

appear in Christian theology until the fourth century.¹

In summarising the argument of the great Catholic theologian St. Anselm, the Catholic Encyclopedia says:

Anselm's answer to the question is simply the need of satisfaction of sin. No sin, as he views the matter, can be forgiven without satisfaction. A debt to Divine justice has been incurred; and that debt must needs be paid. But man could not make this satisfaction for himself; the debt is something far greater than he can pay; and, moreover, all the service that he can offer to God is already due on other titles. The suggestion that some innocent man, or angel, might possibly pay the debt incurred by sinners is rejected, on the ground that in any case this would put the sinner under obligation to his deliverer, and he would thus become the servant of a mere creature. The only way in which the satisfaction could be made, and men could be set free from sin, was by the coming of a Redeemer who is both God and man. His death makes full satisfaction to the Divine Justice, for it is something greater than all the sins of all mankind.²

St. Anselm's position has since been challenged and modified but the fundamental concept of Jesus' death paying for the sins of humanity has been retained throughout the doctrine's permutations both within the Catholic and also Protestant churches.

Following on from this belief - that God incarnated as man suffered the penalty of death in payment for sins committed by humanity since the fall of Adam - is the concept of the exclusivity of Jesus' atoning act. The book of Hebrews says:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.³

As Christians believe Jesus' death already paid the price for all sin, it naturally follows that there is no room for any other atoning figure. According to Christian belief, Jesus Christ is without parallel in religious history. As

God incarnate, there is no other religious founder like him. Others such as the Buddha or Muhammad, or even the Jewish prophets such as Abraham and Moses, are considered to be under the stain of original sin "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"⁴. As such, they do not have the spiritual rank and standing that Christians give to Jesus Christ, and are not suitable candidates for the substitutionary atonement.

With the appearance of Islam, the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement with Jesus Christ as the central figure was not addressed. Mainstream Muslim theologians completely rejected belief in the death of Christ in accordance with a literal understanding of the Qur'anic verse:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God";- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:-
Nay, God raised him up unto Himself; and God is Exalted in Power, Wise...⁵

Furthermore it rejected entirely the doctrines of incarnation and original sin – both necessary for the Christian comprehension of the subject.

It is important to note however, that the minority sect of Shi'ite Islam did develop a doctrine of atonement with the martyrdom of the Imam

Husayn. As David Waines notes in his *An Introduction to Islam*:

[S]ince al-Husayn's martyrdom was believed to have been divinely ordained, Karbala^[6] became a symbol of Allah's mercy and justice, through which the redemption and condemnation of mankind are achieved.⁷

Believed to be God's chosen mediator for humanity, Husayn was given a role in Shi'ite belief almost unapproachable by any other figure.

The Bahá'í holy texts on the other hand reaffirmed both the death of Christ by symbolically interpreting "An-Nisa" 4:157-8 and the doctrine of the atonement between God and man but in a dramatically different way than it had previously been argued by mainstream Christian or even Muslim religious thinkers.

Bahá'í scripture maintains that God has sent many revelators of His will known as Manifestations, one of whom is Jesus Christ⁸. Others named include Adam⁹, Krishna¹⁰, Noah¹¹, Abraham¹², Moses¹³, Zoroaster¹⁴, the Buddha¹⁵, Muhammad¹⁶, the Báb¹⁷ and Bahá'u'lláh¹⁸. However the Bahá'í texts tell us there have been other Manifestations whose names are lost to history¹⁹.

According to Bahá'í belief, these various Manifestations of God, from before Adam to the latest - Bahá'u'lláh, all occupy two stations. The first is one of essential unity; in that they all manifest the attributes of the one God to humanity²⁰, are the exponents of one Cause²¹, they all call humanity to its salvation²², they are all the manifestations of the Creative Word²³, they are all the appearance of the Primal Will²⁴.

Bahá'u'lláh writes in the Kitáb-i-Iqán:

These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them all by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth. Even as He hath revealed: "No distinction do We make between any of His Messengers!" For they one and all summon the people of the earth to acknowledge the Unity of God, and herald unto them the Kawthar of an infinite grace and bounty.²⁵

In this station, there is no distinction between Jesus or Muhammad, Krishna or Moses.

