his exposition of Bahá'í teachings and principles. Mr. Schaefer does not gloss over dif-

ficult issues such as the role of obedience to authority or the Bahá'í noninvolvement in politics. Rather he confronts such questions boldly, giving forthright and clean-cut answers. While presenting the underlying rationale for Bahá'í principles and laws, he never degenerates into obsequious apology; while showing considerable scholarship, he never becomes pedantic. The essays on Islám attempt to correct the biased and distorted view of Muḥammad and His religion, which have been given by traditional Western treatment of the subject. Again, the author's balanced presentation is largely successful.

Thus Mr. Schaefer's work is clearly a welcome contribution to Bahá'í literature and can certainly be read profitably by both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís.

"Answer to a Theologian" is the author's reply to a German Protestant theologian, Dr. Kurt Hutten, who published a polemical review of the German edition of Sabet's *The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder* (reviewed in *World Order*, 11, No. 3 (Spring 1977), 46-51). Mr. Schaefer, a lawyer and former student at Heidelberg University, undertakes a point-by-point answer to Dr. Hutten's criticism and discussion of Bahá'í doctrines. In doing so he addresses himself to many of the Christological and theological questions treated in a much less formal way in Sabet's book. The considerable scholarship the author brings to his discussion of these issues makes *The Light Shineth in Darkness* a thorough yet succinct treatment by a Bahá'í scholar of the major issues of European Christian theology in relationship to the Bahá'í Faith.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Hutten attacks the Bahá'í Faith as a

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1. "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" John 1:5 (King James Version; Revised Standard Version except where otherwise indicated).

2. It is perhaps of some interest to North American readers to note that this European theology has been the principal curriculum for most liberal, nondenominational divinity schools in the United States for decades. American theologians, where they have struck out on their own, have tended to be either very sociological in their approach or else, especially in the case of certain denominations, rather emotional and evangelical. American scholars have, nonetheless, contributed significantly to higher biblical critical studies.

"deliberately modern" religion "'made to measure'" to fit the contemporary world. As such, it is out of harmony with the religion of Jesus Christ and, therefore, cannot command the allegiance of sincere Christians. Mr. Schaefer skillfully points out that the "Christian Faith" Dr. Hutten defends is (p. 56), in fact, a certain collection of doctrines constituting a very particular neo-Protestant theology. This theology is only one among a multitude of Christian theologies, each having roughly the same claim to be counted as the "correct" one. Not only are there serious contradictions among Christian theologians and their theologies, there are serious questions as to the degree of Biblical faithfulness for any given one of them. Thus Dr. Hutten has arrogantly assumed that his theology is Biblical and that it is the only right one and has proceeded to reject the Bahá'í Faith on that basis.

At the same time, Mr. Schaefer points to the historical origins of the Bahá'í Faith and to various proofs of the Prophethood of Bahá'u'lláh to refute the superficial notion of the Bahá'í Faith as a "sociological" or synthetic religion. While he makes these points capably, I feel he is sometimes thrown a bit off balance by the vehemence of Dr. Hutten's criticisms and is thus led to overreact to some of them. In my judgment, this occasionally leads Schaefer to misstate the Bahá'í position, at least to some degree.

For example, Dr. Hutten has criticized the Bahá'í Faith for being too rational, for being without mysteries and paradoxes. Mr.

Schaefer is led to counter by saying, among other things:

The Bahá'í Faith is a religion of law, and its revealed laws are "irrational" in that they acquire validity primarily through the Founder's statement, not through their special wisdom and rationality. . . . Nor is it true that the Bahá'í Faith is without mystery. The status of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the short duration of the Báb's mission are regarded by the Bahá'ís as hidden mysteries. (p. 63)

What bothers me here is that the whole notion of "mystery" involved in the discussion is never unambiguously defined either by Dr. Hutten or by Mr. Schaefer. A mystery can mean, as it often does with Christians, an irrational or self-contradictory notion (for example, Christ as God-man, Mary as sinless-sinner, and so on; compare Note 11 below). But it can also mean simply something that is beyond the knowledge of man at the present stage of human development. This latter notion is wholly compatible with rationality, and indeed science itself is replete with such mysteries.

