

## A SCRUTINY OF THE KORAN (*Cribratio Alkorani*)

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### BOOK TWO

#### CHAPTER ONE

On mystical theology, according to which God is ineffable.<sup>1</sup>

Let me now turn to a clarification of [the doctrine of] the Trinity that we revere in the divinity. And let me show that on a devout interpretation the Koran does not contradict [the doctrine of] the Trinity in the sense in which we who adhere to the Gospel speak of trinity.

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An Arab might say:

We who revere the Koran as the word of God cannot deny the things that have been said in praise of the Gospel. Nevertheless, because sound faith is [faith] in only one, single God who is the Creator of all things and who is without any participant, without associates, without plurality, without son or sons, and without any equality whatsoever, and because Christians say that a plurality consisting of God the Father as Creator, God His Son, and God the Holy Spirit of both [the Father and the Son] does not contradict the Gospel, Muslims prefer the Koran to the Gospel. Moreover, the califs in Baghdad, where the school of this sect is located, forbid that the Gospel and philosophy be publicly read. For prior to the prohibition they found that those who studied the Gospel became Christians, that a certain calif always carried a Christian cross concealed in his breast, and that philosophers derided the Koran. And so, in Chapter 11 of the Koran it is said of Christ: "Jesus the son of Mary is the messenger of God and is God's spirit and is the Word sent from Heaven to Mary. Thus, you who believe in God and believe Jesus to be God's envoy should not state that there are three Gods. For there is only one God, who is without a son; and to the Almighty God all things in Heaven and on earth are subject. Indeed, neither Christ Himself nor the angels near to God can at all deny that they are subject to God's power."

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To the foregoing I reply that the Gospel not only condemns any [belief in a] plurality of Gods but also affirms a plurality of Gods to be impossible. For no one doubts that God is the Beginning and is that from which all things originate. [But] how would a plurality be the Beginning? For before plurality there is Oneness, or Singularity. And Oneness is, necessarily, eternal. For it is the unqualified Beginning, which must be eternal because it is the Beginning and is not anything originated. Now, this Beginning can be considered without respect to

things originated, so that it is as much not-Beginning as Beginning. For this reason it is altogether infinite and boundless, incomprehensible and ineffable. Assuredly, then, since it surpasses all the senses and every intellect and every name and everything nameable, it is not said to be one or three or good or wise or Father or Son or Holy Spirit (and the case is similar as regards whatever can be spoken of or thought of)—even as Dionysius the Areopagite teaches that [God] infinitely excels and precedes all such names.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, [God] remains hidden from the eyes of all the wise; and He is not known to any creature but only to Himself; and of Him we know only that He is Infinity itself,<sup>3</sup> which infinitely surpasses every created intellect. Since, in accordance with the foregoing manner, it is not the case that there can properly be said or affirmed of Him anything which He would not surpass, we marvel at, contemplate, and revere Him in silence.

- 89 In Chapter 29 the Koran speaks of this boundless and infinite God when it says: “Thus, let one who is awaiting the end of this world, or the altogether truthful day of Judgment, consider only the God of whom there is no end—besides whom there is no other God.”<sup>4</sup> And in Chapter 64: “Indeed, every mundane thing will be bounded. But only the Countenance of God, who is greatest and most abounding, is boundless. Does anyone deny this? New things happen to all creatures of Heaven and of earth.”<sup>5</sup>

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## CHAPTER TWO

On affirmative theology, according to which God is the trine and one Creator.<sup>6</sup>

In another way I notice that since this visible world could exist otherwise than it now does,<sup>7</sup> it does not exist from itself; for [if it existed from itself,] it would have existed before it existed. And since it could exist otherwise {e.g., [it could be] larger or smaller (or [could exist] in some other manner), because its magnitude has an end and is limited—[a condition] with which its being larger or smaller is not incompatible}, surely from some Beginning that is prior to itself it is that which it is.<sup>8</sup> And that [Beginning] made it be the way it is and not otherwise. But since that Beginning was not caused by anything else—for it is a Beginning prior to which there is no other beginning—it was, and is, free to create and not to create,<sup>9</sup> just as an intellectual nature is free with regard to its operations.

- 91 But just as when the intellect is at work, it must have in its reflection [*mens*], or in comprehension, that at which it is working ([for] otherwise it would not know what it was doing and would not be intellect), [so] it also must have in its knowledge, or know-how, that at which it is working. For if it lacked the know-how for working, how would it be at work? Moreover, [the intellect] must have in its will that at which it is working, since the intellect, which is noble, does nothing unwillingly. We who work with our intellects experience these things within ourselves and recognize them to be thus necessary. For example, how would an artist paint with understanding unless he had in his reflection that which he was painting? And how could he paint that which he has in his reflection if he lacked a knowledge of painting? And how would he finish with [the painting] if he were unwilling to? Hence, we see that will is neither know-how nor reflection and that know-how is not reflection.<sup>10</sup> For I do not always have know-how with regard to that which I will; nor do I [always] have knowledge, or know-how, with regard to what I have in my reflection. And even though I have a knowledge of painting, nevertheless I cannot paint Muhammad, since I do not have [an image of] him in my reflection. Hence, although reflection and knowledge and will are of the same intellectual essence and nature, still know-how, or knowledge, is begotten from reflection, for someone who lacks reflection lacks know-how. And someone who lacks reflection and know-how lacks free will and free choice; therefore, free will proceeds from reflection and from knowledge, or know-how. Note these [points] first of all.
- 92 Subsequently, notice how it is that that which is in the reflection of an operative intellect is also in both [the intellect's] know-how and its will and is not one thing in [the intellect's] reflection, another thing in its know-how, and still another thing in its will. [For] otherwise there would not be a perfect operation. Now, that which is in the reflection *is* reflection; for in the reflection the comprehension and what is comprehended (or the reflection and the reflected) are the same thing. Similarly, that which is in knowledge *is* knowledge;<sup>11</sup> for in knowledge the known is the knowledge. And that which is in the will is will; for in the will the willed is the will. Therefore, it is evident that reflection and knowledge and will are not different things [essentially] but are essentially the same thing. [And] although they are not interchangeably such that the reflection is the knowledge or the will, nevertheless the reflection is not something [essentially] other than the

know-how and the will.

- 93 Therefore, the nobility of the intellectual nature, which is free, requires that the reflection not be the knowledge that is begotten from it. For since [the knowledge] is begotten from the reflection, [the knowledge] is not the reflection, i.e., [is not] the “begetting father.” Similarly, [the nobility of the intellectual nature] requires that the reflection and the knowledge begotten from it not be the will that proceeds from the reflection and the know-how, for that which proceeds is not the things from which it proceeds. The reason that the foregoing [relationships] obtain is in order that [the intellectual nature] can freely and perfectly produce its intellectual operations.

A farmer who is a seed planter readily grasps the foregoing [points]. For it is necessary that he have in his comprehension the seed of grain, and have in his knowledge the know-how for planting the grain, and have in his will the willingness to plant the grain. For planting is a work of intelligence; and these [operations of the intellect] are interrelated in the foregoing way.

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### CHAPTER THREE

How from the operation of the intellectual nature  
we see the divine [nature].