For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and the "Hidden" - all of which pertain to Him Who is the Innermost Spirit of Spirits and Eternal Essence of Essences.²⁶

However the Manifestations all occupy a station of distinction in the mortal world. Bahá'u'lláh explains:

The other station is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by

a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfils a definite mission, and is entrusted with a particular Revelation.²⁷

In their human personalities, all the Manifestations were different people, living at different times, with specific messages to bring to the peoples to whom they were sent. However it is important to note that the differences between them are not due to their own innate spirituality, but rather due to the needs and exigencies of the times in which they lived. Jesus was not a better soul than Muhammad or vice versa: they simply lived at different times and in different contexts. Bahá'u'lláh says:

It is clear and evident, therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world.²⁸

and in a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi says:

As regards your questions concerning the station of Jesus Christ, and His return as explained in the Gospel. It is true that Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of God, but this, as explained by Bahá'u'lláh in the Iqán, does not indicate any physical relationship whatever. Its meaning is entirely spiritual, and points out to the close relationship existing between Him and the Almighty God. Nor does it necessarily indicate any inherent superiority in the station of Jesus over other Prophets and Messengers. As far as their spiritual nature is concerned all Prophets can be regarded as Sons of God, as they all reflect His light, though not in an equal measure, and this difference in reflection is due to the conditions and circumstances under which they appear.²⁹

'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses this subtle point in Some Answered Questions. He points out that if Jesus were placed in the same time and conditions as those in which Muhammad lived, then he too would have took up arms to fight against oppression. That Jesus and Muhammad acted differently was dependent not on

their own
morality, but rather the specific conditions in which each lived.³⁰

[W]e must follow and adore the virtues revealed in the messengers
of God whether in Abraham, Moses, Jesus or other prophets but we must not
adhere to and
adore the lamp. We must recognize the sun no matter from what dawning-point it
may shine
forth, be it Mosaic, Abrahamic or any personal point of orientation whatever,
for we are
lovers of sunlight and not of orientation. We are lovers of illumination and
not of lamps
and candles.³¹

And so we come to the first difficulty in considering whether the
Christian doctrine of atonement has a place within Bahá'í belief. Fundamental
to the
Christian approach, is the belief that Jesus is paramount amongst religious
founders, that
only he is worthy to pay for our sins, and yet Bahá'í scripture specifically
states that
humanity must not make such a distinction between the spirituality of the
various
Messengers of God.

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God
is one and the same... To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones
above
the rest, is in no wise to be permitted.³²

The Christian belief in the innate superiority of Jesus over any
other religious figure is argued by two claims³³. Firstly that Jesus, by virtue
of the fact of his miraculous birth, is
free from the stain of original sin, and secondly that Jesus never committed
any voluntary
sin.

The Catholic Encyclopedia quotes an early creed describing the
Christian belief in Jesus' sinless nature due to his miraculous birth:

"We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
begotten of God the Father . . . that is, of the substance of the Father . . .
in Him Who
for us men and for our salvation came down and was made Flesh, that is, was
perfectly
begotten of Mary ever Virgin by the Holy Spirit; Who became Man, that is, took
perfect
human nature, soul and body and mind and all whatsoever is human save only sin,
without
the seed of man; not in another man, but unto himself did He form Flesh into

one holy
unity [eis mian hagian henoteta]; not as He breathed and spoke and wrought in
the
prophets, but He became Man perfectly; for the Word was made Flesh, not in that
It
underwent a change nor in that It exchanged Its Divinity for humanity, but in
that It
united Its Flesh unto Its one holy totality and Divinity [eis mian . . .
heautou hagian
teleioteta te kai theoteta].³⁴

and describes Jesus' inability to sin:

The effect of the Incarnation on the human will of Christ was to
leave it free in all things save only sin. It was absolutely impossible that
any stain of
sin should soil the soul of Christ. Neither sinful act of the will nor sinful
habit of the
soul were in keeping with the Hypostatic Union.³⁵

However the Bahá'í Writings specifically deny that Jesus'
divine and sinless nature was due to his lack of a natural father.

The honor and greatness of Christ is not due to the fact that He
did not have a human father, but to His perfections, bounties and divine glory.
If the
greatness of Christ is His being fatherless, then Adam is greater than Christ,
for He had
neither father nor mother.³⁶

The Bible says "[f]or all have sinned, and come short of the
glory of God"³⁷ but for
Bahá'ís this description does not apply to the various Manifestations of God
such as
Abraham or Zoroaster any more than it applies to Jesus Christ. 'Abdu'l-Bahá
says:
"[f]or these Holy Souls [the Manifestations] are pure from every sin and
sanctified
from faults."³⁸

They are all pure and sinless, not by virtue of the physical
conditions surrounding their advents, but because the spiritual nature of the
Manifestation of God is different from that of the ordinary human. Whilst they
share with
us the human condition: that is they are born, live out their lives on earth,
suffer
weaknesses such as hunger and illness, enjoy human emotions such as love, and
eventually
they suffer physical death (see endnote 30) - nevertheless they have a
different spiritual

nature than the rest of humanity. "The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent"³⁹ and are "pure from sin".⁴⁰

