Reviews

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***Tāhirih in History: Perspectives on Qurratu'l-'Ayn from East and West*, Sabir Afaqi (ed.), Studies in the Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions, Volume 16 (2004)**
Los Angeles: Kalimat Press xiv + 292 pp.
(including 11 pp. of poetry in Persian)
ISBN 1–890688–35–5, $29.95

Reviewed by **Lil Abdo**
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This book is unusual in the context of the Studies in the Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions Series insofar as most of the material has been published previously and in several cases the articles are many years old and are very well known. What editor Sabir Afaqi has done is collect an eclectic mix of writing by and about Tahirih and present them to the reader in four sections; Baha'i Sources, Eastern Impressions, Western Considerations and The Writings of Qurratu'l-'Ayn.

The Baha'i Sources section comprises of two accounts of Tahirih's life most likely to be known to the casual Baha'i reader: 'Jinab-i Tahirih', an excerpt from 'Abdu'l-Baha's *Memorials of the Faithful* and 'Valiant Tahirih' from Shoghi Effendi's *God Passes By*. The latter includes the claims that she was 'the first woman suffrage martyr', which is anachronistic given the lack of any kind of suffrage movement in Iran at the time, and that her last words were 'You cannot stop the emancipation of women', apparently addressed to her executioner but with no reference as to who recorded this unlikely utterance.

The Eastern Impressions begins with Sabir Afaqi's previously unpublished 'Qurratu'l-'Ayn Tahirih in Urdu Literature'. The introduction is slightly sloppy, repeating unreferenced, disputed incidents such as her refusal to become queen of Persia (p. 27); however, once Afaqi starts to outline Tahirih's place in Urdu literature his scholarship becomes far more rigorous and he puts forward a convincing case for 'the greatest reason for Tahirih's fame and popularity is her poetry' (p. 28). Most western readers are not aware of the importance of Tahirih in Persian and Urdu literature and it is striking that most of the articles in this section concentrate upon her poetry rather than her life and beliefs. If further proof of his thesis were needed, Afaqi places an excerpt from the *Javid-Nama* by Pakistan's national poet Muhammad Iqbal as the second piece in this section. Iqbal writes of Tahirih as one of three noble souls who, disinclined to live in Paradise, wander forever. There then follow four short biographical sketches which, whilst of varying quality and accuracy, throw a light upon the importance of Tahirih to Asian literature. It is interesting to note that most of these sources are Muslims and that her poetry bridges religious divides.

The Western Considerations section begins with excepts from *A Traveller's Narrative* and 'The Babis of Persia, their Literature and Doctrines' by Edward G. Browne and *Seyyid Ali Mohammed dit le Bab* by A.L.M. Nicolas. The latter work has never been translated into English so Peter Terry's translation of this extract is particularly welcome. Although these two pieces might be argued to be little more than historical curiosities, they shed light upon what information and disinformation was available to these two scholars and how their work would colour the understanding of the story in the West. Browne reports difficulty in finding and authenticating Tahirih's writing; one can only assume the passage of time will have exacerbated this problem. Nicolas's work is full of unsubstantiated detail, much of which found its way into Baha'i folklore. Abbas Amanat's contribution, 'Qurrat al-Ayn: Remover of the Veil' is probably the most detailed and scholarly account of the life and death of Tahirih to date, clearly and simply written with detailed references and footnotes it evidences Amanat's rigorous scholarship and grasp of his subject in her historical context. The contributions by Farzaneh Milani and Susan Stiles Maneck examine their subject from the perspective of gender. Milani has the better grasp of the feminist hermeneutic and makes clear that the term 'feminism' is anachronistic in describing her beliefs but rather that, in her repudiation of gender-specific norms, her actions embodied the concept. Stiles Maneck takes up the question of how can Tahirih be presented as an 'ideal woman'. She leaves the conclusion open; however, she does reflect in passing on how western accounts of Tahirih, although numerous tend to tone down her radicalism. Indeed a serialized account of her did appear in *Votes for Women*, the journal of the Women's Freedom League, written by the League's president Charlotte Despard. Despard's group had split from the more militant suffrage organizations over the use of violence and some of her ideas appear to have been influential in 'Abdu'l-Baha's responses to the suffrage campaigns in the West; this may back up Stiles Maneck's assertion. Negar Mottahedeh's short piece 'Ruptured Spaces and Effective Histories' uses Michel Foucault's historiographic theories to analyse the events at the Conference of Badasht; this is probably the most complex and detailed article in the collection. The last contribution in this section comes from Jan Teofil Jasion's forthcoming biography of Izabella Arkadev'na Grinevskaia, who wrote a popular play based upon the story of the Bab and Tahirih which opened in St Petersburg in 1904. Jasion reminds the reader that many early western accounts of the Babi movement were in fact written and published in Russian.

The fourth section, The Writings of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, opens with a survey of Tahirih's work by Denis MacEoin, from *The Sources for Early Babi Doctrine and History*. MacEoin's excellent and painstaking research would prove an invaluable starting point for anyone wanting to make a study from primary sources. This is followed by a prayer, translated by Juan Cole, which gives the reader some insight into Tahirih's understanding of her relationship to the Divine as well as her style as a poet. To further this end there is a small anthology of poems and fragments of poems translated by various authors, which I would not presume to review but rather urge readers to peruse them for themselves. Finally there is a selection of poems in the original languages in the calligraphy of Rashid Butt. Butt uses the Nasta'liq style to provide a brilliant and authentic background to the poetry.

It would be improper to review this book without mentioning the fascinating photographs that illustrate it. It is not enough to say that they are pictures of women wearing the costumes of the various classes and regions of Iran and neighbouring territories for they are a social history all on their own. It is regrettable that more detailed information about the circumstances of their origins is not included.

Whilst it is inevitable in a book of this nature that there will be a fair amount of repetition as different authors outline the life of their subject, in this case the kaleidoscope of different interpretations and analysis make it possible to spot where some of the various myths have arisen, been discounted and replaced by new insights and assumptions.

This little book is of great value to anyone interested in Tahirih Qurratu'l-'Ayn either as a casual reader or a scholar. It is extremely accessible and brings together both venerable sources (getting increasingly hard to find) and current scholarship. It is particularly commendable that it brings into sharp focus an eastern perspective, so often ignored in the West. Sabir Afaqi is to be congratulated on such an interesting and thought-provoking collection.