Now, since the intellectual nature has the foregoing [functioning] and the foregoing nobility only from its Creator (for it works in the likeness of its Creator): just as the Creator, by creating, produces real things, so the image of the Creator, viz., the intellect, produces by its operations likenesses of real things; for to create is to make to be, and to understand is to make to be like.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, since the Creator of all things understands that which He creates and since He knows it (or has know-how with respect to it) and wills it, then with regard to the fact that the one Creator of all things is most noble and most perfect and most free, He is truly a trine Creator. And a likeness of the Creator is set forth in our intellect, which is one in essence and three in operation.

- 95 Therefore, Christians designate as *Father* and as *Creator* the Divine Reflection, in which all creatable things exist eternally. But the Know-how, or Wisdom, or Knowledge<sup>13</sup> of the Creator’s omnipotence Christians designate as *the Father’s Son*, through whom [the Father] makes all things. And since the Will (without which there can be nothing) proceeds from the Father and the Son, i.e., from the

Reflection and the Know-how, they speak of it as the *Holy Spirit*, which perfects all things. However, the works of the Trinity are undivided, because there is one creation and operation with regard to all things.

- 96 Therefore, on the basis of a likeness to our intellectual operation we see in creation the trinity of the one Creator. On account of this trinity Moses—at the beginning of Genesis, through the words “Elohim” and “Let us make man ...”—spoke plurally of God the Creator, even though elsewhere he used the words “I am a jealous God.”<sup>14</sup> Likewise, even in the Koran God says: “We created men from a perishable vapor.”<sup>15</sup> And in another place [it says]: “Indeed, we created heaven and all celestial things in accordance with our Will”<sup>16</sup>—even though still elsewhere [in the Koran] God commands: “Tell my people that I am a merciful God.”<sup>17</sup> Now, just as by the expression of plurality with regard to God’s creating or operating Moses and Muhammad did not mean to affirm more than one God, so Christians do not mean, on account of [the doctrine of] the Trinity, to depart from [a belief in] the oneness of God the Creator.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

How we are elevated from the fecundity of the intellectual [nature] to the fecundity of the divine nature.

In order that by means of perceptible things you may be elevated unto the fecundity of the intellect and [subsequently] may be elevated from that [fecundity] unto the divine fecundity, take note of the following: [There are] so many beautiful and variegated structures of towns, temples, castles, and buildings, so many kinds of garments, so many paintings and decorations, so many languages, so many sciences and arts and books, so many most delightful harmonies, so many delectable cuisines, so many very well ordered states and laws—as well as countless other things. [These] are the work of the simple and trine intellect, which is invisible and is imperceptible to each of the senses. All of the foregoing things have issued forth from the intellect; and they would not have issued forth unless they preexisted intellectually in the intellect in a much higher degree [than they now exist]. When you see [all the things of which I have just spoken], then you also see the very marvelous intellect. Thereupon ascend from the intellect toward the Creator of the intellect and of all things, in order to behold the Creator’s divine fecundity—[i.e., (1) behold] how it is that the intelli-

98 gences, the heavens, the stars, the sun, the moon, the elements, and all things that exist, live, and understand are the work of the most simple and most fecund Creator, and (2) [behold] that the creation is the manifestation of the things which in the Creator's Reflection have always and eternally been present as the Creator Himself and which in His Know-how, or Wisdom,<sup>18</sup> have always and eternally been present as the Creator Himself and which in the good pleasure of His will have [always and] eternally been this same Blessed God, who from out of His pure goodness manifests the riches of His glory. (Similarly, the rich intellect, in order to manifest its glory, manifests and communicates itself in its works; and the things which it has within itself intellectually and as precisely as it can, it attempts to unfold perceptibly, in order in this way to impart itself in accordance with the nature of the good and to make itself capable of being participated in.)

And [having ascended,] you will see the simple God, who is ineffably rich and beautiful and filled with the full happiness of a glorious life. From out of His riches He has produced and manifested so very many bright intelligences filled with forms, so very many splendid stars, so very many living animals, so very many most fragrant odors and most delicious tastes and most beautiful flowers, as well as countless other things.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

Guidance from the things in the world,  
in order to see God as trine.

Now, in that Muhammad believes God to be the Creator of all things, he also, necessarily, predicates of God those things which Christians confess regarding God's trinity. Therefore, in order that every Arab may attain—as much as suffices for faith—unto the divine Fecundity, Offspring, and Love, I repeat: it is most certain that this world cannot exist and continue without fecundity, offspring, and love. For if these are removed, then the world must cease to exist. From the fecundity, the offspring, and the love there is one world. Therefore, the fecundity, the offspring, and the love comprise one world. The fecundity is not one world, the offspring another, and the love still another. Rather, they are one and the same world. And they comprise the one world in such way that without them there would be no world. For the world's fecundity, its offspring, and its love are participated in by angels angelically, by men humanly, by non-rational animals non-ra-

tionally, by plants vegetatively, by minerals minerally, by the heavens celestially, by the sun solarly, by the moon lunarly, by the stars stellarly, by beings existently, by elements elementally, by living things vitally, by intellectual things intellectually—and so on regarding all things in their own respective manner.

**100** And from where except from the Creator does the world have these things, so that, necessarily, it is trine as well as one? Therefore, if without this trinity the world would not have its nature and would not possess either its natural perfection or the divine blessing that in the foregoing way shines forth trinely in oneness of essence, then how shall we deny that the Creator Himself has the natural perfection which He bestows upon all things in order that they may exist in the best way they can?<sup>19</sup> Therefore, just as what is created is triune, so is also the Creator, since, of itself, what is created is nothing; indeed, all that which [the creation] is consists in its being the image and the likeness of the Creator. Therefore, the trinity that is seen in a creature is from the Uncreated Trinity as an image is from its exemplar and as what is caused is from its cause.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, God, who created the triune world in accordance with His image and likeness, is triune. Therefore, in the divine nature there is Fecundity, Offspring, and Love. The Fecundity is God who is the Beginning and the Father; the Fecundity's Offspring is the Son; and the Love is the Union of both [the Father and the Son].

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#### CHAPTER SIX

Guidance from the intellectual trinity unto the Divine [Trinity].

Now, in order to see an image of God in a creature that is more like unto God, let us look at the intellectual nature. For how great a fecundity, offspring, and love there is in the intellectual, speculative nature is shown to us by countless books of the contemplatives.<sup>21</sup> [Indeed,] how many theoretical reflections on truth have been begotten by intellectual fecundity! How many delights and spiritual pleasures have proceeded from these [theoretical reflections]!—[delights and pleasures] which have made the contemplatives esteem the joys of this world as nothing. (Something similar must be asserted regarding the practical intellect, as I mentioned earlier.<sup>22</sup>) For in the intellectual nature there is fecundity, which begets from itself an intellectual word, or concept; and from these two there proceeds an embracing, or a willing. For when the reflection<sup>23</sup> begets a word, or a notion, then im-

mediately there proceeds an embracing, or a willing. For just as that which is not known is not loved,<sup>24</sup> so willing cannot fail to proceed from reflection and its notion. For knowledge is included in the number of honorable goods. But a good is that which is desired, for all things desire what is good.

