

of Manifestation, one must also understand the Bahá'í concepts of God, creation, and humanity. This is because Bahá'u'lláh says the Manifestations of God have a twofold station; one is the station of 'pure abstraction and essential unity, not only with each other, but with God as well; the second is the 'station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof (Gleanings 51, 52). Thus Manifestations are bridges between a perfect, ineffable, and transcendent God, on the one hand, and humanity and the physical world on the other. Traditional Christianity views the station of Jesus in a similar way in that Jesus can not save humanity unless He is part of humanity and part of God simultaneously.

Bahá'u'lláh describes the nature of God by emphasizing its transcendence. The innermost essence of God is beyond anything humanity can understand and experience, because we are limited and God is infinite; we are creatures and God is the Creator (Gleanings 151, 193). As 'Abdul-Bahá explains, the difference between God and humanity is like the difference between a painter and a painting; just as a painting is incapable of understanding the painter, so we are limited in our ability to understand our Creator (Some Answered Questions 5). This does not deny the reality of mystical experience; rather, it asserts that however intensely an individual may experience Gods love, God is capable of loving that person even more intensely; so intensely that the frail human soul would be totally destroyed by the power of the love. It is in this sense that the Bahá'í writings strongly emphasize Gods transcendence.

The Bahá'í writings add, however, that even though the innermost essence of God is sanctified beyond our ken, nevertheless humans can know something about God; this is because God chooses to manifest Himself through attributes, such as love, knowledge, compassion, justice, and mercy. Bahá'u'lláh, in a prayer, says 'I testify that Thou hast been sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names (Bahá'í Prayers 12), indicating that even Gods attributes do not fully express Gods inmost essence.[3]

The Christian equivalent to the Bahá'í concept of Manifestation is the concept of incarnation. The word to incarnate means 'to embody in flesh or 'to assume, or exist in, a bodily (esp. a human) form (Oxford English Dictionary). From a Bahá'í point of view, the important question regarding the subject of incarnation is, what does Jesus incarnate? Bahá'ís can certainly say that Jesus incarnated Gods attributes, in the sense that in Jesus, Gods attributes were perfectly reflected and expressed.[4] The Bahá'í scriptures, however, reject the belief that the ineffable essence of the Divinity was ever perfectly and completely contained in a single human body, because the Bahá'í scriptures emphasize the omnipresence and transcendence of the essence of God.

Bahá'u'lláh defines creation and humanity in considerable detail. He says that on 'every created thing He [God] hath shed the light of one of His names (Gleanings 65). In other words, everything reflects an attribute of God; thus Bahá'u'lláh endorses a major insight of nature mysticism. Bahá'u'lláh adds that on the human soul, however, God 'hath focused the radiance of all His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self' (Gleanings 65).

Thus the human soul contains all the attributes of God in potential form (Kitáb-i-Íqán 101), and in this sense we are all linked to, and expressions of, God (though we are separate from the inmost essence of God).

Bahá'u'lláh asserts that the principal bridge between God and all of creation is the Manifestation of God; individuals in whom all the attributes of God exist not only potentially, but in whom they are all perfectly expressed. Manifestations are the mouthpieces of God; the exemplars of God's qualities; they are God's vice-regents on earth. An analogy for the Manifestations found in the Bahá'í writings (Kitáb-i-Íqán 79, 142; Gleanings 74; Some Answered Questions 147-48; Promulgation of Universal Peace 114-15) is that they are like perfect mirrors, reflecting the light of the sun so faithfully that the image of the sun, seen in such a mirror, is indistinguishable from the sun in the sky. Ordinary human beings, no matter how much they polish the mirrors of their own souls, can never become perfect mirrors; and nature also, however much it reflects God's beauty and magnificence, remains an imperfect mirror. To see God truly, we need to turn to the Manifestations. It is interesting to note that the mirror analogy was not unknown to early Christians; the great theologian Origen (185-254 C.E.), citing the Book of Wisdom, called Christ 'the spotless mirror' of God's workings (Origen, On First Principles 26).