Sadly this will be one of the last in this excellent series published by Kalimat Press, a publisher that so enriched Baha'i scholarship. Readers may also be required to obtain copies directly from the publisher as Baha'i Publishing Trusts no longer handle Kalimat products.

The Genesis of the Bābī-Bahā'ī Faiths in Shiraz and Fars, Mirza Habību'llāh Afnān (translated and annotated by Ahang Rabbani) (2008)

Numen Book Series, vol. 122, Leiden: Brill, xxi + 404 pp.,
ISBN 978–90–04–17054–4 (hbk), € 129.00/US$ 199.00

Reviewed by **Moojan Momen**
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In the first few years of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi began to call for the recording and writing of histories of the Baha'i Faith in the various localities around the world where the religion had been established. In particular he called for the Iranian Baha'i community to carry this out on a systematic basis, both commissioning the writing of local histories in all of the major cities and some of the smaller towns and villages of Iran as well as the writing of a major overall history of the Baha'i Faith. This latter task was given to the scholar Fāḍil-i Māzandarānī.

In the last decade, several of the local histories produced as a result of this process have been published in the original Persian. This book is the first translation into English of one of these histories: the history of the Baha'i Faith in Shiraz and in the province of Fars. The author of this history, Mirza Habibu'llah Afnan, was well-qualified to carry out this task. As a member of the Afnan family, the family of the Bab, he had access to family records that yielded valuable insights into the period when the Bab was in Shiraz. In addition, the author's father had been the third member of that family to be converted to the new religion and had been an observer of the

events of the Baha'i history of Shiraz since about 1855. The author himself, born in 1875 and growing up in this household, was privy not only to all of the accumulated lore, knowledge and documents of the family but himself played a part in many of the later events he describes.

This book covers the period from the birth of the Bab in 1819 to 1910. In addition to providing much information about the Bab that is not recorded elsewhere (in chapters 1 to 4), the history also records the conversions of the Afnan family (chapter 7), the execution of a number of Baha'is in 1871 (chapter 8) and 1892 (chapter 11), the life and passing of the wife of the Bab in 1882 (chapter 9), the turbulent events in Shiraz leading up to and after the Constitutional Revolution(chapter 13, 15 and 17) and such events as the rebuilding of the House of the Bab (chapter 14). There is also some information in this history about events in some other towns in Fars such as the three upheavals in Nayriz (1850, 1853 and 1909 in chapters 5, 6 and 16) and events in Abadih (chapter 12), but this falls short of being a history of the Baha'i Faith in those places.

One particular aspect of Baha'i history that can be followed on these pages is the manner in which the Baha'is were caught up and scapegoated in the local power politics of Shiraz. For much of the last half of the nineteenth century, two families battled each other for control of Shiraz, the Qavam and Mushir families. In the course of this, the Baha'is were often used by one side in their machinations against the other. At first it was the Mushir family who attacked the Baha'is as a way of discomfiting Qavam ul-Mulk, who held the position of *Kalantar* (responsible for public order). Later, during the Constitutional Revolution, it was Qavam ul-Mulk who attacked the Baha'is as a way of causing trouble for and getting rid of a governor who was opposed to him. Similarly, the Baha'is became pawns in the machinations of various clerics as they vied with each other for power. Instigating an attack on the Baha'is thus became a way for ambitious individuals to demonstrate and consolidate their power.

The translator has extensively annotated the text to give accounts of some of the individuals mentioned and give further explanations to those who may not have the cultural background that the author is assuming. He has also added a number of very useful appendices to this book. These include the translation of an extension to this history by the author's son, Abu'l-Qasim Afnan, to cover events between 1910 and 1951; an account of the various Baha'i holy places in Shiraz; biographical notes on the various governors of Fars in this period; the translation of some letters and papers relating to the Afnan family and the visit to Baghdad in 1861 of the Bab's uncle, Sayyid Muhammad, his meeting with Baha'u'llah and the circumstances in which the latter wrote for him the Kitāb-i Īqān; notes on the individual members of the paternal and maternal family of the Bab; some general notes on Shiraz and Fars; and a translation of the Sūrih-yi Ḥajj (Tablet for the Pilgrimage to the House of the Bab).

As with any translation, there are a few places where another person would have translated differently. There are also some misunderstandings and mistranslations in the book. On page 5, Mulla Fatḥu'llāh who had worked in Shaykh 'Abid's school, where the Bab had been taken as a child, describes himself as *khalīfih*, which is explained in parentheses thus: '(that is the [school's] principal)'. I think this is one misunderstanding compounding another. Mirza Habibu'llah has inserted the words in

parentheses using the word *nāẓim* to explain *khalīfih*. Rabbani has translated this as 'school's principal'. When modern schools came to Iran, they were modelled on the French system in which each school had a *proviseur* (headmaster or principal) and *censeur* (superintendent or administrator). These words were translated in Persian as '*mudīr*' and '*nāẓim*' respectively. It was however probably an anachronism for Mirza Habibu'llah to apply this word to Shaykh 'Abid's school which was a traditional Iranian school (*maktab*) and would not have had such a figure. It was a further misunderstanding for Rabbani to translate '*nāẓim*' as 'principal', when in fact this word referred to the *censeur*, an employee who was responsible for order in the school and the administration of it. As for the original word *khalīfih*, which all of this is attempting to explain, it is clear from the text that Shaykh 'Abid was a Sufi *shaykh* (the head of a Sufi order) and this school was established in a Sufi *takiyyih* (retreat or convent). In this context, the word *khalīfih* refers to the next level below *shaykh* in the hierarchy of Sufi orders.

Another misunderstanding occurs on page 61, where one of Ḥujjat's wives is described as *muta'ih*, which is translated as 'contracted'. This is an acceptable translation but the footnote given in explanation (no. 118) is entirely misleading. The footnote states: 'Islamic jurisprudence allows for four permanent wives and any number of concubines. The latter do not typically enjoy the same status as the former.' This statement is correct and would be accepted by both Sunnis and Shi'is (being based on Qur'an 4:3). The word 'concubine' in this context, however, relates to 'slave women'. This has nothing to do with the institution of *muta'ih* wives, who are free women contracted as wives for a defined period of time, an institution allowed only in Shi'i Islam.