- 102** And so, it is evident by what illustration we can be led unto the Divine Trinity. For God cannot be said not to know Himself.<sup>25</sup> Now, if He understands Himself, then He begets from Himself a Concept (or a Word) of Himself. Now, He who begets the Word is not the same as the [Word] that is begotten; i.e., He who conceives is not the same as He who is conceived. Nor are they something other [than each other] in their divine essence, for God begets such a Concept of Himself that it cannot be more perfect.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it will be equal [to God] by a substantial equality<sup>27</sup> (which is more perfect than an accidental equality); and so, it will not at all be of another nature, or essence. Likewise, the Love that proceeds from the [Conceiver and the Conceived] cannot be said to be those from whom it proceeds; nor can it be said to be something *other* [than they are]. For it is most perfect [Love], prior to all otherness; and so, it is consubstantial<sup>28</sup> with those from whom it proceeds. And [the showing of] this [consubstantiality of the three is what] was aimed at [in this chapter].

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#### CHAPTER SEVEN

Guidance with regard to the same thing—  
[guidance] through [the illustration of] love.

Furthermore, in order that those who use their reason may see that we who believe in the Trinity are reasonably moved [to entertain this belief], let me by means of another illustration proceed toward the same [conclusion as in the preceding chapter]. There is no one who does not recognize that love is altogether necessary for the world to exist; for if love were removed, nothing at all could continue to exist. It is certain that love is found to be present in its own way in intellectual natures and in living natures, as well as in all that exists. Shall we indeed deprive of love the God who is the Creator and Giver of all love?<sup>29</sup> So if we say that God has love, assuredly He *is* that which He *has*. Therefore, God is Essential Love.<sup>30</sup>

- 104** But since love unites, then most perfect Love (which cannot be greater or lesser, since it is substantial<sup>31</sup> [Love]) unites maximally. Therefore, in the essence of this Uniting Love I see Oneness; for how



would there be a Uniting Love without Oneness? I also see therein Equality; for the Love begets an Equality with itself, i.e., [begets] Love. (As the saying goes: “if you want to be loved, then love.”) Therefore, Oneness begets Equality. Next, I see that from the Oneness of Love and from the Equality of Love there proceeds the Union of both: viz., the Love that unites the Oneness of Begetting Love with the Equality of Begotten Love. Therefore, Love is the Union of the Father and of His Son—from both of whom it proceeds.

**105** However, it is certain that Oneness is prior to all multitude; and therefore *Oneness is eternal*. [And it is also certain] that Equality is prior to all plurality (for the many, by virtue of the fact that they are many, are unequal; therefore, inequality falls short of Equality); hence, *Equality is eternal*. Likewise, *Union, too, is eternal*, because it is prior to plurality. (For the many are, necessarily, separate from one another; and separateness falls short of Union; therefore, prior to all separateness there is Union, which proceeds from Oneness and from Equality of Oneness.) Thus, it is evident that Oneness, Equality, and Union are eternal prior to all multitude, inequality, and separateness. Now, they cannot be three eternal things. For prior to all multitude there is Oneness, which is presupposed by multitude—even as inequality presupposes Equality and as separateness presupposes Union. Therefore, Oneness, Equality, and Union are not three eternal things but are one Eternity. Thus, they are not three things, because if they were three things they would be three eternal things. Therefore, Oneness is not one thing, Equality another, and their Union still another (for in that case they *would* be three things and three eternal things). However, it is not the case that for this reason Oneness is Equality or Union; for Equality is begotten from Oneness; but the begotten is not the begetter. Moreover, Union is neither Oneness nor Equality; for it proceeds from them, and that which proceeds is not that from which it proceeds.

**106** Therefore, it is evident that in the essence of Divine Love the Oneness of Love, the Equality of Love, and the Union of Love are not three loves. For the one Love is not something other than the other, even though the Oneness of Begetting Love is not the Equality of Begotten Love or the Union (of the Begetting Love and of the Begotten Love) that proceeds from the Begetting Love and from the Begotten Love.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

An explication of the Holy Trinity.

Now, it is evident that those who do not attain unto the fact that *not-other* is not *same* and that *not-same* is not *other* cannot grasp the fact that Oneness, Equality, and Union are the same in essence but are not the same as one another.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, they apprehend the trinity in the deity only in terms of three. Gods. Now, Christ has taught us that God the Father enlivens and that His Son enlivens and that also the Spirit proceeding from the Father and from the Son enlivens—as is read in the Gospel of Christ written by the Apostle John.<sup>33</sup> However, [Father, Son, and Spirit] are not on this account three enlivenings or three enlivening Gods, even though the Father is not the Son and is not the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and from the Son.

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It is evident that those who do not grasp the foregoing [truths] do not have a perfect enough concept of the most perfect God. Rather, they form for themselves the concept of a God who is not happy in supreme happiness and who is unnatural, sterile, and infertile, lacking the sweetness of paternal love and joy, of filial love and joy, and of love and joy common to the Father and the Son, as well as lacking the perfection of fecundity. They do not take notice of God's having said through the prophet Isaiah, "Shall I myself, who make others to give birth, not give birth?, says the Lord. Shall I, who bestow upon others [the power of] begetting, be sterile?, says the Lord your God."<sup>34</sup> And the Arabs cannot reject the prophet Isaiah, because in the Koran none of the prophets are rejected but, rather, all of them are accepted.<sup>35</sup>

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## CHAPTER NINE

A symbolism, although a remote one, of the Blessed Trinity.

With regard to these matters we must have recourse to a symbolism, until such time as we have a well-versed understanding: I saw a large body of water with shore all around it. It was without any inflow, or springing up, of any other water; and it remained always of the same quantity. On its circumference it had fruitful trees and crops and [fertile] meadows; and the farmers who lived nearby could not sufficiently praise the body of water, than which they thought there to be none better. I wondered at its not having become smaller and more dried up, since I saw no stream flowing into it. And I wondered why it had not

become putrid, since it appeared to be stagnant. I approached more closely; and after having made a lengthy and more detailed examination, I discovered that in the middle there was a spring. This fact I inferred to be the case on the basis of a stream which I saw to be coming forth from the center. And I said: “Perhaps this is the reason that this body of water never becomes smaller even though it supplies to the trees, the seeds, and the grass [the water] from which they are nourished. For the living spring does not allow the body of water to become smaller; and although [the body of water] is stationary within its [surrounding] shores, nevertheless it constantly replenishes itself, because it proceeds from the spring and from the stream of the spring. Therefore, it does not become putrid or corrupt because it does not grow old but is ever replenished from the bountifulness of the spring.”

Hence, I saw that the body of water was a spring, a stream, and a pond. And these it was equally, because it was no more a spring than a stream and a pond; and in the pond were the stream and the spring. Nevertheless, the spring was not the stream or the pond, and the stream was not the spring or the pond, and the pond was not the spring or the stream. And I saw these [matters] only when I intellectually considered that the spring begat from itself the stream. And so, the spring and the stream differ as begetter and begotten—or as father and son. And the pond cannot be the stream or the spring, from both of which it proceeds.

**110** And I said: “The spring is oneness; the stream is equality [of oneness]; and the pond is the union of both.” Therefore, I concluded that if I would leave aside the symbolism and would ascend unto Eternity, I would find Eternity to be trine and one in a truer manner than is this visible body of water. And I more readily believed, with indubitable faith, the aforesaid points as they regarded eternal begottenness and eternal procession. Moreover, I said that in the Koran it is written that all living things come from water.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, if this present body of water gives nourishing life to all the surrounding trees and seeds and grass without any diminishment of itself, then how much more the Creator of this body of water gives all things to all creatures without any diminishment of Himself! [I ascended] by figuratively naming Absolute Being *Water*,<sup>37</sup> in which Being I saw a “Spring,” a “Stream,” and a “Pond” and from which Being all existing things receive that which they are—[indeed,] not only [all] existing things but also [all] things that both exist and live, and [all] things that exist and

live and understand.