For example, there is nothing in the least "irrational" in the fact that Bahá'í law is based on the authority of Bahá'u'lláh if we have established by a rational process that this authority is truly of God and, therefore, valid. Moreover, Mr. Schaefer has already aptly (and quite rationally) refuted Dr. Hutten's contention that Bahá'u'lláh is a false prophet (p. 57). In the above-quoted passage, Mr. Schaefer appears to me to be straining to find "mysteries" and "paradoxes" in Dr. Hutten's sense of irrationalisms, whereas one of the strengths of the Bahá'í Faith is that it does not have mysteries of this sort.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Schaefer obviously wishes to establish that the Bahá'í Faith is much more than simply a rationally coherent system of intellectual belief by showing that profound religious heart-stirrings are also a significant part of the Bahá'í life and teachings, but his discussion of mysticism in the Bahá'í Faith (p. 63) would easily suffice to make this important point.

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3. On the preceding page (p. 62) Schaefer does make the point that, in the Bahá'í Faith, "Human reason is certainly given a different value than it is in the Protestant Church (Martin Luther spoke of 'that whore, Reason')." This, however, is not because the Bahá'í Faith is a 'deliberately modern religion' in the sense that in order to enhance its attractiveness, everything is geared to plausibility and effect; but quite simply because the divine truths do not run counter to human reason." This happily serves to mitigate the effect of the possible overreaction represented by the passage cited above.

But these are, in some ways, minor issues. The heart of Dr. Hutten's critique, as one would imagine, turns on the doctrine of man's salvation through faith in the substitutional sacrificial atonement by the God-man Christ. In his view, the human race is not involved in any process of growth, development, or evolution toward a more perfect society based on a progressively unfolding vision and understanding of the Divine will and purpose. Rather, man is a fallen race, sunk in evil and depravity. His only hope is to accept salvation through faith in the single redemptive act of Jesus' death on the cross, a sacrifice that "reconciles" man to God. Acceptance of this salvation is purely an internal act of faith and may not reflect itself in much external change of behavior, especially on the social level. Man, in this view, and in contrast to the Bahá'í view, is not seen as potentially perfectible but only as salvageable from the very worst consequences of his depraved nature.

The net effect of this theology is that Jesus' life and teachings become of secondary importance for Christians who hold this view. Rather, the symbolic meaning of Jesus' death coupled with the negative view of man as a fallen creature become the central facts of the Christian Faith. In this way, the

theology about Jesus' nature (Christology) is so important that Jesus Himself, His life and teachings, become virtually irrelevant.<sup>4</sup> The value of Jesus' earthly passage is seen to reside wholly in the symbolic and occult meaning of His death, a curious shift indeed!

Mr. Schaefer proceeds to refute this view of Jesus, drawing heavily on his own knowledge of critical theology, as well as his understanding of the Bahá'í teachings. The question to be answered is: how did such a shift occur? If Jesus was indeed, as Bahá'ís believe, a Messenger of God with teachings that man should have and could have accepted and applied (and that were, in fact, accepted and applied by many of His early followers as well as some of His later ones), what process has led to the change of focus represented by views like those of Dr. Hutten?

THE ANSWER appears to lie in the shift of authority from Peter to Paul that took place in the first generation after Jesus' death. The mystic and occult doctrines concerning Jesus are to be found largely in the letters of Paul. Indeed, as Mr. Schaefer points out (and as others have pointed out before him), the picture of Jesus contained in Mark (the earliest Gospel) or in Matthew is precisely the image of a moral and spiritual teacher sent by His Father to instruct men how to perfect their character, to purify their souls, and to go beyond the external letter of the Mosaic law to a new psychospiritual dimension of intentionality and motive based on an individual inner relationship with God.

Paul, in contrast, makes the central message of Christianity to be not the path of development shown by Jesus but rather a mystic justification through faith in Christ's sacrificial atonement. Indeed, the whole extant corpus of Paul's writings contain virtually no reference whatever to any of Jesus' teachings or sayings (p. 81). Whether consciously or not, Paul usurped the authority of Peter, and Christianity was transformed from the religion of Jesus to a religion about Jesus. Christianity became Paulism.<sup>5</sup>

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4. So much is this true that some Christians will even go so far as to say that Jesus' life would have been meaningless without His death on the cross. I have heard Christians say that, had Jesus been acclaimed and accepted by all those who heard Him rather than rejected and crucified, had He been recognized and proclaimed Messiah by the Jews and His teachings followed and applied, His life would still have been without significance. It is not clear whether Dr. Hutton would himself adopt this extreme position, though it is the logical extension of his views.