Two philosophical terms might be useful to clarify the twofold station of the Manifestations that Bahá'u'lláh describes. One is ontology, 'the science or study of being' (Oxford English Dictionary). Ontology pertains to the nature or essence of things. The other term is epistemology, 'the theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge' (Oxford English Dictionary). Epistemology pertains to what we can know about things. What we can know about a thing is not necessarily identical to the thing itself.

One can argue that Bahá'u'lláh is asserting that epistemologically the Manifestations are God, for they are the perfect embodiment of all we can know about God; but ontologically they are not God, for they are not identical with God's essence. Perhaps this is the meaning of the words attributed to Jesus in the gospel of John: 'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also' (John 14:7) and 'he who has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).

Bahá'u'lláh uses the concept of the twofold station to explain seemingly contradictory statements in the Qur'án and hadith about Muhammad:

The first station, which is related to His [the Manifestations] innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself. To this testified the tradition: 'Manifold and mysterious is My relationship with God. I am He, Himself, and He is I, Myself, except that I am that I am, and He is that He is. And in like manner, the words: 'Arise, O Muhammad, for the Lover and the Beloved are joined together and made one in Thee. He similarly saith: 'There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee [God] and Them [the Manifestations], except that They are Thy servants. The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: 'I am but a man like you. 'Say praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle? (Gleanings 66-67).

The New Testament, similarly, contains statements where Jesus describes Himself as God, and others where He makes a distinction between Himself and God. For example, 'I and the Father are One (John 10:30); and 'the Father is in me, and I am in the Father (John 10:38); but on the other hand, 'the Father is greater than I (John 14:28); and 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). These statements do not contradict, but are complementary if one assumes they assert an epistemological oneness with God, but an ontological separateness from the Unknowable Essence.

The Christian concept of the Trinity arose out of the need to explain statements such as these. The earliest Christians tended to be "binitarian," that is, they stressed the Father and the Son. The third person of the Trinity was added because of the experience of the Spirit in Christian worship and in order to explain many doxologies and expressions used in worship that included the Holy Spirit, such as the baptismal formula in Matt. 28:19, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. However, the baptismal formula originally was not necessarily meant to be a trinitarian statement. Nor did it standardize the views of Christians; Ignatius, a prominent second-generation bishop (died 115 C.E.) used various formulae in his writings, such as 'Christ God (Smyr. 10:1), 'Son, Father, and Spirit (note the order) (Magn. 13:1), and 'in honour of the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles (Tral. 12:2).[5] Tertullian, the first great Latin theologian, coined the word Trinity about the year 200 C.E.; the doctrine reached its traditional form by about 325 C.E.[6]

In its most literal form – that God consists of three separate parts or 'persons, a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Trinity contradicts the Bahá'í view that God consists of a single, transcendent, unknowable essence. But even a literalistic conception of the Trinity can be related to the Bahá'í concept of God. For example, one could identify the transcendent, unknowable essence of God as the 'Father part of the Trinity. The Son and the Holy Spirit can be seen as manifestations of the essence and thus are equivalent to Gods attributes. 'Abdul-Bahá, using the analogy of the perfect mirror previously mentioned, endorses this approach:

Now if we say we have seen the Sun in two mirrors – one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit – that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the other two on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly. (Some Answered Questions 114)

This is one Bahá'í explanation of the symbolism of the Trinity. There are others, for the concept can be understood in many different ways. When one examines the concept of the Trinity historically one finds that a literal understanding was not originally intended. The word 'person, two thousand years ago, never meant an individual human being, as it does today. The word is believed to come from the Latin per, 'through and sona, 'sound; its etymology refers to the masks that actors in plays frequently wore, which had mouthpieces in them to amplify the actors voice. When the actor wished to represent a

different character he put on a different mask or persona. Thus the concept of 'person in the Trinity' could also be translated into modern English by words such as 'personality', 'character', 'face', or 'expression' instead of 'person' (Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought* 46-47). The original idea of the Greek theologians was that God had multiple forms of expression, not multiple individualities, and that these multiple forms were, nevertheless, one.