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#### CHAPTER TEN

Guidance, this time, from [the consideration of] three persons.

Furthermore, note [the following]: We do not maintain that just as there is more than one man, so there is more than one humanity. Thus, *humanity* and *man* are not the same thing. But *deity* and *God* are the same thing because of the most simple divine essence. Hence, just as there is not more than one deity, so there is also not more than one God. Moreover, in humanity there are only three persons: viz., I, you, and he. Hence, I speak truthfully [when I say]: “I am a man; you are a man; he is a man.” And these three persons are of the same humanity. Whence, then, would these persons have this [fact about themselves] if God the Creator were not likewise three with respect to persons and one with respect to essence? Therefore, God can say truthfully of [one and] the same deity: “I am God; You are God; He is God.” But the three persons are not three Gods. For they are not three deities but, rather, are one God; for they are one deity, which is God. It is also certain that three persons in oneness are only a oneness, or a singularity, but that three persons in number are only a number-of and a plurality-of.<sup>38</sup> Now, we maintain that the divine persons are three in oneness, not in number. And we maintain that [three] human persons are three in number and therefore are several men.

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#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

Arabs must confess the Trinity.

It is evident that Arabs must confess that there is this trinity in God. For unless they confess [it], then—since they believe that the Koran is the Book of Truth—they are convicted of ascribing to God a participant. For it is written in the Koran that God said to Muhammad: “Indeed, upon you, who did not know the Book and the Law, we have bestowed light, in sending our Spirit.”<sup>39</sup> And elsewhere: “Having been sent to you from Heaven with this [Book], the Blessed Spirit, who is altogether just, has penetrated your heart, in order that with this [Book] you may administer reproof in Arabic.”<sup>40</sup> And, again, [the Koran] elsewhere says regarding Christ: “Jesus is the son of Mary and is the messenger of God and is God’s Spirit and is the Word sent to Mary from Heaven.”<sup>41</sup> And still elsewhere: “For God Himself and His blessed

Spirit wrote this most true Book, the Koran.”<sup>42</sup> In many other places the Koran contains similar [statements].

**113** Hence, since the Blessed Spirit of God cannot be said to be a creature and since the Spirit that is sent is not sent from Himself, then unless you affirm that He is the third person in God and is sent by the Father and the Son (for [the Koran] speaks, in the plural, of *senders*<sup>43</sup> [of the Spirit]), you will have to posit more than one God—viz., the Gods who send and the God who is sent. Moreover, Jesus the son of Mary, is the Word-of-God sent from Heaven. But the Word of God cannot be a creature, since all things are created by the Word of the Lord.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the Word of God is God. Therefore, if [the Word of God] is God but is not the second person, which is called Son, i.e., Word of the Father, then you will have to posit that there is more than one God and that the Word of God is a participant in God. Note that while wanting to deny that the Word of God is the Son of God who is of the same nature as the Father—[deny it] lest you seem to ascribe to God a participant—you really are ascribing to God a participant! And this [point] is also proven from the authority [of the Koran, when it states]: “God and His Spirit wrote the Book.”<sup>45</sup> If God and His Spirit are not two Gods, then it follows that the Spirit is a person in God. Therefore, Arabs must confess the Trinity. Otherwise, they are unbelievers who ascribe to God a participant.

**114** Furthermore, [we can argue] in the following way: You [Arabs] confess that the Gospel is a most clear and most truthful book. In it is contained [the view] that the one God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, nothing to the contrary can be claimed by you when this [view] is pointed out to you from the Gospel. (For the Gospel is of no less authority than is the Koran—as the Koran itself teaches.<sup>46</sup>) Now, it is certain that [this view] is found in the Gospel. For we read in the Gospel that Christ said: “There is one who is good, [viz.,] God.”<sup>47</sup> Likewise: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”<sup>48</sup> Likewise: “the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send ....”<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere: “... the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father ....”<sup>50</sup> And, again, Christ commands [the Apostles to] baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>51</sup> From these and other passages of the Gospel it is clearly inferred that the one God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

Let [it suffice that] the foregoing points have been made regarding the Holy Trinity.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

Christ was truly crucified and truly died.<sup>52</sup>

Sizable deviations of the Koran from the Gospel remain to be clarified. For example, in the Koran, Chapter 11, it is written that Christ did not die but that the Jews hung up some other man who resembled Christ: “They did not at all kill Christ, because the wise and incomprehensible God caused him to pass over unto Himself Men of the laws will truly believe in Christ before their deaths; and in the future age Christ will be a witness on behalf of these men.”<sup>53</sup> These [words] are found in the Koran.

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But the Gospel and all the writings of those dressed in white, i.e., of the disciples, and all the chronicles of those times affirm, in unison, not only that Christ died but also that, in accordance with the writings of the Prophets concerning the Messiah, He died in such way as is found to have been foretold. Now, because the Koran, according to the followers of [that] Book, ought not to be understood as contradicting itself and because it approves of the Gospel and the Prophets, a [consistent] interpretation should be sought as to what is meant in the aforementioned [passages].

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First, let me cite passages that are in agreement with the Gospel, which contains the statement that, in the end, Christ will be the one Shepherd and this whole world will be His one sheepfold.<sup>54</sup> Conformably [hereto] the Koran asserts that all men of the laws—whether [followers] of the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the law of the Arabs—will truly believe in Christ before the Day of Judgment.<sup>55</sup> Now, the entire endeavor of the Koran is to persuade men that they ought to believe in God alone. And because [the Koran] here asserts that all men of the laws will truly believe in Christ, assuredly it does not disassociate Christ from the divinity and does not make Him [out to be] someone other [than God]; rather, it tacitly affirms Him to be of the divine nature. Similarly, in the Gospel Christ said [that] those who believed in Him believed in God the Father, who sent Him.<sup>56</sup>

118

Secondly, the Gospel and the Koran state that at the Last Judgment the Judge and the Witness will be the same one. Now, the Gospel states that this Judge is Christ.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the Koran here<sup>58</sup> tacitly approves of this [statement], for [the Koran here] states that in the future age Christ will be a witness on behalf of those who are faithful to Him. Consequently, [the Koran] acknowledges, just as also does the Gospel, that Christ will be also the Judge. But according to the Koran

only God, the Creator, will be the Judge. Therefore, the man Christ, because He is the Judge, will also be God. Now, the Koran says in Chapter 48: “You, O God, Creator of all things, You who will come with the slain prophets: You will judge all things with the Truth.”<sup>59</sup> Note [the following]: If, together with the slain prophets, God will judge, and if Christ is above all [others]—[Christ,] who even according to the Koran, as is evident from the aforesaid, will not be absent from the Judgment—then Christ will be the first and highest of the slain prophets, as well as being the Truth, and the truthful Word-of-God, through whom all things will be judged (according to the passage-of-the-Koran that has been cited). Hence, the Gospel rightly states that God the Father gave all judgment to His Son *because* [the Son of God] is also the Son of man.<sup>60</sup> For through His human form [Christ] judges (1) that men who are like Him are sons of God (even as is He) and, hence, will be sons of immortal life and (2) that men who are unlike Him are sons of eternal death.