5. This understanding of Paul's role as usurper in early Christianity is not just the result of analytical and critical theological scholarship by Christian scholars but is reflected, in various ways, by the Bahá'í Teachings as well. In *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 113, Shoghi Effendi states explicitly that in the Bahá'í Faith "the primacy of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended." In the

According to scholarly evaluations, Paul's probable motive for effecting this transformation in Christian doctrine was his sincere desire to teach the Christian Faith to non-Jewish intellectuals and to pagans. Indeed, it is well known and accepted that purification through blood sacrifice was a common notion in the mystery cults with which early Christianity found itself in direct competition. Since Jesus' own teachings were aimed primarily at those who had already under-

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Canadian Film "Invitation", Rúhíyyih Khánúm recounts how 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while staying in the Maxwell home in Montreal in 1912, was asked by an inquirer to discourse about Paul. According to Rúhíyyih Khánúm, His answer, stated in the strongest terms, was, "Not Paul, Peter!" Also, the renowned Bahá'í scholar, Mírzá Abu'l Faḍ'l, in his work *The Bahá'í Proofs* (trans. Ishtael-Ebn-Kalenter [New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1929]) states that only the Gospels can be regarded as a valid source of knowledge about Jesus, thereby excluding the letters of Paul. Mírzá Abu'l Faḍ'l alludes to the current German scholarship on the subject.

Let us note in passing that it is primarily the notion of redemption through blood atonement that is attributable to Paul. The ultimate form of the doctrine of original sin as well as the doctrine of the trinity are much later. The former (in which original sin is physically transmitted from Adam to all generations of men) was due to Augustine, while the latter was crystallized at Nicea in 325 A.D. after extensive (and acrimonious) debate among Christians as to the proper understanding of Jesus' true nature.

6. This is reflected not only in Jesus' style of teaching, which often involved extensive reference to Jewish scripture accompanied with illustrative examples from Jewish life, but in specific utterances of Jesus. For example, in His charge to the twelve, Jesus instructs them to: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5).

7. Mr. Schaefer makes the point that the sacramentalism of the Church and the attribution of an occult or mysterious meaning to Baptism can also be traced to Paul's influence (pp. 81-82).

8. Some have been more harsh in their judgment of Paul, even calling him the Antichrist. Mr. Schaefer abstains from presenting any personal judgment about Paul but sticks to an objective description of the various views.

stood and accepted the Mosaic law, it must have been very difficult for early Christians to teach their new-found Faith to pagans and others who had little knowledge of or interest in the Jewish religion and the revelation of Moses.<sup>6</sup> Paul, then, appears as an innovator who seized upon the events of Jesus' death as a way of making the new religion attractive to pagans. Jesus' death on the cross was a transcendental blood sacrifice accomplished once and for all, thus avoiding the necessity for the ritual of blood sacrifice as practiced by the mystery cults.<sup>7</sup> Paul's innovations were clearly successful in winning to Christianity the allegiance of masses of adherents, but a concomitant result was the dilution of the pure religion of Jesus with a host of pagan ideas and practices.

Of course, ideas concerning Paul's motives and any judgment as to the degree of consciousness and deliberateness with which he carried out this program must necessarily be considered as personal speculation.<sup>8</sup> But the facts of the situation seem quite beyond serious dispute.

It is important to the Hutten-Schaefer exchange to note that it is German Protestant theological and biblical scholarship which is largely responsible for having brought to light and clearly identified this early aberration in the development of Christianity. Dr. Hutten is certainly deeply aware of this body of critical and analytical scholarship; yet, as we have already noted, his polemic against the Bahá'í Faith proceeds as if his particular theological position was the only conceivable one. He thus stands accused of a certain *de facto* hypocrisy. Politely, Mr. Schaefer refrains from drawing this conclusion explicitly, but his extensive references to the body of German theological scholarship are sufficient to make the point dramatically clear.