In all, this is a very useful book for anyone interested in those aspects of Baha'i history that relate to the central figures of the religion and events in Iran. Many will want to read it just for the information that it gives about the Bab but others will want to know about the history of the Baha'i Faith in this important Iranian city. The book is well produced and there is a good index and so it is a pity that the price will undoubtedly put many people off purchasing the volume.

***Take My Love to the Friends: The Story of Laura R. Davis,* Marlene Macke (2009)**

St Marys, ON, Canada: Chestnut Park Press.
xviii + 287 pp. (index, bibliography, 37 b&w photographs),
ISBN 978–0–9810256–0–5 (pbk), US$/Canadian$ 29.95

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As attested by the 'In Memoriam' entries in *Bahá'í World* volumes, biographies occupy a particular space in Baha'i communities. They are spiritual snapshots of Baha'is who have contributed to, and inspired, communities around the world. As national Baha'i communities age,

there are opportunities for writing full-scale biographies. The United Kingdom, the United States and Australia are seeing the emergence of these biographies. Canada, too, is a place that has witnessed successful attempts at biographical writing.

It is a matter of personal joy to see Marlene Macke's completing of a detailed narrative of Laura R. Davis, a prominent early Canadian Baha'i (1895–1990) who exercised a long-lasting loyal influence on the lives of numerous Baha'is, in addition to her many years of service on Canada's National Spiritual Assembly, starting with the first one in 1948. The Universal House of Justice characterized her dedicated service as 'an example to present and future generations of Canadian believers' (p. xi). For 40 years Laura held weekly firesides in her home, undertook hundreds of teaching trips in Canada and abroad in which she used her devotion to the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith to inspire and instruct Baha'is and non-Baha'is alike. Macke assiduously conducted research on the life of Laura for 11 years beginning in January 1998. *Take My Love to the Friends* is a very timely work: among the hundred people Macke relied on, I counted 43 per cent who were of advanced age or who have died since her research.

Canadian Baha'is should welcome *Take my Love to the Friends*. It contributes to filling a vacuum in Canadian Baha'i historiography in which there are too few biographies. We can count two that take a scholarly approach to a Baha'i life. The first is Jan T. Jasion's biography of Marion Jack, *Never be Afraid to Dare* (2001); the second is *Honoré Jaxon: Prairie Visionary* (2007) by Donald B. Smith, a professor of history at the University of Calgary. Jaxon was an enigmatic and leading figure in Louis Riel's rebellion in Canada's prairies, a socialist who eventually became in 1897, in Chicago, the first Canadian Baha'i.

At the other end of the genre are the five more intensely personal accounts. Suzanne Schuurman's *Tristan* (1987) stands as the first biography of a Canadian Baha'i. Although not historical in the strict sense of the word, it captures the spirit of the Baha'i community touching, and touched by, the life of Tristan, a young person with physical and mental disabilities. *Fires in Many Hearts*, Doris McKay's autobiography (1991), captures her life and the Baha'i community since the 1920s. Angela Szepesi's autobiography, *Dreams, Nightmares, and Dreams Again* (1995), is a personal diary with a lesser focus on the Baha'i community. One should also include Larry Rowdon's pioneering accounts in the Magdalen Islands and in Montserrat, *Hidden Bounties* (1994) and *In the Path of the Wind* (1997), respectively.

There is a third genre of biographical writing pursued by Canadian Baha'is. Without academic intentions, this genre nevertheless entails a considerable collection of data and a commitment to preserve for posterity a living memory of Baha'is who had a unique place in Baha'i history. In 1998, Ilona Sala Weinstein offered an edited volume of the letters and papers of Emeric and Rosemary Sala (1998), hopefully laying the groundwork for subsequent research on the Salas. Patricia Verge authored *Angus from the Heart: the Life of Counsellor Angus Cowan* (1999). Verge's book represents a careful and systematic collection of interviews, personal experiences and documents, encapsulating them into a narrative of someone who has had a profound influence on the Baha'i teaching work among Canada's indigenous populations. Macke's book, *Take My Love to the Friends*, falls into this genre.

Chapter 1 covers the early years of Laura's life (1895–1919); chapter 2 speaks to the years 1919–27, during which time Laura became a Baha'i. Chapter 3 (1928–38) deals with the quickening of the Canadian Baha'i community, especially in Toronto where Laura played a critical role. With chapter 4 (1939–44) we see the acceleration of the Baha'i momentum across Canada. Her work on teaching and other committees is the subject of chapter 5 (1944–48). Chapter 6 (1948–54) allows us to see Laura's loyal service on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada. Chapter 7 (1954–63) is built around her meeting with the Guardian while on pilgrimage who instructed her to 'take my love to the friends'. Chapter 8 (1964–90) takes the reader to Laura's last days, when she had to rely on fellow Baha'is (she had no children) for help. This last chapter is intensely moving; Macke relies on the words of those who have attended to Laura's needs before she faded into dementia and death. Inter alia, the book even takes time to offer the reader Laura's sense of fashion which received mixed praise from all those who knew her (pp. 152–3).

The value of Macke's research lies on several fronts. The book not only offers a well-researched biography, but also presents to readers unfamiliar with even recent Baha'i history insights about the spirit and functioning of the Baha'i community, especially since the late 1920s. One finds a stream of Baha'is of historical (and not-so-historical) stature who nourished the Baha'i community, each in their own distinctive way. Detailed footnotes substantiate Macke's observations. Here is a story that many contemporary Baha'is can draw on, either for inspiration or to see the struggles that went into building the Baha'i community of Canada, and of Toronto in particular. It is a history that comes alive. Macke also builds her story around the changing conditions of the Baha'i community, with its plans for expansion and consolidation. Extensive quotes from correspondence to and from Laura allow the reader to share in these developments from 'the inside'. Laura's enthusiasm for the 'Hippie Era' is not missed in this volume.