The reason given in Bahá'í scripture for the appearance of Manifestations of God, is that without some sort of intermediary, humanity would be unable to access God who is considered to be completely transcendent. Each chosen representative manifests God to the degree that humanity is able to receive the message he is commanded to bear. So one Bahá'í interpretation of Jesus' claim to exclusivity "no man cometh unto the Father but by me"⁴¹, is that he was pointing to the notion of the Manifestation being the sole source of access to God, rather than to his own individual being. The "me" in John 14:6 is not the "me" of Jesus, but the "me" of the Christ, the Primal Will.

To every discerning and illuminated heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress... The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings... hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness [the Manifestations of God] 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... These attributes of God are not, and have never been, vouchsafed specially unto certain Prophets, and withheld from others. Nay, all the Prophets of God, His well-favored, His holy and chosen Messengers are, without exception, the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes. They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light.⁴²

This brings us to an essential Bahá'í theme described in Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh p64-69: the idea that God chooses to allow humanity knowledge of Him through the appearance of the Manifestation of God.

Without this gift given freely by God's grace which humanity cannot earn by its own

actions, humanity would perish. This is the fundamental purpose of the appearance of all the Prophets of God. This is the reason why Jesus was sent into the world: to bring humanity into reunion with God through revealing teachings by which humans can develop their spiritual potential.

All praise to the unity of God, and all honor to Him, the sovereign Lord, the incomparable and all-glorious Ruler of the universe, Who, out of utter nothingness, hath created the reality of all things, Who, from naught, hath brought into being the most refined and subtle elements of His creation, and Who, rescuing His creatures from the abasement of remoteness and the perils of ultimate extinction, hath received them into His kingdom of incorruptible glory...

Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He...chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him ...

And since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation...He hath ordained that in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven...

These Essences of Detachment, these resplendent Realities are the channels of God's all-pervasive grace. Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, They are commissioned to use the inspiration of Their words, the effusions of Their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of Their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations. Then, and only then, will the Trust of God, latent in the reality of man, emerge, as resplendent as the rising Orb of Divine Revelation, from behind the veil of concealment, and implant the ensign of its revealed glory upon the summits of men's hearts...

Through the Teachings of this Day Star of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the

potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and such might as only the Eternal can reveal.⁴³

'Abdu'l-Bahá reaffirms this central Bahá'í doctrine:

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions.⁴⁴

and gives the example of Christ:

The purpose of the appearance of the Manifestations of God is the training of the people. That is the only result of Their mission, the real outcome. The outcome of the whole life of Jesus was the training of eleven disciples and two women. Why did He suffer troubles, ordeals and calamities? For the training of these few followers.

That was the result of His life. The product of the life of Christ was not the churches but the illumined souls of those who believed in Him. Afterward, they spread His teachings.⁴⁵

All the Prophets of God, including Jesus Christ, appeared in the world for the education of humanity, to develop immature souls into maturity, to transform the ignorant of mankind into the knowing, thereby establishing love and unity through divine education and training.⁴⁶

Shoghi Effendi also describes the essential design of the religions that the Manifestations founded:

...the fundamental purpose of all religions - including our own - is to bring man nearer to God, and to change his character, which is of the utmost importance.⁴⁷

The Christian doctrine of the substitutionary atonement holds as its central theme, the belief that the purpose of the advent, life and death of Jesus Christ was to pay for the sins of humanity; that this was the chosen method for humanity to be allowed forgiveness and achieve oneness with God.

Yet the Bahá'í texts say that the fundamental purpose for the

appearance of Christ was so that human beings might develop their spiritual potential and thus enter into reunion with God⁴⁸. This was achieved through recognition of Christ as a Manifestation of God, and through the belief and practice of his teachings. As such, the meaning of the word atonement as it figures in Bahá'í scripture rests upon the belief that humanity is united with God through the teachings he sends via his Manifestation; that through the voluntary acceptance and practice of these teachings, humanity develops the ability to reunite with its Creator.

The very name of the doctrine "atonement" is derived from a medieval Latin word meaning to "unite". The Oxford dictionary defines the original "onement" (from which the word atonement later developed) as: "[t]he fact of being made into one; physical union; mental or emotional union, agreement."⁴⁹ It was much later that the word came to carry the meaning of payment due for an offence, which the Christian doctrine emphasizes.