The scholarship that Mr. Schaefer displays in refuting Dr. Hutten is of the highest quality. However, I feel that Mr. Schaefer has missed an important opportunity to clarify to his Christian audience the precise Bahá'í understanding of the station and nature of the Manifestation of God. For nowhere in this

essay does he undertake to explain systematically and clearly the dual nature of the Manifestation of God as it is so clearly presented in the Bahá'í teachings.<sup>9</sup> Nowhere does he explain the Bahá'í belief in the preexistence of Christ<sup>10</sup> and His divinity,<sup>11</sup> or in the uniqueness of the Manifestation as a link between God and Man.<sup>12</sup> In the light of these omissions, Mr. Schaefer's continual insistence on Jesus as Messenger, Prophet, and Teacher is almost bound to lead to a misconception of the Bahá'í view of Jesus' nature.

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9. Speaking about the nature of the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh says: "And since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation, and no resemblance whatever can exist between the transient and the Eternal, the contingent and the Absolute, He hath ordained that in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter, and the spiritual, *which is born of the substance of God Himself*" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, trans. Shoghi Effendi, 2d rev. ed. [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976], p. 66). The italics are mine.

10. Not only is the Manifestation preexistent in that He reveals to man the eternal (and therefore preexistent) light of God, but even in His individual reality. Shoghi Effendi makes this quite clear in the following words: "The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world. We cannot imagine what that world is like, so words are inadequate to picture His state of being" (*High Endeavours: Messages to Alaska*, comp. National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Alaska [n.p.: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Alaska, Inc., 1976], p. 71).

11. In *The Promised Day is Come* (rev. ed. [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1961], p. 113) Shoghi Effendi states explicitly that Bahá'ís believe in "the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ." Of course, such belief is already implicit in the passage of Bahá'u'lláh quoted in Note 9. The notion of divinity involved here is not that the phenomenal human Jesus was God the creator, but that all of God's attributes were fully present in the Person of Christ.

Indeed, the notion that Jesus is literally God is

In the following passage, for example, Mr. Schaefer contrasts two views of the nature of Jesus: "Jesus was not the only-begotten Son of God come down from Heaven, crucified and resurrected, nor the unique Saviour, but the messenger of God to whom the *Qur'an* testifies and who is glorified by Bahá'u'lláh." (p. 87). Here Mr. Schaefer cursorily identifies the Bahá'í view with one which, without further explanation, could easily be taken as representing disbelief in the divinity or preexistence of Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

In his discussion of theological pluralism within contemporary Christianity, he does dissociate the Bahá'í view from the total humanization of Jesus practiced by some theologians: "The degrading and levelling of Christ, of which Bahá'ís are accused because they deny the doctrine of the Trinity and incorporate Jesus into the historic series of the

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self-contradictory, according to the Bible text. For example, Jesus prays to God at Gethsemane saying "'not what I will, but what thou wilt'" (Mark 14:36). If Jesus is literally God to whom He is praying, then the "I" and the "thou" in the above passage are absolutely identical. Jesus is praying to Himself saying "not what I will but what I will," a formal logical contradiction.

12. This important point is made quite clear in the following statement of 'Abdu'l Baha: "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, splendours, 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 Manifestation, he will be bereft of the knowledge of God" (*Some Answered Questions*, comp. and trans. Laura Clifford Barney, rev. ed. [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1964], pp. 257-58).

13. In several other passages Mr. Schaefer also mentions the notion of Christ's preexistence in a way which implies Bahá'í disbelief in it (pp. 80, 82), again without a detailed explanation of the Bahá'í understanding. It is Paul's concept of the role of Christ as redeemer through blood sacrifice which is to be rejected, not necessarily his view of Christ's metaphysical *nature*. More will be said about this later on in the present review.

messengers of God, has become reality in the case of many Christian theological scholars. To many of them Jesus of Nazareth has become a man like others, for whom much was unknown and who often erred—an impossible concept for a Bahá'í!" (p. 89). However, because he does not go on to explain in a positive way what the Bahá'í view is, the reader cannot understand precisely how such a humanistic conception differs from the Bahá'í one.<sup>14</sup>

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14. Moreover, it is not really the doctrine of the trinity, rightly understood, that Bahá'ís reject but rather the theological concept of *incarnation*—that is, that Jesus represented the total incarnation of God the Creator within the limited frame of a finite human body. It is true, nonetheless, that the Nicean form of the doctrine of the trinity implicitly involves this notion of incarnation.