**119** Hence, it is evident according to a devout interpretation that the Koran meant to reveal these secrets only to the wise. And so, [the Koran] says that it conceals no secrets but that only for the wise is it easy, whereas for others it is difficult.<sup>61</sup> For in the beginning period the Arabs who were uneducated, whom the Koran calls the worst of all unbelievers, were not to be instructed openly regarding secret [matters]. But if Muhammad had simply preached the Gospel to these Arabs and had not given them their own law, they would not have come to the Christian law, which they rejected for almost six hundred years. Therefore, he preached to them that they were Ismaelites and had descended from Abraham and that both Jews and Christians praised the man [Abraham] as a prophet and approved of his faith—through which faith he obtained from God the greatest things both here below and in the other world. And [Muhammad preached that] since this [praising and approving] was done by the Gentiles, who after following Abraham in the rejection of idols favored a certain law (whether the law of Moses or the law of Christ), then *a fortiori* the Arabs, who were descended from Abraham, ought themselves to do [this. Moreover, Muhammad preached] that God had chosen him as His messenger unto them and that God commanded them to accept the faith and the law of Abraham, a most excellent man, who was a believer and who was neither a Jew nor a Christian, having preceded both the Jews and the Christians. Having rejected idols, Abraham turned toward the Creator of the universe and worshiped and obeyed

Him, as did also his descendants Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel.

**120** In the foregoing way [Muhammad] frequently taught the abandonment of idolatry, which, previously, [the Arabs] were never concerned to abandon as a result of the Gospel. [They were unconcerned] especially because evangelical perfection seemed to them to be onerous and to be such that their parents were afraid to accept it. For their parents had been taught (as even the Koran contains) that those who accept Christianity and do not keep its commandments offend against God more than do all [others] and that they will be tormented very grievously in Hell. Therefore, Muhammad hid from the Arabs the secrets of the Gospel, believing that in the future [these secrets] could become known by the wise—just as in its beginning period the Gospel, too, remained obscure and unknown to many but was made progressively more evident. And if this [procedure] had not been expedient, then Christ would not have spoken to the people in parables.

**121**

#### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Crucifixion is an exaltation and a glorification of Christ.

In order to raise the issue of the mystery of Christ's death, let us now take note of how we are to understand [the Koran's claim] that Christ did not die on the Cross.<sup>62</sup>

First, it is certain that the Koran agrees with the Gospel that Christ is alive. Therefore, if He is alive and if it is expected that He will return to the world in order to convert all men of the laws, then assuredly it is herefrom evident that Christians, who have accepted His Gospel, will not accept any other Gospel than this one, because this one is perfect, even according to the Koran.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, if others follow books that are opposed to the Gospel or are at variance with it, then assuredly they must abandon their books and embrace the Gospel. Therefore, they are not presently on the right pathway but will be [on it] for the first time [only] then [i.e., only subsequently to their abandoning and their embracing]. Therefore, it is especially absurd for the Arabs to persecute adherents of the Gospel on the ground that the Gospel does not agree with their Koran, according to their interpretation. For they act against the Koran in persecuting believers and in persecuting—in the believers—the Gospel that is approved of in the Koran.

**122**

Perhaps [the Arabs will] say: Christians are not Christians but



rather are blasphemers in that they believe that Christ, the Word of God, was crucified on the Cross by altogether unbelieving Jews. Christians [will] reply: The Koran (written some six hundred years after the death of Christ) approves of the Gospel (written at the time of Christ's death) and of the prophets who prophesied (before the death of Christ) that Christ would come when He did and would act as He did and die as He did. And I think we must note that the angel Gabriel revealed to the prophet Daniel that after sixty-two weeks [of years]<sup>64</sup> Christ was to be slain (as is read in Chapter 9 of Daniel), just as it also happened. For the angel Gabriel revealed these matters to [that] prophet whom Muhammad asserted to have made known to him the Koran.<sup>65</sup> How, then, will the following [claim] stand up?: that by the command of God Gabriel foretold to the prophet [Daniel] the death of Christ and that after the lapse of the time that had been foretold by Gabriel, this same [angel] states that Christ did not die—[thereby] making both God and himself liars.

Moreover, consider the fact that Christ, before His death, likewise told His disciples that He was going to die on a cross. Similarly, the chronicles of that period speak harmoniously [regarding Christ's death]; and all Christians, Jews, and Gentiles held this belief for some six hundred years before the time of Muhammad. Hence, my argument may be summed up [as follows]: if the Koran denies the [death of Christ], then assuredly a stand must be taken on the side of the Gospel, since [the Koran] offers no support [for its claim].

**123** But—allege certain [people]—it seemed to the writer of the Koran that the [affirmation that Christ died] is blasphemous and ought not to be believed with regard to so great a prophet [as Christi], on the ground that it does not accrue to his honor. Now, if [the writer] thought this in this way, then assuredly he was ignorant of the mysteries of the Cross of Christ. For the crucifixion of Christ is an exaltation and a glorification of Christ and is the justification and the life of Christians and is the resurrection of all men. There were many kings and princes who derided and persecuted Christians because Christians worshiped one who was crucified. For example, Aegeas in Achaia [derided] Andrea, the first disciple of Christ. And to Aegeas, the apostle [Andrea] replied that this derision occurred on account of an ignorance of the mysteries of the death of Christ on the Cross—[mysteries] which could not be grasped by the Gentiles. And when the apostle Paul preached about the Cross of Christ, then although [his preaching] was a stumbling block to the Jews and although the wise men of

the world, viz., the Greeks, regarded this [preaching] as foolishness,<sup>66</sup> nevertheless [Paul] was not silent until he had opened for Christians the mysteries of redemption.

- 124** Therefore, it is certain that if without an explication of the mysteries [of Christ's death] the Koran had openly affirmed to the Arabs that Christ was crucified, it would not [thereby] have been magnifying Christ in their minds. Therefore, [the Koran,] on a devout interpretation [thereof,] aimed to hide from the Arabs [Christ's] lowly death and to affirm that He was still living and would come [again]. Now, [the Koran] would not have been able to teach of Christ's resurrection from the dead through His power to lay down His life and to take it up again (as He avows in the Gospel<sup>67</sup>) unless it had showed Christ to be not only a man but also God—[a view] which it supposed to be at odds with [the doctrine of] God's oneness, which it was preaching. Moreover, it was not consistent with the Koran's faith to maintain that Christ had already risen from the dead—as will be explained in a moment. So perhaps these are the reasons that [the Koran] spoke in the way it did. Nevertheless, [the Koran] makes these [statements] in such way that the wise can infer that the Gospel is altogether true, as will be evident.

**125**

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

How it is that God led back unto Himself  
Christ's soul and caused Christ to pass over  
[unto Himself] and took Christ unto Himself.

The Koran relates that when unbelievers dealt deceitfully with Christ, in endeavoring to put him to death, they themselves -were deceived; and the Creator addressed Christ in the following way: "In leading your soul back unto me and in exalting it, I have freed you from unbelievers."<sup>68</sup> Thereafter [the Koran] says elsewhere that God caused Christ to pass over unto Himself.<sup>69</sup> And still elsewhere it says that Christ was taken by God unto Himself.<sup>70</sup> Christians duly affirm that all these [points] are true. For according to the witness of the Gospel: when [Christ] cried out on the Cross in a loud voice unto the Father, [asking] why [the Father] had forsaken Him, and when Christ added that He commended into the Father's hands His spirit, which He sent forth when thus crying out, then it proved to be true that God led His soul back unto Himself<sup>71</sup> (for soul and spirit are the same thing). And through the Resurrection the passing-over [unto God] proved to be

true, for through death [Christ] passed unto immortal life. In this way God caused Christ to pass over unto Him who alone possesses immortality;<sup>72</sup> and Christians call this passing-over *pasch*. (The Koran, too, makes mention of *pasch*.<sup>73</sup>) Finally, in the ascension of Christ unto the Father the Father's taking [of Christ unto Himself] proved to be true.