When faced with the problem of defining the three personae in precise terms, Christian thinkers turned to theology by description and analogy. A good example comes from Gregory of Nazianzus (329-391 CE): 'The Father is the begetter and emitter; without passion, of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is the begotten, and the Holy Spirit is the emission; for I know not how this can be expressed in terms altogether excluding visible things ('The Third Theological Oration – On the Son, in Hardy and Richardson, *Christology of the Later Fathers* 161). Another place, using the analogy of light, Gregory says God can be comprehended 'out of light [the Father], as 'light itself [the Son], and 'in light [the Spirit] ('Fifth Theological Oration – On the Spirit, in Hardy and Richardson, *Christology of the Later Fathers* 195).[[7]

It is interesting to note that 'Abdul-Bahá also took this analogical approach to describing the Trinity. In a tablet He revealed to an American Bahá'í in 1900, He said:

But as to the question of the Trinity, know, O advancer unto God, that in each one of the cycles [dispensations of a Manifestation] . . . there are necessarily three things, the Giver of the Grace, and the Grace, and the Recipient of the Grace; the Source of the Effulgence, and the Effulgence, and the Recipient of the Effulgence; the Illuminator, and the Illumination, and the Illumined. Look at the Mosaic cycle – the Lord, and Moses, and the Fire (i.e., the Burning Bush), the intermediary; and in the Messianic cycle, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost the intermediary; and in the Muhammudan [sic] cycle, the Lord and the Apostle (or Messenger, Muhammad) and Gabriel (for, as the Muhammadans believe, Gabriel brought the Revelation from God to Muhammad,) the intermediary. Look at the Sun and its rays and the heat which results from its rays: the rays and the heat are but two effects of the Sun, but inseparable from it and sent out from it; yet is the Sun one in its essence, unique in its real identity, single in its Attributes, neither is it possible for anything to resemble it. Such is the Essence of the Truth concerning the Unity, the real doctrine of the Singularity, the undiluted reality as to the (Divine) Sanctuary. ('Abdul-Bahá, *Tablets from Abdul Beha Abbas* 9.)[8]

In addition to discussing Jesus Christ in general terms, and in terms of the Trinity, the Bahá'í writings discuss Jesus Himself. Jesus' death on the cross is recognised as an atonement for humanity (*God Passes By*, 188; *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, 543). Bahá'u'lláh describes Jesus' impact on the world in very specific terms:

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole of Creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent spirit . . . He it is who purified the world. Blessed the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him. (Gleanings 86)

Bahá'u'lláh states that while all the Manifestations of God hold an equal spiritual station, they are not equal in terms of the intensity and potency of their revelations (Kitáb-i-Íqán 104). The above quotation suggests that Jesus Christ, the Manifestation who founded what is today the largest religious community on the planet, had a unique impact on human history; an impact that perhaps was greater than that of any other Manifestation before Bahá'u'lláh.

A Bahá'í view of Jesus' titles

The Bahá'í writings do not discuss all of the titles used by Christians for Jesus, but they imply approaches that Bahá'í can take to the titles that are not discussed. A key element in the Bahá'í approach is the uniqueness of each Manifestation; Bahá'u'lláh says that each has 'a distinct personality, a definitely prescribed station, a predestined revelation, and specially designated limitations (Gleanings 52). Thus Bahá'ís do not have to recognize the validity of, say, the title 'Son of Man' by attributing it to Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or another Manifestation. Jesus can be the Son of Man; Muhammad can be the Seal of the Prophets; Bahá'u'lláh can be the Glory of God; each is different, yet none is better than the other because of His unique title.

Son of God and Son of Man.