The task of assembling a large number of disparate facts can be quite daunting for any biographer. To get around this problem, Macke makes sure that she alerts us to significant social and cultural forces that impinge on or shape Laura' s life. We read of Canada's role in World War I (in which Laura's husband Victor was a pilot), psychic research of the 1920s (which attracted a few Baha'is), Ontario' s Optometry Act, Girl Guides, Toronto's literary and artistic circles, the Group of Seven (Canada's premiere group of artists), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Canada's clothing manufacturers and more. Some of these accounts are lengthy, others are short, but they serve the purpose, for the most part, in making cultural meaning of Laura's life.

Take My Love to the Friends is Macke's first book and it is no surprise that a reviewer like myself is inclined to offer constructive criticism. The first challenge is deciding for which audience the book is written. In this case, as Laura was particularly significant and relevant for the Baha'i community, the author directs her work to Baha'is. Macke does her best to define in-house terms in footnotes, but there are still terms that might seem puzzling to readers who are less acquainted with the Baha'i Faith (such as simply writing 'joined the Faith' (p. 134), as opposed to the 'joined the Baha'i Faith'). This reviewer also sometimes found the mentioning of names, without introducing them, distracting, asking himself why is this person mentioned? The context only

becomes clearer later on in a chapter. One might also consider positioning the photos in the centre of the book, rather than seemingly randomly distributing them through the book. However, these are mainly quibbles on my part for I define Macke's work more in terms of its significance in evoking Baha'i history and the people associated with that history.

Take My Love to the Friends is a laudable work. Macke has already started her next work, namely a biography of Dr Albert Durrant Watson, a Baha'i in Canada's early history who travelled in literary circles, and the author of a lengthy epic poem about the Baha'i Faith. There are also thoughts about writing a full-scale book on Siegfried (Freddy) Schopflocher, a Canadian Hand of the Cause. There is yet another outcome of *Take My Love to the Friends*: Macke has had to found her own press (Chestnut Park Press) to enable the publication of her book. That, too, is laudable. However, her efforts point to an endemic problem of publishing scholarly works in the Canadian Baha'i community: it is an uphill climb to have such works see the light of day. The larger Baha'i presses elsewhere offer no opportunity to Canadian authors to publish Canada-specific historical and biographical materials. Within the Canadian Baha'i community, there are no publication subventions that would allow books such as *Take My Love to the Friends* to be produced.

We must thank Marlene Macke for her arduous labours in researching and writing this book, all without financial support to make it all possible. Instead, through personal perseverance, interest and a desire to make one (historical) Baha'i life more visible for the rest of us, she has carried on the research to full fruition. I can foresee the time when the work of other Baha'is, who are fascinated with a Baha'i historical figure will see their results appear in print through Chestnut Park Press.

Church and State: A Postmodern Political Theology, **Sen McGlinn (n.d.)**

Leiden: University of Leiden (Distributed by Kalimāt Press, Los Angeles as volume 19 of Studies in the Babi and Baha'i Religions), 441 pp. ISBN 90–807460–2–9

Reviewed by **Wendi Momen**
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The title of Sen McGlinn's very readable book does not do justice to the contents: it does not mention the Baha'i Faith or suggest that the postmodern political theology examined in the book is one based on the author's understanding of the Baha'i scriptures and texts. The book – the first of a series – is an examination of the historical roots, scriptural basis and theological premise of what McGlinn considers to be the Baha'i doctrine of the separation of church and state – the 'political theology' of the title – in the context of postmodernism.

McGlinn's thesis is that the Baha'i scriptures and teachings endorse a complete separation of the religious and political systems of governance – that is, a complete separation of 'church and state', not only for today but as an eternal principle postulated by all the religions of God. In contrast, the

Universal House of Justice, the international governing council of the worldwide Baha'i community and head of the religion, has, in its document of 7 April 1999 entitled 'Issues Related to the Study of the Bahā'ī Faith', described this view as a 'misrepresentation' of 'Shoghi Effendi's [head of the religion from 1921 to 1957 and appointed interpreter of its scriptures] explanation of Bahā'u'llāh's vision of the future Bahā'ī World Commonwealth that will unite spiritual and civil authority'. Thus McGlinn's book, and this reviewer's comments on it, are set into this context of the difference and tension between McGlinn's thesis and the view the Baha'i leadership takes of it.

It is impossible to bridge the chasm between these two positions in a short review of a book that sets out its thesis in some 200,000 closely argued words. For the Baha'i reader, the finding of the Universal House of Justice is conclusive; for others, as well as for Baha'is, the book is best read in conjunction with the entirety of each Baha'i text upon which McGlinn bases his thesis so as to set his position in context.

Critics might take the view that the thesis presented in the book is a rather private discussion between the author and the senior governing body of the worldwide Baha'i community and is marginal to the main thrust of the wider discourse on the theme of church and state. McGlinn would dispute the marginality of the discussion, stating as he does in the Foreword, that this issue is 'now critically important to the Bahai community and its relations with the world' (p. 1). This is an important subtext in McGlinn's present work: that the Baha'is in general seem not to realize that they have misunderstood their own writings and, more significantly, that the Universal House of Justice is supporting this misperception. He hints that the Baha'i community itself does not seem at all concerned about this issue – which is likely to be true – and one can easily see that the Universal House of Justice has rather directed the Baha'i community away from this discussion: the Baha'i community is still very small and is very much engaged in developing its membership to a significant level. Thus McGlinn, who says that he is writing 'primarily for the Bahais' (p. 8), sets out his purpose as a 'Bahai theologian': to 'help' the Baha'i community know itself (p. 1).

McGlinn's book is to be seen in the light of his interest in this subject over many years. In 1995 he wrote to the Universal House of Justice with questions regarding certain passages in the Baha'i texts relating to the separation of church and state as he understood it. He received an answer on 27 April of that year setting out the explanation that the sources he cited 'indicate that the relationship' between the religious and civil governance systems 'is an evolving one' and pointing to the evolution of 'Bahā'u'llāh's Administrative Order' into 'His World Order'; the general thrust of the letter is that eventually the Baha'i institutions and the civil institutions will be one and the same.[1] That McGlinn continued his research into this area is not surprising – the subject is a fascinating one – but his research has led him away from the conclusion of the House of Justice and this has resulted in a thesis he himself suggests is 'somewhat over-argued' (p. 244). The reason he has done this, he says, is because so many authors of secondary Baha'i literature, examined in his chapter on 'Church and State in the Secondary Literature', have missed the point that the Baha'i writings support the complete and eternal separation of church and state. One wonders if he includes the House of Justice in this category. He does not include its letters among

1. 'Separation of Church and State', letter, 27 April 1995, Baha'i bookshelf of *Ocean Research Library* at http://www.bahai-education.org/ocean.

the primary or secondary sources of his literature review; indeed, he does not refer to any of the works of the Universal House of Justice at all as a category of texts relevant to the present discussion – he does not refer even to the letter written to him in 1995.