Concerning the impossibility of God's incarnating His essence, Bahá'u'lláh says: "Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. . . . He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person" (*Gleanings*, p. 49).

Indeed, as Shoghi Effendi has pointed out (*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974], p. 112), any "God" who could so incarnate himself would, by that very fact, "cease immediately to be God."

15. "'Before Abraham was, I am'" (John 8:58) or "'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him'" (John 14:6–7). This last statement of Jesus expresses notions quite similar to those found in the following passage of Bahá'u'lláh: "The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of

Such omissions of Mr. Schaefer are reflected in another way. Whereas the synoptic Gospels on the one hand, and Paul's writings on the other, receive extensive treatment, the Johannine scriptures are passed over in silence. Yet the language of John's Gospel finds many echoes in Bahá'u'lláh's own language. For example, Jesus' abstract use of the first person to refer to his preexistent spirit<sup>15</sup> can be seen in such statements of Bahá'u'lláh as "If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He has once more, in My person, been made manifest unto you,"<sup>16</sup> or in words of Muḥammad such as "I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus."<sup>17</sup> Similarly, John's preexistent Word come down to earth (John 1:1–18) is reflected in certain passages by Bahá'u'lláh.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, the basic Christological concepts that occur throughout John's Gospel appear

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His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. . . . Whose turneth away from them, hath turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above. . . . (*Gleanings*, pp. 49–50).

16. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 101.

17. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 51.

18. "the Source of infinite grace . . . hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence" (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude*, trans. Shoghi Effendi, 3d ed. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 99). Also Bahá'u'lláh, speaking of Himself, says "The Book of God hath been sent down in the form of this Youth" (*Gleanings*, p. 104), thus identifying His spiritual nature with the preexistent Word or attributes of God.

It is important to notice also that it is the pre-existent Word that John designates by the (now-famous) phrase "only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14, King James Version). The logical (as opposed to literal) meaning of this term is "the only thing directly generated by the essence of God." But this is precisely the attributes of God,



to me to be in complete harmony with the explanations that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá give concerning the nature of the Manifestation, in particular with the idea that the Manifestation represents a distinct level of being superior to man and is not just an ordinary man inspired by God.<sup>19</sup> I feel that the real difference between the Bahá'í teachings and the traditional Christological doctrines of the Church lie not so much in their respective notions of Jesus' nature but rather in the Bahá'í assertion that the "Christ event" which took place in Jesus two thousand years ago has taken place in our history both before and after Jesus. Rather than lowering the station of Jesus to that of an inspired human teacher, Bahá'ís do just the opposite: They lift the station of the other Manifestations to that which the Christians attribute to Christ. The basic difference between traditional Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith, then, lies in the Christian insistence on the uniqueness of Christ and on His superiority over all of the other Manifestations, not in any supposed "lowering" of Christ by Bahá'ís.<sup>20</sup>

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for indeed the attributes (or nature) of God represent the only thing *directly* generated by His essence. Everything else God has created has been done *indirectly*—that is, through the intermediary of His attributes ("all things were made through the Word," John 1:3).

19. Some may object that John's concept of the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14, King James Version) necessarily implies belief in the doctrine of incarnation whose incompatibility with Bahá'í teaching has already been noted (Note 14). However, the doctrine that Jesus represents God's essence in human form rather than simply revealing God's nature and attributes became official Church doctrine only at Nicea in 325 A.D., several hundred years after John's Gospel was written and circulated. Moreover, this particular incarnation interpretation of the Christ event was imposed by *force majeure* over a number of other conceptions (notably that of Arius and his followers), and these other views were clearly present from the beginning. The "Word made flesh" can just as well be taken as a metaphor for Bahá'u'lláh's "to appear out of the realm of spirit, in the noble form of the human temple" (cf. Note 16).

This interpretation is further supported by John

Of course, I am under no illusion that Dr. Hutten would find the Bahá'í Faith more acceptable in the light of these supplementary explanations. Nevertheless, I feel that it is imperative that the Bahá'í concept of the Manifestation be clearly explained to Christian audiences, for it is much closer to their conception than they realize.

