

# The Baha'i Faith—Part Five

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## THEOLOGY—Part 1

### *Christianity*

While Baha'is tell potential converts that they are not anti-Christian, their prophets and modern writers are denouncing Christianity in four major areas: 1) the authority of the Bible; 2) the Trinity; 3) Christology (from the Virgin Birth to Christ's unique Deity and mediatorial atonement); and 4) salvation by grace through faith alone.

Certainly, Baha'is may *sound* Christian. Consider the following Baha'i statement: "Baha'is believe in Jesus Christ. Baha'is believe that Christ was the son of God, born of the Virgin Mary. Christ came to bring salvation to mankind.... A person cannot be a Baha'i unless he believes in Christ."<sup>49</sup> But do Baha'is really believe this?

The Baha'i message for Christians is that *Baha'u'llah* is the promised Messiah of the Bible and other holy scriptures, and that Baha'u'llah's teachings supersede all others. Baha'u'llah was none other than Jesus Christ returned, and it is to him, not Jesus, that Christians and others must look. Why then are orthodox Christians still looking for Jesus' return? Because Christ's erring disciples falsely interpreted Jesus' teachings. This explains why such teachings do not seem to conform to Baha'u'llah's revelations.

Consider several examples. William Sears declares that because he was a Christian (but one who did not know Christ was the Messiah!<sup>50</sup>), he was compelled to accept Baha'u'llah as Christ returned. For this, he was told, was the true teaching of Christ that the disciples had distorted. "I had to accept Baha'u'llah or deny Christ.... To deny Moses and Christ would be to deny Baha'u'llah.... I could not refuse to accept Baha'u'llah or I would be denying Christ Himself...."<sup>51</sup> Although his book *Thief in the Night* is allegedly a reputable Baha'i apologetic for their view that Baha'u'llah is Christ returned, anyone with a modicum of doctrinal and biblical knowledge may easily uncover the historical, biblical and religious errors that run throughout his book.<sup>52</sup>

A related effort is by George Townshend. His book *The Heart of the Gospel* tells us, "Within the Baha'i Faith the spirit of the early Christian Church has risen again.... Christ is adored as the very Word of God sharing God's glory from all eternity.... Christ's message is renewed, elucidated, expanded, carried forward."<sup>53</sup>

In his book *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, J. E. Esslemont states that Baha'u'llah "comes to make Christians better Christians."<sup>54</sup> He quotes 'Abdu'l-Baha: "The principles of Christianity and the commandments of Baha'u'llah are identical and their paths are the same."<sup>55</sup> Horace Holley avers, "Baha'u'llah's message does not *repeat* the message of Christ—it *completes* that message."<sup>56</sup>

Baha'is, then, are uncompromising in asserting that they are genuine Christians. Naturally, it is the "true Christians [who] will accept Jesus in his returned form [as] Baha'u'llah. The Baha'i Faith thus becomes... a truer form... of Christianity"; "The Baha'i Faith is Christianity today; the Baha'i Faith is Islam today."<sup>57</sup> Richardson even claims that "Christians by the thousands have deserted the banner of Jesus for that of Baha'u'llah."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately,

because of Baha'i distortions about Jesus, many people from mainline Christian churches have become Baha'is.

To win over Christians, the Baha'i faith destroys Christian faith and replaces it with Baha'i doctrines. Nominal Christians who are now Baha'is and Baha'is themselves need to ask some serious questions concerning this approach. How can Baha'is be Christian and followers of Jesus Christ when their teachings are anti-Christian and opposed to Christ? How do they objectively know that the Jesus they believe in is the real Jesus? What if historical proof exists that their Jesus is the corrupted Jesus? (See our book *Ready With an Answer*, chapters 4-6, 8, 14-16.) If the path of Baha'i and Christianity is the same, why did orthodox Christians reject the subsequent Baha'i Manifestation of God after Jesus, Muhammad? Why did they reject the Bab? And why did they reject the most complete Manifestation of God to date, Baha'u'llah?

Also, how can Baha'is logically claim to honor Christianity when their own teachings demand that they reject it as an evil religion? All true Christians worship Jesus as God, but this is something that Baha'is declare is an idolatrous blasphemy. What about the "ancient dogma" and "error of exclusivism" in Christianity that hinders the Baha'i march toward world unity? Is not the Christian belief in miracles a "primitive rejection" of the "victory of science" proclaimed by Baha'is? <sup>59</sup> And do Baha'is not believe that the apostle Paul, whom Christians accept as divinely inspired, is a perverter and destroyer of Jesus' teachings? One could go on and on, but knowledgeable Baha'is know their adversary. Christians do not persecute Baha'is as Muslims do, but to the Baha'i cause, Christian doctrine is almost as dangerous.

(to be continued)

#### **Notes:**

49. Huschmand Sabat, *The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder* (Oxford, England: George Ronald Publishing, 1975), pp. 9, 11
50. William Sears, *Thief in the Night* (Oxford, England: George Ronald, 1973), pp. 252-255.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 253-255.
52. For example, pp. 117-119, 148-150, 172-175, 203-207.
53. George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel* (London, England: George Ronald, 1960), pp. 156-157.
54. J. E. Esselmont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* (Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1970), p. 256.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
56. *World Order*, Spring 1978, p. 5.
57. *Ibid.*, Spring 1976, p. 36.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
59. Abdu'l-Baha, *Christ's Promise Fulfilled* (Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1978), p. 30.