The book is, McGlinn says, the first in a series and 'a work in progress'. It was written and published to fulfil the requirements of his master's degree and contains elements that a more commercially oriented book might omit, for example, a long literature review (in the fifth chapter) which McGlinn himself considers to be rather dull reading but which I found quite engaging.

In his Introduction McGlinn sets out what he means by the different terms he employs in the book. 'Political theology', for example, asks 'what is the point' of the institutions and rules of political and religious life from the point of view of religion. In political theology, he states, our religion is treated as part of our world-view. By postmodern he refers to the 'world we live in', the 'sociological fact' and 'not to current literary and philosophical theories about postmodernity'. His description of globalization as the progressive differentiation of different spheres of social life, coupled with the development of individualization and the possibility of people constructing their own identities from the different 'selves' they are in different contexts, plus an emphasis on pluralism and relativism and sustained by technological advances and the convergence of material cultures are worth expanding, especially as McGlinn suggests that the Baha'i teachings uphold his view that 'the differentiated and individualised society' is 'the way things are meant to be' (pp. 7, 18).

In his first chapter, 'Religion and Politics in Islamic History', McGlinn sets the framework for his later thesis regarding the future Baha'i polity, asserting that the differences between church and state in Islamic and Christian scriptures and discourse is between 'traditional and modern' and that the difference between these two is that the differentiation between social and religious orders is made explicit in modern societies and is grounded in theory as well as in institutions and laws. McGlinn's stated purpose in this lengthy chapter – a full quarter of the book is devoted to it – is not to provide an overview of the subject in Islamic history or theology but 'simply to be sufficiently convincing to clear away the undergrowth of misconceptions, so as to provide clearer ground for our main topic' (p. 33). Islam not being my subject at all, I found this chapter the least engaging and I could happily have skipped it to get to the meat of McGlinn's thesis.

In his second (short) chapter, 'Theses on Church and State', McGlinn sets out 'some lessons and general laws' found in the first chapter, which he presents as 'theses', including that the issue of church and state is universal and local (local because it depends on the characteristics of the particular state); that people count, that is, that the engagement of the people with the ideas of a religion, e.g. the Baha'i Faith, determines whether that religion will take root and become influential in any particular place and, further, the individual's world-view determines how that religion functions; that establishment (that is, a country having an established church, such as the Church of England) is not an issue when discussing the separation of church and state and both are to be differentiated from freedom of religious practice; that religions do not supply society with common values but with virtuous individuals; that religious law is different in nature to civil law; that God has separated

the religious sphere from the political for all time. Some of these theses seem to contradict the Baha'i writings as commonly understood (McGlinn would undoubtedly say 'as misunderstood'). The chapter ends with a quotation from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha stating that people must be set 'completely free from their old patterns of thought' so that they can give their attention to the 'new principles' (p. 147), a thought-provoking juxtaposition of ideas.

The third chapter, 'Church and State in the Bahai Writings' comprises a commentary on a selection of Baha'i texts which, McGlinn states, supports his contention that 'the Bahai writings explicitly recognize the differentiation of religion and politics as distinct spheres, the right of each to function without interference from the other, and the desirability of cooperation between them' (p. 149). McGlinn's own summary of 'key themes in Bahai political teachings' (p. 244) is a useful insight into his reading of these Baha'i texts.

The fourth chapter, 'The Theology of the State', sets out four 'cardinal' points which McGlinn says are based on his 'whole understanding of the Bahai teachings' (p. 248): 'The "kingdom" of religion is a kingdom of the heart'; the 'civil state is legitimately associated with force and coercion'; the 'state and religion are cooperative organs in society'; and the 'institutions of the Bahai community have no government function'. This frames McGlinn's discussion of what he sees as 'two distinct systems of government; the Bahai administration and the civil (but not necessarily secular)' (p. 249). He describes the differences between the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice and demonstrates how the 'idea' of each – 'something like a hidden genetic code' – is an example of how the political and religious orders 'have a common function in the advancement of human well-being, but have entirely different means at their disposal to achieve it' (pp. 249, 250).

McGlinn in this chapter also alludes to another theme he has explored more fully elsewhere,[2] that the Baha'i administrative order 'functions in partnership' with the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkār (p. 251), a view that the Universal House of Justice considers a 'misrepresentation'.[3]

The book has four appendixes. The first is his translation and analysis of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Risālih-yi Siyāsiyyih (Treatise on Politics), which he entitles 'Sermon on the Art of Governance'. The second is an interesting passage from the 1923 edition of Esslemont's *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, removed from later editions, on the subject of government. The third appendix compares the translation in different sources of selections from a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Paris on 17 November 1911 on the non-interference of religion with politics. The fourth appendix provides a table of transliterated and original spellings and definitions of terms used in the book.

While the main thrust of the book is McGlinn's contention that 'the Bahai teachings not only provide a theological justification for the separate existence of the state' and 'indications of how church and state, once securely separated, are to be reconciled' (p. 27), a major subtext of the book is the role, nature and station of the Universal House of Justice. McGlinn's discussion of this subject centres on his contention that the Universal House of Justice (in fact, any Baha'i administrative body) is not ever going to be an institution with the powers of civil government and that, according to divine scriptures, it *cannot* be.

2. 'Exploring the Mashriqu'l-Adhkār', http://bahai-library.com/articles/mashriq.html. 'House of Justice, House of Worship' http://sen-mcglinn.wordpress.com (21 January 2009).

3. Universal House of Justice, 'Issues Related to the Study of the Bahā'ī Faith,' 7 April 1999, p. 2 (on *Ocean Research Library*).