In a passage describing Muhammad, but germane to this point, Bahá'u'lláh writes that through active belief in Muhammad the remission of sins was achieved:

The following is an evidence of the sovereignty exercised by Muhammad, the Day-star of Truth. Hast thou not heard how with one single verse He hath sundered light from darkness, the righteous from the ungodly, and the believing from the infidel? ... Whosoever acknowledged His truth and turned unto Him, his good works outweighed his misdeeds, and all his sins were remitted and forgiven. Thereby is the truth of these words concerning Him made manifest: "Swift is He in reckoning." Thus God turneth iniquity into righteousness, were ye to explore the realms of divine knowledge, and fathom the mysteries of His wisdom. In like manner, whosoever partook of the cup of love, obtained his portion of the ocean of eternal grace and of the showers of everlasting mercy, and entered into the life of faith – the heavenly and everlasting life. But he that turned away from that cup was condemned to eternal death. By

the terms

"life" and "death," spoken of in the scriptures, is intended the life of faith and the death of unbelief. The generality of the people, owing to their failure to grasp the meaning of these words, rejected and despised the person of the Manifestation, deprived themselves of the light of His divine guidance, and refused to follow the example of that immortal Beauty.⁵⁰

Furthermore Bahá'í scripture specifically denies as superstition, the notions that Christ's death was a necessary payment for the inheritance of original sin or that it was a necessary payment for the inherited human ability to sin. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

[The churches] teach that because of Adam's sin all His descendants have, likewise, committed transgression and have become responsible through inheritance; that, consequently, all mankind deserves punishment and must make retribution; and that God sent forth His Son as a sacrifice in order that man might be forgiven and the human race delivered from the consequences of Adam's transgression.

We wish to consider these statements from the standpoint of reason. Could we conceive of the Divinity, Who is Justice itself, inflicting punishment upon the posterity of Adam for Adam's own sin and disobedience?⁵¹

Yet, the Bahá'í texts do make certain statements that at a superficial reading appear to confirm the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. In particular Bahá'u'lláh, describing the intended sacrifice of the son of Abraham, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn, says:

The purpose of God, moreover, was to sacrifice him as a ransom for the sins and iniquities of all the peoples of the earth.⁵²

furthermore Shoghi Effendi writes that Bahá'u'lláh's son Mirza Mihdi was "offered up as a ransom by Bahá'u'lláh for the quickening of the world and its unification".⁵³

So what is the purpose of Jesus' death, according to Bahá'í scripture? The question is answered succinctly by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Jesus accepted to be crucified so that his teachings could become known and therefore elevate humanity. He knew that his mission would attract persecution, yet because he loved

humanity and
desired that everyone might have God's teachings, he willingly accepted the
abuse and
torture heaped upon him. As explained before, it is only through the belief and
practice
of the teachings of God that humanity can attain reunion and atonement with
God: so Jesus
was willing to suffer that humanity might have access to these teachings.

In order to understand the reality of sacrifice let us consider
the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. It is true that He sacrificed
Himself for our
sake. What is the meaning of this? When Christ appeared, He knew that He must
proclaim
Himself in opposition to all the nations and peoples of the earth. He knew that
mankind
would arise against Him and inflict upon Him all manner of tribulations. There
is no doubt
that one who put forth such a claim as Christ announced would arouse the
hostility of the
world and be subjected to personal abuse. He realized that His blood would be
shed and His
body rent by violence. Notwithstanding His knowledge of what would befall Him,
He arose to
proclaim His message, suffered all tribulation and hardships from the people
and finally
offered His life as a sacrifice in order to illumine humanity - gave His blood
in order to
guide the world of mankind. He accepted every calamity and suffering in order
to guide men
to the truth.⁵⁴

Bahá'í scripture makes several illuminating comments about the
purpose of the life and death of Jesus Christ. They include describing the aim
of
Jesus' appearance in the world to educate humanity⁵⁵; that he unified
divergent peoples and proclaimed peace⁵⁶; that he established a divine
civilisation⁵⁷; that his "essential teaching was the
unity of mankind and the attainment of supreme human virtues through love"⁵⁸;
that he was willing to die in order to
raise the call of unity and love⁵⁹; and that he died on the cross for the
purpose of achieving the unity of
humanity⁶⁰.

But was it only Jesus that was sacrificed for our sake? According
to the Bahá'í texts, all the Manifestations and Prophets of God suffered for
us and
because of us. Jesus' sacrifice was in his willingness to undergo any

suffering, and

'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that in a like manner Abraham (for example) made the same sacrifice as Jesus.

In reality, Abraham sacrificed Himself, for He brought heavenly teachings to the world and conferred heavenly food upon mankind.⁶¹

He says that each and every Manifestation and Prophet suffered to atone us.