- 126** Now, Muhammad denies that the Jews killed Christ. Instead, he states that they hung up someone else who resembled Christ;<sup>74</sup> and Muhammad never makes mention of the Cross. Note that, perhaps, Muhammad wants to argue as follows:

Christ is alive; therefore, he was not killed by the Jews. For had he been killed, how would he now be alive unless he had arisen? However, the resurrection of the dead has not yet occurred; but the day is coming on which all [men] will rise again and return. Prior to that day whatever has life—whether angels or men or other animals—must die, in order for the resurrection and return of all things to occur. Therefore, Christ, who is alive—a fact which is certain—was never killed. Nevertheless, at length, he will die, and he will rise again on the day of resurrection.

This is Muhammad's conviction, which is contained in the Koran, although dispersedly. Nevertheless, in Chapter 48 he says: "Indeed, at the first sounding of the trumpet all [living] things will yield to death except those which the right hand of God will protect; and at the second sounding they will come to life again."<sup>75</sup> Note these [points] for the sake of the things that will follow later. And note that Muhammad holds [the view] that God alone is the Reviver of the dead and that those who [purportedly] have already been revived and those who are to be revived are not to be deemed to have arisen from the dead. And so, [according to Muhammad,] they must die anew before the day of resurrection.

- 127** Next, consider the fact that according to Muhammad no perceivable time elapses between the day of death and the day of resurrection, so that when Abel (the son of Adam and the first one who died) will arise, he will not judge that he was dead longer than was one who will die immediately before the day of resurrection. For [Muhammad] says in Chapter 55, at the end: "For on the day of Judgment, on which day our commandment will be evident to each [man], each will approach as if having been away for only one hour of a day."<sup>76</sup> He speaks similarly in Chapter 29 also, as well as very often in other passages. Accordingly, [Muhammad] makes no estimate of the in-between time—[i.e.,] after death and before resurrection—although he says that

those who seem to die for God's sake do not [really] die. Thus, in the Koran the following is also written: "Let no one think that those who are killed in the service of God are dead, but rather [let him believe] that they are pre-eminently alive and well."<sup>77</sup> And elsewhere: "The divine graciousness supervenes upon, and bestows joys upon, those who undergo death in the service of God and out of love for God."<sup>78</sup> And again: "Those who die in the ways of God are not at all to be called dead. For they live with God, rejoicing over God's goodness and love, awaiting those who have survived them, and fearing nothing."<sup>79</sup>

**128** Hence, although [Muhammad] says "Every soul will taste of death,"<sup>80</sup> nevertheless the Gospel says that those are not to be feared who after they kill the body can do nothing more, because they cannot kill the soul, but rather He is to be feared who even beyond this [killing of the body] can send the soul to Hell.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, [Muhammad] followed the Gospel and the Books of Wisdom [in teaching] that although the just seem to the eyes of the foolish to be dead, nevertheless they are alive and in peace. On the other hand, [Muhammad] affirms, no less, that the souls of such [men] will, at length, taste of death, in order that they may arise in the general resurrection, which he calls "the Day of Truth." For in the Koran he speaks as follows: "On the Day of Truth, on which [day] souls and angels will arise ..."<sup>82</sup> And in the *Doctrinae ad Abdallah* [he says]: "On that day God will command the angel of death to kill every creature that has a spirit: all angels and all devils and all men, all birds, fish, wild animals, and all cattle. For in the Koran it says the following: 'All are dead except God.'"<sup>83</sup> And [Muhammad] adds that at length Adriel, the angel of death, will slay himself and that afterwards there will follow the resurrection. [He adds this] when he says: "Then while standing in Jerusalem, Seraphael, having received a trumpet whose length is five hundred years, will blow the trumpet and will discharge all the souls that are kept there during the interim, and they will fly off to their bodies."<sup>84</sup>

**129** According to the foregoing opinion it is certain that Christ, as regards His soul, was not killed by the Jews. For it would have been the case that they killed him [who died] for the sake of God. And [according to Muhammad] men who thus die ought not to be deemed to be dead. Hence, it is altogether false that the Jews hung up Christ. But we must rightly consider that which follows in the Koran: "Professing themselves to be the perpetrators of their act of killing, they

had no doubt at all about it in their hearts. Nonetheless, they did not at all kill him.”<sup>85</sup> For it seems that by these words it is not denied that the Jews could be perpetrators of the killing of Christ, even though they did not [really] kill Him. Therefore, in the whole of the Koran there is no denial that Christ was crucified; rather, [the possibility is left open that] Pilate, not the Jews, could have carried out this crucifixion in the way stated by the Gospel.

130

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That Christ died free of ills and that by His own power He came to life again is plainly seen to be the case from Chapter 28—i.e., from the middle—of the Koran,<sup>86</sup> where after many [statements] Christ is recorded to have said the following: “ ‘God created me as a man not burdened with ills but free of them. And both on the day of my birth and on the day of my death—from which death I will come to life again—there rests upon me divine salvation.’ This is the truthful word concerning Christ, the son of Mary; nevertheless, many disagree with this word.”<sup>87</sup> Note that [the Koran here] speaks of the day of death and not of the day of general resurrection (as elsewhere it speaks of John, [the son] of Zecharias, when it states that divine salvation rests upon John on the days of his birth, death, and resurrection<sup>88</sup>). And so, I construe [the previous passage to mean] that Christ died before the day [of general resurrection] and came to life again in the way in which the Gospel relates this. Hence, it is not true that Christ and everything living die either when the trumpet sounds or at the hand of Adriel, the angel of death, as is read in Muhammad’s *Doctrines*.<sup>89</sup> And so, to correct this [false] claim there is added in Chapter 42 [the statement] that all [living] things will yield to death—*except those which the right hand of God will protect*.<sup>90</sup> (Now, if anyone is worthy of this protection, then assuredly it will be Christ, than whom no one is more worthy. Indeed, He is God’s Right Hand, or Power, through which God made, makes, and will make all things.) And that which is read in the *Chronicle of Muhammad and of His Successors, the Kings* adds thereto that Mary, the mother of Jesus survived him by five years and lived [altogether] fifty-three years.<sup>91</sup>

131

But tell us, O teachers of the law of the Arabs: If those who are killed for God’s sake are not [really] dead, because they live with God, then assuredly their souls will live as separated from their bodies. [So]

are their souls supposed to die thereafter on the day of the killing of all living things? If you answer Yes, then won't the lover of God who walks on God's pathway and who is killed on that day by the angel of death also not die with respect to his soul, just as if he had been killed long before? If so, then with respect to his soul he will not be dead on the day of general resurrection. Therefore, those who beforehand were killed for the sake of God [will] also not [be dead with respect to their souls], for they will not be worse off [than those who were killed by the angel of death]. Therefore, the souls of all such [men] will never die and will never arise, even though the whole man ([consisting] of soul and of body) who was dead, will arise. And because it is not fitting to say that the dead-and-extinct soul of a sinner is resurrected by God to the end of burning eternally in Hell, Christ's teaching is, assuredly, altogether true: viz., that the soul cannot be killed.<sup>92</sup>