Thus he states (p. 216) that 'it is important for my present thesis to demonstrate beyond any doubt at all that it [the Supreme Tribunal mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Baha in his Will and Testament ('Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.'[4])] is not the same body as the Universal House of Justice, as so much of the Bahai secondary literature has claimed.' McGlinn includes a comprehensive – and fascinating – review (over a hundred pages) of secondary Baha'i literature in which this subject is further developed. What he does not do is cite or refer to the quotations cited in the 1995 letter written to him from the Baha'i World Centre, which shed a different light on, for example, the relationship between the Supreme Tribunal and the Universal House of Justice:

> The Universal Court of Arbitration and the International Tribunal are the same. When the Baha'i State will be established they will be merged in the Universal House of Justice.[5]

The core of the issue here is how the institutions described by Shoghi Effendi in some detail in 'A Goal of a New World Order' and subsequently in 'The Unfoldment of World Civilization' (both in *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh*) are to be understood ('the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world', 'some form of a world super-state' comprising an 'international executive', 'a world parliament' and 'a supreme tribunal'[6] and a 'international Force'[7]). Are they transitional institutions, for a period of political peace agreed by the governments of the various countries of the world (Baha'is generally refer to this period as the Lesser Peace) or are they intended for all time?

McGlinn holds that these are 'forever', 'once for all' institutions and that by their very nature, constitution, method of formation, function and reach, they are separate and distinct from Baha'i institutions, citing, for example, Shoghi Effendi:

> World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and *establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life*.[8]

Other Baha'i writers[9] – and the Universal House of Justice[10] – hold that the institutions outlined by Shoghi Effendi are transitional: institutions that will evolve or are currently evolving and that they bridge the gap between the present state of global government (or lack of it) and the future Baha'i Commonwealth, which they see as a completely different stage in the evolution of world governance and civilization, emerging in the 'Golden Age'.[11] McGlinn however understands the 'commonwealth' to be 'the body of believers in solidarity with one another' (p. 233) In his review of the Baha'i literature, McGlinn cites a number of passages to support his own understanding of what he calls 'the doctrine of the two sovereignties' (p. 150), based on the 'two sovereignties' found in Baha'u'llah's writings (p. 231):

4. *The Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahā* (http://reference.bahai.org/eng/t/ab) 13.
5. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 17 June 1933, quoted in 'Monogamy, Sexual Equality, Marital Equality, and the Supreme Tribunal', a memorandum from the Research Department to the Universal House of Justice, 27 June 1996 (found on *Ocean Research Library*).
6. Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1991) 40–1.
7. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 203.
8. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 202; emphasis mine.
9. Ariane Sabet, 'Bahá'u'lláh's Concept of Collective Security in Historical and Theoretical Perspective', in Charles O. Lerche (ed.), *Healing the Body Politic* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2004); Cheshmak A. Farhoumand-Sims and Charles Lerche, 'Perspectives on Peace Building: An Overview and Some Insights from the Bahā'ī Writings', in Lerche, *Healing the Body Politic*; Craig Loehle, *Blueprint for a New World* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2007); Christopher Sprung, 'Bahā'ī Institutions and Human Governance', in *Law and International Order* (London: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1996) 151–65.

the spiritual sovereignty of the prophets of God and the sovereignty of civil government.

This reading of the Baha'i texts as promoting the establishment of two parallel, yet mutually supporting, governance structures – one civil and operated without interference or influence from religion, by the kings and elected civil officials, and the other overseeing the spiritual life of the people and governing their religious life without interference from the civil government – is the heart of McGlinn's thesis of the eternal separation of church and state and is completely at variance not only with the popular views of the majority of Baha'is but also with its leadership. In his examination of the Baha'i texts in his third chapter, McGlinn observes, with what appears to be some bewilderment or even astonishment, that in Shoghi Effendi's summary of the themes of the Kitāb-i-Īqān, he has not included 'anything like the separation of church and state, or what I have called the doctrine of the two sovereignties, in his list of its teachings' (p. 150). So here you have it: McGlinn knows what this particular text of Baha'u'llah is about; Shoghi Effendi, who was appointed by 'Abdu'l-Baha to be the 'Interpreter of the Word of God'[12] does not.

McGlinn anticipates and deals with many of the arguments others put forward that support their point of view over his. He makes a clear distinction between the civilization of the future and its governance, between world order and its governance, between the Administrative Order being 'the nucleus and pattern of His World Order'[13] and its governance, etc. (see, for example, p. 321), seeming to suggest that if a passage from the Baha'i texts does not actually say the words 'government', 'governance' or 'civil administration' then this aspect of community structure is deliberately excluded by the authors (Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha or Shoghi Effendi) from discussion on the grounds that there is this 'forever' separation of civil governance of a community (at whatever level) from its spiritual (and Baha'i) governance – or at the very least, they would have mentioned it because of its centrality to an understanding of the nature of the future world order/civilization. Indeed, in describing Shoghi Effendi's letter entitled 'The World Order of Bahā'u'llāh' in the collection of letters with the same name, McGlinn points out that Shoghi Effendi does not 'mention *government* institutions' (p. 313, emphasis his) as being among the 'tottering institutions of present-day civilization'.[14] 'The Bahai institutions are described as the "pattern" "instrument" and "agency" of a new civilization – but not as its government' (p. 313).

McGlinn's contention is that any other reading is just plain wrong, evidence of 'how the clear and simple has escaped the understanding of dozens of authors, and generations of Bahais' (p. 244). Many arguments made by other writers are 'confused'. Hence when quoting, for example, Shoghi Effendi's passage regarding the future Baha'i Commonwealth:

> And as the Bahā'ī Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahā'ī Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future super-state.[15]

10. 'Separation of Church and State', the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, quoting Shoghi Effendi, in the Universal House of Justice, *A Wider Horizon* (Riviera Beach, FL: Palabra) 179.
11. See, for example, Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahāī World* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1971) 74–5; Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, rev. ed. 1995) 59–60, 324, 411–12; Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1995) 6, 7.
12. *Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahā* 6
13. Introduction to *God Passes By* xv.
14. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 16.
15. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 7.