Consider to what extent the love of God makes itself manifest.

Among the signs of His love which appear in the world are the dawning points of His

Manifestations. What an infinite degree of love is reflected by the divine Manifestations

toward mankind! For the sake of guiding the people They have willingly forfeited Their

lives to resuscitate human hearts. They have accepted the cross. To enable human souls to

attain the supreme degree of advancement, They have suffered during Their limited years

extreme ordeals and difficulties. If Jesus Christ had not possessed love for the world of

humanity, surely He would not have welcomed the cross. He was crucified for the love of

mankind. Consider the infinite degree of that love. Without love for humanity John the

Baptist would not have offered his life. It has been likewise with all the Prophets and

Holy Souls. If the Báb had not manifested love for mankind, surely He would not have

offered His breast for a thousand bullets. If Bahá'u'lláh had not been aflame with love

for humanity, He would not have willingly accepted forty years' imprisonment... all the

divine Manifestations suffered, offered Their lives and blood, sacrificed Their existence,

comfort and all They possessed for the sake of mankind.⁶²

All the Prophets of God have been sent to free us from sin:

Evil is imperfection. Sin is the state of man in the world of the baser nature, for in nature exist defects such as injustice, tyranny, hatred, hostility,

strife: these are characteristics of the lower plane of nature. These are the sins of the

world, the fruits of the tree from which Adam did eat. Through education we must free

ourselves from these imperfections. The Prophets of God have been sent, the Holy Books have been written, so that man may be made free.⁶³

In conclusion, we can see that the concept of atonement, as it is understood in the Bahá'í texts, denies the idea that God requires the payment of a blood sacrifice in order for the forgiveness of sins to be achieved; it rejects belief in the inherent supremacy of Jesus over other religious founders and discards the notion that only Jesus suffered and died for humanity's sake.

As such it cannot reasonably be argued that the traditional Christian doctrine of the substitutionary atonement has a place within Bahá'í theology as the Bahá'í texts instead promote the belief that God has sent an unending stream of chosen Messengers - united in aim, purpose and spiritual station - to bear His revelation at the cost of their own lives; that belief in these Manifestations constitutes belief in God Himself, and that the practice of their teachings achieves the remission of sins and atonement with God.

Footnotes

1 Karen Armstrong, *History of God*, p104

2 <http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/02055a.htm>

3 Bible, "Hebrews" 9:28

4 Bible, "Romans" 3:23

5 Qur'an, "An-Nisa" 4:157-8

6 The battle in which Husayn was killed.

7 David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, p161-2

8 Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 64

9 The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p126

10 Shoghi Effendi, *Buddha, Krisna, Zoroaster*, p20

11 The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p126

12 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p449

- 13 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p366
- 14 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p197
- 15 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p197
- 16 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Secret of Divine Civilization, page 99
- 17 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Will and Testament, page 19
- 18 Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, page 161
- 19 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 142
- 20 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 103
- 21 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 159
- 22 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 152, Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 55
- 23 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 51, Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 76-7
- 24 The Báb, Selections from the Bab, p126
- 25 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 152
- 26 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p54
- 27 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 176
- 28 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p79
- 29 From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 29, 1937 and quoted in Lights of Guidance, p492
- 30 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 20
- 31 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p.16
- 32 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p78
- 33 It should be noted that as well as the claims to innate superiority, the Christian belief in Jesus' literal resurrection (and therefore triumph over death to which the rest of humanity must submit) also differentiates him from any other religious figure. The Bahá'í texts deny a literal reading of the

resurrection and instead emphasise the spiritual victory of Jesus' resurrection through the body of the believers. The same status of victory over death is therefore argued for all Manifestations of God and is not exclusive to Jesus.

"The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, Their acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and divine signification, and have no connection with material things." `Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p103. See also: Shoghi Effendi, High Endeavours, p69-70 and Multiple Authors, Lights of Guidance, #1649

34 <http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/07706b.htm>

35 <http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/07706b.htm>

36 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 89

37 Bible, "Romans" 3:23

38 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p170

39 Shoghi Effendi, High Endeavours, p72

40 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p170

41 Bible, "John" 14:6

42 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p46-48

43 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p64-69

44 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p300

45 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p437

46 `Abdu'l-Bahá: Promulgation of Universal Peace, p40

47 Shoghi Effendi, A Chaste and Holy Life, p61

48 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p109

49 Excerpted from The Oxford Interactive Encyclopedia.

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- 50 Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 111-4
- 51 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p449
- 52 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p76
- 53 Shoghi Effendi, Bahiyyih Khanum, p63
- 54 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p450
- 55 `Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p85
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