- 132** Therefore, the Koran's passage "All are dead except God" must be understood in comparison with God, who alone possesses immortality<sup>93</sup> and from whom each living thing is alive insofar as God Himself bestows [life] upon it. Now, God bestows upon the intellectual soul [the gift of living freely and of being judged as to whether it prefers error to truth. Therefore, it will not perish, since it is subject to divine judgment. But since animals that lack reason cannot be judged and since they do not have to rise up unto judgment, they would arise in vain. Moreover, how would the *same* animals be raised up if their previous [respective] souls, which, through death, were altogether extinguished and reduced to nothing, did not return to their bodies? Similarly, since the intellectual soul is created from no preexisting material, then if through death it were reduced to nothing, how would the *same* soul arise to be judged? Likewise, neither angels nor daimons have need of resurrection, since they have an intellectual nature and have already been judged. Moreover, regarding all the things that are not to be judged: there is no need for them to *return* to God, from whom they exist; for with God nothing passes into oblivion or into a past. Therefore, the Arabs have to understand such discrepancies with the Gospel in the [same] way as do Christians, who adhere to the Gospel. And so, with very good reason the Koran said that the Gospel, which it often asserted to be very clear, is the right way.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, Christ ought not to be asserted to be going to die again and, at length, to be going to arise together with the others. Rather, [He ought to be maintained] already truly

to have arisen from the dead.

**133**

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The mystery of Christ's birth and death.<sup>95</sup>

In order to see the reason for Christ's death on the Cross we must premise that God created all things for the manifestation of His own glory. For since a king whose glory is unknown cannot be reputed to be a king any more than not a king, and since he is deprived of honor and of [receiving] beneficence, he expends his every effort to the end that his power and glory may be seen and that through them he may be known to be great and through them may be honored and glorified as great. But he shows his glory only to those who have intellects. Similarly, God, in order to be known, created intellectual creatures who are capable of judgment and capable of apprehending glory and truth (and for the sake of these [intellectual creatures He created] all the lower beings). For He worked all things for His own sake, just as in Chapter 94 of the Koran it is said that He is the Beginning and the End of things.<sup>96</sup>

**134**

Now, man, who occupies the lowest place among the intellectual [creatures], has an intellect that is in potency and that needs some other actuality to bring it from potency into actuality. Therefore, man, endowed with innocence, was placed in Paradise in order that, being innocent and living in obedience to God, he would by the grace of God be brought at length unto a vision of God's glory and would enjoy this [vision]. But through the Devil's persuading, man, who was free, chose to ascend by means of knowledge rather than by means of innocence and obedience. And he refused to obey God, in order that he might have—in accordance with the promises of the Devil—an autonomous knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, having lost his innocence, he was cast out of Paradise. And he who previously could have lived forever if he had remained standing became mortal and ignorant. And, consequently, it was impossible that by any effort of his own he could ever attain unto immortality and unto a vision of God's glory, which cannot be seen by any mortal. And there was no remedy unless He who created him for this end would through His grace also form [him] once again.

**135**

And so, in order to be made fit for this re-forming, man was tested as to whether he could progress by means of the law of nature that was created with him. Afterwards the written law that was added to

the [law of nature] elevated man unto hope in the promises of God— [hope] first with respect to sensible things and then with respect to intelligible things. And along with all the prophecies, the Saviour of all [men]—the Messiah who was to be sent by God—was foretold to man to be going to come one day; and having the power of God He would completely reform and save the people of God. At length this long-expected, Heaven-sent Supreme Envoy and Son of God—coming into this world in the form of a humble and poor man, coming as the Virgin Mary's son, who was named Jesus Christ—appeared with divine power. And by His works, His heavenly teaching, and His divine miracles He openly showed that He had the power of God.<sup>97</sup> [He showed this] in order that [men] would see that in Him there worked God the Father, who sent Him, and that the words which He Himself spoke were [the words] of the truthful God. To Christ, John the son of Zecharias gave most certain witness. And [Christ] told of the things that He saw in the presence of His Heavenly Father. And those who accepted His words found Him to be the altogether truthful Word of God.

**136** Therefore, He who is the beloved Son of God gave to all who believed Him to be the Son of God the power to become sons of God.<sup>98</sup> For His entire concern was directed toward being believed to be God's Son and Word. For in that<sup>99</sup> case (1) all-that-He-foretold would be received with steadfast faith, and (2) sure faith would be lent to His promises about the future Kingdom of Heaven, about the resurrection from death, and about eternal life, and (3) His commandments would be kept. Who, then, would sin if he knew from the undoubted Word of God that sin would bring on everlasting death? And who would fail to obey even unto death if he did not doubt God's Word that in exchange for his temporal death everlasting life would be bestowed upon him by God, who is the best Rewarder? For how can a man who with most certain faith believes that the promises are God's promises have doubts about them?

**137** Therefore, Jesus entered into this world without any concupiscence of the flesh and with a human will. [And He was] not at all liable to death, which on account of the actual sin of our first parents—their original sin—beset all their sons, who were begotten from the concupiscence of the flesh. Therefore, being innocent, Jesus was free from death; He was not born in sins, nor did He ever commit any sin. He revealed regarding His Heavenly Father and His [Father's] king-



dom and glory those things which were known only to Himself and to no one else, for no one [else] had ever seen the Father in this sensible world, where He cannot be seen. And [Jesus] disclosed that He Himself was the way, the life, and the truth.<sup>100</sup> He opened the Scriptures, [showing] that they were about Him.<sup>101</sup> And He made known by His deeds and His teachings that He was a physician for all infirmities of the body and the soul—and even for death. And He manifested in word and in deed that He was the King and Messiah (although His kingdom was not of this world) and that this world and this sensible life ought to be esteemed as nothing in comparison with the future age and future life. And after many signs and miracles He who was able to be immortal had He willed to be, died in order to show (1) that this present life ought to be despised for the sake both of truth and of the kingdom of immortal life and (2) that God ought to be obeyed unto the point of death—even the most shameful death on the Cross. Thereby, He glorified God His Father, who likewise willed [His death]; and by His most innocent death He merited eternal life with Himself for all men who by faith accept Him and put Him on.<sup>102</sup>

**138** For the consummated death of the most innocent and only begotten Son of God—[a death] which He suffered in His human nature—merited redemption for all those who were held captive by Satan, the author of death. In Christ's death each [man] who has become one body with Christ<sup>103</sup> has died and has merited life. Therefore, in the death of the crucified Messiah all believers, who have died with [Christ,] have merited that unto them everlasting life be recompensed in Christ. Now, [Christ]—who had the power to lay down His life in death and to take it up again in resurrection—arose on the third day by His own power. Hence, His Resurrection is that through which all men will arise, who are of the same human nature with Him—[a nature] which in Him is united to immortal life. But He arose on the third day in order to prove by [this] deed that we ought to believe in the resurrection-of-the-dead, which, He taught, was to be expected at the Day of Judgment. Therefore, Christ is the one in whose death we die and in whose Resurrection we are made alive and through whom we have access to God the Father, the Creator, in order to see God in His own glory and, with Him, Christ Jesus, His ever-blessed Son.