McGlinn is at pains (five pages) to explain that the Universal House of Justice will *not* exercise 'the rights of *government* of the super-state' (emphasis his, p. 238).

This is a rather engaging argument. My difficulty is that all McGlinn's arguments seem predicated on the understanding that once the super-state has come about and all the instruments of government at the global level are in place, that will be it – there will be no future development or evolution of those institutions, no further stage in the relationship between the Baha'i institutions and the institutions of the super-state, no evolution of civilization requiring a new understanding of governance or indeed of civilization itself. Others have made this same point.[16]

And this seems to come down to how we are to understand various terms found in the Baha'i texts: world order, new world order, Baha'i world order, world order of Baha'u'llah, Baha'i administrative order, world commonwealth, Baha'i commonwealth, the Golden Age of the Baha'i Faith, humanity's golden age – the relationship between them, if any, and whether there is any evolution or 'periodization' (p. 314) from one to another.

Shoghi Effendi makes a clear relationship between the 'Baha'i Commonwealth of the future' and the 'Administrative Order', stating that the latter is the 'sole framework' of the former.[17] In its letter to McGlinn of 27 April 1995, the Department of the Secretariat wrote on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, referring to the 'gradual process of the evolution of the Bahā'ī Administrative Order into the World Order of Bahā'u'llāh'.[18]

McGlinn appears not to accept that there is any relationship between these concepts and dismisses the notion of an evolving society or civilization or system of governance once the world super-state has been established. He makes this very clear on his blog, stating that 'when Shoghi Effendi uses two different terms – World Order and Administrative Order – he is referring to two different things', McGlinn describing them as 'the yolk and the white', which some authors have 'conflated' into an 'omelet'. 'Yet it is so simple', he writes. 'Bahai Administrative Order is not equal to World Order ...'[19] Shoghi Effendi, however, does seem to link the two:

> ... laying the foundations of that world-embracing Administrative system designed to evolve into a World Order which posterity must acclaim as the promise and crowning glory of all the Dispensations of the past.[20]

> ... destined to play so prominent and vital a part in ushering in the last phase in the gradual establishment of the structure of an Administrative Order that must needs slowly evolve into the World Order of Bahā'u'llāh, and which in turn will give birth, in the fullness of time, to a world spiritual civilization, which posterity will hail as the fairest fruit of His Revelation.[21]

That the Baha'i administrative order is the embryonic World Order of Baha'u'llah seems clear. But McGlinn seems to be suggesting that there is a difference between 'world order' (which he considers to be a civil order, with political institutions) and the 'world order of Bahā'u'llāh' (which he sees as a religious order, headed by the Universal House of Justice) as well as making a distinction between 'world order' (that is, the political world order) and the 'administrative order' (of the Baha'i Faith). These terms and

16. See, for example, Susan Stiles Maneck, 'A Review of Sen McGlinn's Article on Theocracy' at http://bahaistudies.net/susanmaneck/theocracy.html.17. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 152.
18. 'Separation of Church and State', citing Shoghi Effendi's letter of 30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference.
19 'World Order, Administrative Order', http://senmcglinn.wordpress.com (1 January 2010).
20. *God Passes By* 328.
21. *Messages to the Bahā'ī World* 84; see also Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* 81, 90, 140.

concepts are used liberally throughout the works of Shoghi Effendi and do appear to be used sometimes to refer to different things and sometimes to the same thing but at a later stage of an evolutionary time line. What exactly the new world order is, to 'attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception', Shoghi Effendi says, 'would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications'.[22]

Although McGlinn states in his blog that 'we do not know what the future will hold, we cannot prescribe the future order of society based on Bahai scriptures, and crystal-ball gazing is fruitless' (1 January 2010), in this book he seems to be very comfortable with his own understanding of the long-distant future – there will always be a separation of 'church and state'. Shoghi Effendi's own vision of the future world is less clear:

> To claim to have grasped all the implications of Bahā'u'llāh's prodigious scheme for world-wide human solidarity, or to have fathomed its import, would be presumptuous on the part of even the declared supporters of His Faith. To attempt to visualize it in all its possibilities, to estimate its future benefits, to picture its glory, would be premature at even so advanced a stage in the evolution of mankind.
>
> All we can reasonably venture to attempt is to strive to obtain a glimpse of the first streaks of the promised Dawn that must, in the fullness of time, chase away the gloom that has encircled humanity. All we can do is to point out, in their broadest outlines, what appear to us to be the guiding principles underlying the World Order of Bahā'u'llāh, as amplified and enunciated by 'Abdu'l-Bahā, the Center of His Covenant with all mankind and the appointed Interpreter and Expounder of His Word.[23]

In some ways McGlinn's thesis in this book is quite an attractive one. He cites many passages from the Baha'i scripture to make his case and marshals his arguments well. What readers must consider is whether McGlinn's analysis holds up or whether, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, it is a 'misrepresentation'.[24]

22. *Bahā'ī Administration* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1995) 62.23. *World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* 34–5.

24. 'Issues Related to the Study of the Bahā'ī Faith', 7 April 1999.

***The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins (2006)**

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In 1880 one of Charles Darwin's self-appointed defenders, one Edward Aveling, requested permission to dedicate his book *The Students' Darwin* to the great man. Darwin politely but firmly refused to grant any such endorsement, and went on to express reservations about the approach taken:

> Though I am a strong advocate for free thought on all subjects, yet it appears to me (whether rightly or wrongly) that direct arguments against Christianity and theism produce hardly any effect on the public; and freedom of thought is best promoted by the gradual illumination of men's minds, which follow from the advance of science. It has, therefore, always been my object to avoid writing on religion, and I have confined myself to science.[1]

If only Darwin's latter-day self-appointed defender, Richard Dawkins, had hearkened to his Master's voice! But no: 'Darwin's rottweiler' (as he is known, presumably to evoke a wicked-cool modern equivalent of 'Darwin's bulldog', T.H. Huxley) has written *The God Delusion*, an uncompromising attack on God and religion, as a result of which it behooves all right-thinking people to restate the case for the notion of a loving God, a tolerant and empowering religion and an enlightened world-view in which both science and religion play their worthy parts. This brief review is my attempt to set the matter straight.