In the previously quoted passage Bahá'u'lláh appears to specifically affirm the title 'Son of Man' (or 'Son of Humanity, as some modern Christian theologians prefer to translate it) as referring to Jesus. Bahá'u'lláh does not say what the term means, and Christian tradition has been fairly vague about the terms meaning. It ultimately comes from the Book of Daniel, where it refers to the Messiah, and is frequently used in the Gospels as a title of Jesus. Presumably the title is symbolic of the perfect humanity that Jesus represented.

Although the Bahá'í writings say nothing about the title 'Son of God' (or 'only begotten Son of God, [John 3:16]) there is much that can be said about it from a Bahá'í perspective. 'Son of God' is an extremely important title of Jesus for Christians, so much so that in the minds of many Christians 'Son of God' defines the relationship of Jesus with His Father. But often Christians do not think about the symbolic meaning of the title; indeed, many seem unaware that the title is symbolic at all.

What does the term 'Son' mean? Normally, the word has a simple biological meaning, but that meaning is the very one that cannot apply to the relationship between God and Jesus, for God does not have genetic material to confer upon Jesus, nor does God have a body with which He could unite with Mary to produce a son. Christian theology never meant the term to be understood literally; as the above quote from Gregory of Nazianzus emphasizes, God begot Christ 'without passion, of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner' ('The Third Theological Oration – On the Son' 161). The Qur'án echoes Gregory's recognition of God's transcendence when it says, 'Allah is only one God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son' (Qur'án 5:171).

Consequently, the word 'Son' must be understood in a metaphorical or symbolic sense; the same is true of the verb 'begotten' when applied to Jesus. One possible meaning of Son, rejected early by the mainstream of Christian theology, was the 'adoptionist' interpretation; that Jesus was an ordinary man, 'adopted' by God as His Son. The Bahá'í writings would also seem to reject this approach, since they do not see Manifestations of God as ordinary human beings; rather, the Bahá'í writings indicate that the souls of the Manifestations are pre-existent, in contrast to ordinary human beings, whose souls come into existence at the moment of conception. Manifestations are indeed unique creations of God, as the phrase 'only begotten' attempts to convey; it describes Jesus's mode of creation through an analogy with the physical world, an analogy that Gregory of Nazianzus, by qualifying the word in the above passage, admits has its limitations.

Another symbolic interpretation of the term 'Son' would be to argue that Jesus was the 'spiritual' Son of God. Various interpreters have taken this approach. One could say that all humans, including Jesus, are 'sons' of God, in other words, that all were created by God. This is true, but it undercuts the uniqueness of the title's application to Christ, probably unnecessarily, and undercuts the distinction that Bahá'í would make between Jesus Christ and creation.

Another approach would be to argue that the title refers to the fact that Jesus, as a Manifestation of God, exemplified the relationship between humans and God in a unique and perfect fashion; Jesus was the true and perfect 'Son' in His obedience, His servitude to God, and His love for His Father. In this sense all the Manifestations of God are 'Sons' of God. Yet another approach would be to argue that while all Manifestations exemplify perfect Sonship., it was a particular and central characteristic of Jesus Christ's mission to exemplify such a relationship.

I prefer the last approach for several reasons. First, it conveys the emphases central to Jesus's mission, especially the stress on love. In the polytheistic days of Abraham, the focus of revelation had to be on the fact that only one God existed; in the time of Moses, the focus was on a simple legal relationship with God, based on laws; by the time of Jesus a deeper, more personal, more loving relationship could be stressed. Subsequently, Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh

could attempt to balance the personal dimension of religion – the relationship of the individual to God – with the social dimension, the establishment of laws for building a religiously based society. Thus, the word 'Sonship' seems to capture a significant dimension of Jesus's message.

Second, historically 'Son of God' has been applied only to Jesus; Bahá'u'lláh does not claim the title for Himself, nor does He apply it to other Manifestations. Thus there seems to be no reason for Bahá'ís to apply the title in a general way to all Manifestations of God.