In my own dialogue with Christians, I have come to feel that their vehement, sometimes admittedly fanatical, defense of the uniqueness of Jesus is due not so much to their having followed misguided theological constructs but to their intuitive sense of the transcendence of the Manifestation of Christ.<sup>21</sup> It is, therefore, only natural that, if they falsely perceive the Bahá'í notion of progressive revelation as a denial of this transcendence, they become reluctant to study the Bahá'í Faith objectively. It is important for our Christian brothers, of whom Dr. Hutten is one, to know how deeply Bahá'ís share their sense of the transcendental nature of the Manifestation of God.

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1:18: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." Here John clearly distinguishes the Son (the Word) from God the Creator (in other words, God's essence from his attributes). The "Word made flesh" would thus mean the "incarnation" not of God but of his attributes. And this is precisely the Bahá'í teaching as to the nature of the Manifestation, for Shoghi Effendi speaks of the "complete incarnation of the names and attributes of God" within the Person of the Manifestation (*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 112).

With regard to the notion that the Manifestation represents a distinct level of being between God and Man, see, for example, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 267 ff.

20. Logically, this changes the whole focus of the Bahá'í-Christian dialogue from a particular positive statement ("Christ was divine") to a universal negative one ("No one else but Christ was or ever can be divine in the same way"). I feel that this change of focus is important, not only in that it reflects more precisely the exact difference between Bahá'í and Christian concepts, but also because it demonstrates the narrowness inherent in Christian exclusiveness.

21. This is probably much less true in the European than in the North American milieu.

Indeed, this fuller understanding of the Manifestation as a distinct level of being, intermediate between God and man, represents a fundamental contribution of the Bahá'í Faith to the religious consciousness of mankind. Muḥammad, the Messenger of God Who immediately followed Jesus, stressed the human nature of the Manifestation (and pointedly denounced the notion

that the human Jesus was God the Creator), perhaps partly to counterbalance the fantastic excesses of the Christian theology of the times.<sup>22</sup> Christian scholars of Islám (Sales and Rodwell, for example) misunderstood Muḥammad's statements as representing a complete denial of Christ's divinity, and indeed some Muslim theologians have done the same. Now that the Bahá'í Faith is coming under critical scrutiny by followers of all religions it is clearly important that the deeper understanding of the nature and role of the Manifestation of God afforded by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh be fully presented to all.

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22. cf. the excellent discussion of these points in Juan Ricardo Cole, "The Christian-Muslim Encounter and the Bahá'í Faith", *World Order*, 12, No. 2 (Winter 1977-78), 14-28.

# Index, Vol. 12, Fall 1977-Summer 1978

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Articles are indexed by author and subject. Book reviews are indexed by subject and reviewer, as well as by the book's author under the heading **BOOK Reviews**. Fiction, poetry, art, and photographs are indexed by author or artist and only occasionally by subject. Letters to the editor are usually included with entries for the articles to which they refer.

## ABBREVIATIONS

bibliog	bibliography
bibliog f	bibliographical footnotes
il	illustrated
jt auth	joint author
por	portrait
Spr	Spring
Sum	Summer
Wint	Winter

For those unfamiliar with the form of indexing used, the following example is given:

**ENTRY:**                    **BAHÁ'Í Faith**  
                               Bahá'í Faith: world religion of the future?  
                               J. Chouleur. bibliog f 12:20-7 Fall '77;  
                               Letter 12:5-6 Sum '78

**EXPLANATION:**    An article, with bibliographical footnotes, entitled "The Bahá'í Faith: World Religion of the Future?" by J. Chouleur will be found in Volume 12 of *World Order* on pages 8-18 of the Fall 1977 issue. A letter commenting on that article appears in the Spring 1978 issue on pages 10-12.

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JOAN IMIG TAYLOR is a freelance writer living in Arizona, a locale that has frequently given her themes and images for her poems. A member of the Phoenix Writer's Club and Penwomen's Club, she has published stories, articles, and poems, including two in *World Order*. Her interests, besides writing, include working in the cause of mental health, helping her artist-husband promote his paintings, raising dogs, and collecting jazz.



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