Let us first be clear about what Dawkins is saying in *The God Delusion* (*TGD*). His principal thesis is that 'God almost certainly does not exist' (p. 189). Here, 'God' is God-the-Creator, whose existence is *unnecessary* because 'Darwinian natural selection is the only known solution to the otherwise unanswerable riddle' of the existence of 'statistically improbable' complex phenomena such as living organisms (p. 138). The greater part of *TGD* is dedicated to setting out the (largely) scientific arguments in favour of this viewpoint. But Dawkins also has a secondary thesis, namely, that religion is a pernicious relic of the past that mankind could well do without. Here, 'religion' means *all* religion, for, although Dawkins is mainly concerned with traditional monotheistic religions for whom God is 'interventionist, miracle-wreaking, thought-reading, sin-punishing, prayer-answering' (p. 41), he also expresses reservations about its more liberal manifestations: 'The teachings of "moderate" religion, though not extremist in themselves, are an open invitation to extremism ... This is one reason why I do everything in my power to warn people against faith itself, not just against so-called "extremist" faith' (p. 346). Let us consider each of these points in turn, from a Baha'i point of view.

Surely Baha'is believe in God? Yes, but we also believe that God is an unknowable essence 'which the wisdom of the wise and the learning of the learned have failed to comprehend ... Who hast been from everlasting exalted above all peer or likeness and to everlasting shalt remain the same'.[2] Certainly we cannot subscribe to Dawkins's reductionist description of God as no-more-and-no-less-than God-the-Creator. In this sense we are in agreement: *The God that Dawkins does not believe in, Baha'is do not believe in, either.*

Surely Baha'is believe in the human soul, something which requires more than just Darwinian natural selection to appear in the world? In fact 'Abdu'l-Baha endorses *both* the notion of a precious and unique soul, and the possibility of physical evolution:

> To recapitulate: as man in the womb of the mother passes from form to form, from shape to shape, changes and develops, and is still the human species from the beginning of the embryonic period – in the same way man, from the beginning of his existence in the matrix of the world, is also a distinct species – that is, man – and has gradually evolved from one form to another.

1. Charles Darwin, *Letter 12757 – Darwin, C.R. to Aveling, E.B.* (13 Oct 1880). Available online: http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-12757.
2. Bahā'u'llāh in *Bahā'ī Prayers* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1991) 122–3.

> Therefore, this change of appearance, this evolution of members, this development and growth, even though we admit the reality of growth and progress, does not prevent the species from being original.[3]

Dawkins might object that this is Baha'is 'having their cake and eating it', for where else *could* the soul have emerged, if not through natural selection? But this misses the point. In this and similar passages in *Some Answered Questions* 'Abdu'l-Baha is not proposing an alternative theory of evolution. On the contrary, by recounting the major tenets of the theory of natural selection 'Abdu'l-Baha is 'rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's', but at the same time it is clear that he is much more concerned with 'the things that are God's': the identity, nature and purpose of the human soul. For 'Abdu'l-Baha, the question is not 'Where did the human soul come from?' but rather, 'Given that it exists, what is to be done with the human soul?' And this is a question for religion, not science. Thus *Baha'is subscribe to the theory of evolution by natural selection, but this does not inform their notion of the human soul.*

Surely Baha'is believe that all major revealed religions are of God, they share fundamental spiritual truths and values, and they are not to be lumped together as a dead and decaying relic of a bygone age? Yes, but we also believe in the 'Divine Springtime', the renewal of religion from age to age: 'Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared.'[4] And the reason for this renewal is precisely because a religion is not a static entity, rather, over time it experiences growth, maturation and decay just like any other dynamic organism. And, like Dawkins, Baha'is have no time for old, worn-out, corrupted expressions of faith: 'If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act.'[5] Thus, *insofar that he restricts his criticisms to religions that have long-since diverged from their original purpose, Baha'is can agree with Dawkins.*

Surely Baha'is believe that Dawkins is mistaken in his mission to 'warn people against faith itself'? Yes: This is one of the main points of departure. (The other is the use of language in *TGD*, which is often emotive and borders on the insulting. This is antithetical both to scientists, who are expected to work with facts and not opinions, and to Baha'is, who are exhorted to express their views with words 'as mild as milk'.) The Baha'i position is that religion is essential for the very survival of mankind:

> Everyone who truly seeks and justly reflects will admit that the teachings of the present day emanating from mere human sources and authority are the cause of difficulty and disagreement amongst mankind, the very destroyers of humanity, whereas the teachings of Baha'u'llah are the very healing of the sick world, the remedy for every need and condition. In them may be found the realization of every desire and aspiration, the cause of the happiness of the world of humanity, the stimulus and illumination of mentality, the impulse for advancement and uplift, the basis of unity for all nations, the fountain source of love amongst mankind, the center of agreement, the means of peace and harmony, the one bond which will unite the East and the West.[6]

3. 'Abdu'l-Bahā, *Some Answered Questions* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1981) 193–4.
4. Bahā'u'llāh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahā'u'llāh* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1983) 81.
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahā, *Paris Talks* (London: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1967) 130.
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahā, *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1982) 440.

Now, it is to be expected that the Baha'i Faith, being a 'moderate' religion, is sometimes seen by the unscrupulous or ignorant as a soft touch, or, as Dawkins says, 'an open invitation to extremism'. Curious, then, that the extremists have not taken control of the Baha'i Faith, despite numerous serious attempts throughout its 150-year history. Perhaps there is more to 'moderate' religion than meets the eye: or, at least, more to it than Dawkins is prepared to see. *TGD* offers no specific evidence supporting Dawkins's aversion to 'moderate' religion, and so one can only suppose that this aversion is *itself* a statement of faith. What, then, are we to make of his avowed mission to 'do everything in my power to warn people against faith itself'? He is beginning to sound just like those 'priests, mullahs and rabbis' that he so despises. This is a pity: As we have seen, Dawkins's views are not so very different from those of Baha'is; however, *there are no clergy in the Baha'i Faith*. But no one is beyond redemption, so maybe one day Darwin's rottweiler will awake from his dogmatic slumbers, cast off his dog collar, and take his place amongst the sheep in the fold. I do hope so.