Third, the title 'Son of Gods is an important and fitting counterpoint to the title 'Son of Man'; the two of them together bring out the twofold station of Jesus. Both expressions use the term 'Son' in the same symbolic fashion, to denote Jesus's perfect expression or embodiment of the two aspects of His nature.

Fourth, 'Son of God' alludes to the virgin birth of Jesus, an event that the Bahá'í writings validate as an historical event (Directives of the Guardian 39; High Endeavors 68).

Saviour

The term 'Saviour' is another title of Jesus that Bahá'ís can understand and accept. In His parables, Jesus makes it clear that entrance into the Kingdom of God is dependent on an absolute acceptance of God's will, apparently as it is revealed through Him. The Apostle Paul stressed salvation through faith in Christ. Though Bahá'u'lláh does not use the word 'salvation', He discusses a similar concept:

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Day Spring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of His creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof, has gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration. (Gleanings 330-31).

Bahá'u'lláh makes it clear that acceptance of the Manifestation of God – two thousand years ago, Jesus, and today Bahá'u'lláh Himself – is crucial for one's spiritual progress, and takes complete precedence over one's actions (here He agrees with the Apostle Paul's position on the priority of faith over works [Romans 3:28]). Bahá'u'lláh goes on to say that obedience to the teachings – especially the laws – of the Manifestation is also required. This is consistent with Jesus giving guidance about divorce (Matt. 5:3 2), and Paul's reminder to the Roman Christians that while faith takes precedence over works, Christians must uphold the law (Romans 330-

Another ingenious, though personal, interpretation of the term salvation was offered by Thornton Chase, the first American Bahá'í. Chase began with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discussion of the five kinds of spirit. Plants possess the vegetable spirit, which consists of the power of growth; animals possess the animal spirit, which includes growth and perception; humans possess the human spirit, which includes growth, perception, and cognition. Above these three is the 'heavenly spirit' or the 'spirit of faith', which 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls 'the power which makes the earthly man heavenly, and the imperfect man perfect' (Some Answered Questions 144). Fifth is the Holy Spirit, 'the mediator between God and His creatures' (Some Answered Questions 145). Chase argues that when a person acquires the fourth spirit (the spirit of faith) – which occurs when one accepts the Word of God into one's heart and it works a transformation in one's soul – then the person has experienced salvation. This, he says, is what is meant by the phrase 'ye must be born again' [John 3:7] (Chase, *The Bahá'í Revelation* 119-21).

Thus Bahá'ís would not claim that only Jesus offered salvation to humanity; all the Manifestations convey salvation, through their words and through their sacrifice. In this sense all Manifestations could be described as 'saviours'. American Bahá'ís frequently apply the title to Bahá'u'lláh in their songs, although the Bahá'í scriptures apparently do not use the title (for Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh, or any other Manifestation of God).

Lord

Christians often refer to Jesus as the 'Lord'. Bahá'u'lláh also applies the title to Jesus, referring to Him as 'Lord of the visible and invisible' (Gleanings 57). 'Lord' is a title of not only to Jesus, but to kings, nobility, masters, and others. The term *kyrie* ('Lord') in Greek had a similarly wide range of uses. Bahá'ís refer to Bahá'u'lláh as their 'Lord', but can apply the term to any Manifestation of God.

Way, Truth, and Life.

Modern Christians sometimes use passages from the New Testament as titles or descriptions of Jesus. Perhaps the best example would be John 14:6, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me'. Bahá'í would not reject this passage from the Gospel of John, but they would interpret it differently than most Christians. Two possible approaches come to mind. One would be to examine the word 'I'; to whom is Jesus referring? To Himself, certainly, but could He not be referring to all Manifestations in general, since, as Bahá'u'lláh explains, one of the stations of the Manifestations is 'pure abstraction and essential unity' (Gleanings 51)? Thus, Jesus's statement would never have been meant to exclude the other Manifestations, especially not Himself when He returned – that is, in the person of Bahá'u'lláh. A Christian theologian, John Cobb, has also recognised the ambiguity of 'I' and has suggested that the 'I' refers not to the historical Jesus, but to the eternal *logos* manifested in Jesus.[9] In Bahá'í terms, Cobb is suggesting that the 'I' refers to the Holy Spirit common to all

the Manifestations, or to their station of unity.

One could also examine the word 'am'. The verb to be has many uses – the Oxford English Dictionary lists twenty four – some of which are normally distinguished from each other only by context. One grammatical usage is the universal present, which is used to make statements that are always true, such as 'triangles are three-sided'. Another usage applies to the present, but may not apply to the future as well, such as 'I am young' or 'I am alive'.

Christians usually understand the statement 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life', as a universal present, but could it not be meant to apply only to some period of time in the past? Could not Abraham have been the way, truth, and life for the peoples of the Middle East from 2000 BCE to respect in the English language that is applied the time of Moses; then Moses was the way, truth, and life until the time of Jesus; then Jesus was the way, truth, and life until the time of Muhammad; and so on? Similarly, Bahá'u'lláh is the way, truth, and life until He will be superseded by another Manifestation, which He assures us will occur after a thousand years (Gleanings 346).

Summary

In summary, the Bahá'í scriptures do not reject the uniqueness of Jesus Christ; on the contrary, they respect, love, and emphasize it.

However, they seek to balance that uniqueness by recognizing the uniqueness of other Manifestations of God as well. This balance is achieved by seeing Manifestations as perfect expressions of the divine will for the people of their place and time. The Manifestations bring eternal and unchanging religious teachings to the people as well as principles designed for the society to which they minister. Thus Jesus is seen by Bahá'ís as divine, as the Son of Man and the Son of God, and as the way, truth, and life to His world. Ironically, this is more than many Christians believe about Jesus. The Bahá'í view of the station of Jesus falls near the middle of the spectrum of views that Christians hold, and claims to understand Jesus in a way fitting to our modern, pluralistic, and historically-minded world.

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End Notes

There have been many studies on this problem; among the best is Gunther Bomkamm's Jesus of Nazareth (for the full bibliographic information on this work, and others cited in this paper, see the bibliography). James Breech's The Silence of Jesus:

The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man is an attempt to analyze Jesus's theological message based on those parables that most scholars acknowledge as historically reliable records of Jesus's words.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi respectively added Buddha and Krishna to this list.

It is interesting to note that 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to some attributes as essential to God's nature, such as pre-existence (Some Answered Questions 148-49). But which attributes are essential? It would seem that the definition of the word God necessitates that God be all-powerful and omniscient; therefore one could argue that these are qualities of God's inmost essence. But can God choose whether or not to be loving and compassionate, and remain God? Is it a necessary part of God's essence that God be loving? Questions such as these await the thought of Bahá'í philosophers and theologians. An excellent

foundation for the study of them has been laid by Juan Ricardo Cole's Concept of Manifestation in the Bahá'í Writings.

See Heb. 1:3.

The writings of Ignatius are available in Cyril C. Richardson, ed. and trans., Early Christian Fathers..

CE stands for 'Common Era', and is the widely accepted replacement for the term AD (which stands for *anno domini*, 'in the year of the Lord').

Gregory of Nazianzus was one of the three great Greek theologians who, after the Council of Nicaea, defined the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in trinitarian terms acceptable to virtually all Christians. He is considered one of the great fathers of the Greek church and is highly respected by all Christian traditions.

Note: this is an old translation, and it has not been checked by the Bahá'í World Centre for accuracy.

It is affirmed (by some Christians), then, that the Word who is incarnate in Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life, and that no one comes to the Father except through the Word. This cannot mean that the Word is present and active in only in Jesus; for in the prologue to the Gospel it is stated that in the Word that was from the beginning was life, that this life that also the true light that enlightens everyone'. (Cobb, Dialogue 17)

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