**139** From these [points] that have been touched upon very briefly it is evident that the death of Christ on a most ignominious Cross is possessed of very great mysteries and was both necessary for believers

and glorious for Christ. Christ died in order to glorify the Father and to show how great the Father is. The Messiah, in His own body and by a most shameful and most grievous death, showed that the Father ought to be obeyed even unto the most terrible of all terrible [ends. Moreover, the Messiah showed] how great is this God's graciousness and how great is His recompense to believers—He who (on account of His Son's death, whereof they were made partakers) recompensed to all who are Christlike their becoming possessors (together with this same most beloved Son of His) of the kingdom of life.

This death of the crucified Christ gloriously showed Jesus to be the Son of Divine Goodness, since He would not have been so gracious, so merciful, and so willing to be obedient even unto death had He not been Godlike and most perfect. Thereby, He revealed the Father through [bearing] witness, by His own blood, that God should be loved above all things, that likewise God should be served, that His commandments should be kept, and that the future life should be greatly praised even to the point of contempt for this present wretched life. He also showed that the promises of His Father, as well as the things which He Himself foretold regarding Himself, were fulfilled. And [He showed] that the Father is truthful and that He Himself is the Father's Truth. And He disclosed all knowledge and the mysteries of the Scriptures and how very much the Heavenly Father is to be loved by all [men]. These [points] are known by the sons of light, who follow Christ. But they are not known by the sons of darkness, who are lovers of this world and who lack the Spirit of Christ.

140

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The fruit of Christ's death.

A zealous Arab might say: "If Christ's death glorifies the Father, the Creator of all, then surely [His death] is powerful and laudable; and to be informed more fully thereabout would be delightful." I will try, in proportion to my limitations, to disclose some further [points] to that zealous man, in order that no one will doubt that [his claim] is correct.

141

There is no doubt that sins cause a division between God and man (as the Prophet states, when he says "Your sins have divided between you and your God."<sup>104</sup> And, hence, the prophet David, the imitator of God, states: "I have hated the wicked."<sup>105</sup> Therefore, the sin [that divides] can be present from the time of [a man's] origin, so that [a man] who is thus conceived in sins exists from his mother as a result

of uncleanness and of carnal lust, as the same prophet [David] asserts that he himself was conceived.<sup>106</sup> And since all [men who are] thus [descended] from Adam are conceived from their mothers in accordance with the will of a man, none [of them] are clean through that cleanness which is pleasing to God (as Job asks: “Can a man who is compared with God be justified, or can one born of a woman appear clean?”<sup>107</sup>). For we are born sons of wrath, having a spirit of carnal concupiscence. This [spirit] does not pertain to the intellectual kingdom of heaven, [the abode] of our incorporeal God. And from the proneness-to-evil that we have from the time of our adolescence, we experience that we are not motivated by God’s good Spirit. And that this [proneness] is in us we experience by the gift of God. For God so constituted man that at the sight of evil he becomes afraid, as is stated in Chapter 79 of the Koran.<sup>108</sup>

**142** Therefore, there is no one descended from Adam by way of concupiscence who is not separated from God because of either an original fault or the fault of an actual sin—except for Christ alone, who (as even the Koran attests) was born most purely from His mother, the Virgin Mary (who never committed any evil deeds) without a male seed and without any carnal inclination.<sup>109</sup> He was not born as a son of wrath and of hatred or as a son of abhorrence but rather as a most clean son and, therefore, as the one who—among all men who have existed or will exist—is the most loved by God. Assuredly, He never committed any actual sin. For He is the one of whom it is written: “He did not commit sin, and no guile was found in His mouth.”<sup>110</sup> And so, He was never divided, or separated, from God. Divine Wisdom took Him into a union with itself For just as [Divine] Wisdom abhors a malevolent soul and a body that is subjected to sins, so it loves—and betroths unto itself in an everlasting bond—a holy soul and a body completely free of sin.

**143** Therefore, Christ is the first, and likewise the only, begotten Son of the King of Hosts, who is the King of Glory. For if according to the witness of Moses God said “Israel is my firstborn son,”<sup>111</sup> then it cannot be denied that within Israel Christ is the first of all, because He is the Messiah, and that Christ is God’s firstborn, who was sent into the world. And, at the same time, He is also the only begotten Son of God, as He Himself states: “he who does not believe in me is judged already, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”<sup>112</sup> Therefore, if for the salvation of the world

God gave His most beloved first-and-only begotten Son, surely He loved the world exceedingly. But that He did make this [gift of His Son] is attested by the Gospel, which says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,” etc.<sup>113</sup> Haven’t we been purchased with a great price—viz., with the most precious blood of the only begotten Son of God—so that we who were subject unto the Prince of darkness belong unto God?<sup>114</sup>

**144** For the Koran says that since Adam did not at all do what was commanded by God, he became subject to the law of mortality.<sup>115</sup> Hence, in the death of the only begotten Son, who died for all who receive Him as Messiah and as King of the intellectual life, the whole human race paid its debt. (On account of its first parent [the whole human race] was stripped of its innocence, which innocence alone has a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. And [the human race] was subjected to the Prince of this world<sup>116</sup> and was eternally condemned to a deprivation of the vision of God’s glory—[a deprivation] which is death for the intellectual nature.) Thus, all who have died in Christ’s death<sup>117</sup> have made satisfaction and have been freed from bondage to the Prince of death. For the most precious death of the only begotten [Son], who was loved by God more than were all [others], abundantly made satisfaction because it was the death of one who foreknew the grievousness of death (as states the prophet)—[a grievousness] which all [others] who die do not know. Hence, the same [prophet] says: “Truly, He bore our infirmities.”<sup>118</sup> And when we see regarding the faithful father of faith, Abraham, how much he merited because he was willing to deliver up unto death his only begotten son, Isaac, in order to please God, then we see immediately what the Messiah merited in delivering Himself up unto death in order to please God in regard to the redemption of the human race.

**145** Behold the ineffable praiseworthiness of God the Father in not sparing His own Son but in delivering Him up for us!<sup>119</sup> Didn’t [God] merit to have an innumerable multitude of sons and of heirs to His Heavenly Kingdom, even as was Abraham? And what did Jesus merit when He really died a most shameful and most grievous death which exceeded all the griefs of [all others] who die? Surely, because He gave His life He merited resurrection from the dead for Himself and for the brothers whom He acquired for the Father. He exists among them as the First-born, holding the pre-eminence over [these] many brothers [of His].<sup>120</sup> Moreover, the Kingdom of the intellectual heav-

en must not be supposed to be as is a kingdom of this world, which [is such that] if several [men] hold [it], each [of them] has less [of it than he would if he held it by himself]. But if without diminishment [one and] the same [kingdom of this world] can be seen and understood by countless [men], so too can the intellectual Kingdom be possessed by countless intellects—completely possessed by each [of them]. Those who are resurrected have intellectual life in order that they may know and delight in the fact that they are alive. What reward would it be for a believer who dies for God if he remained dead or if he did not know that he was alive? Man prefers not to exist rather than to exist without any intellect. Hence, man arises unto intellectual life only in wisdom (i.e., in wise knowledge), in order that he may know<sup>121</sup> that he is alive. But the wisdom that is participated in by all who have an intellect has its magisterium in the Messiah. Therefore, everyone who arises in Christ is alive by participation in that magisterium, for Christ is the Resurrection-and-Life that is sought.

- 146** Each zealous [man] now sees how greatly the work of reforming human nature surpasses the work of creating, [human nature] and how wisely all things are ordained. But although Wisdom (which most wisely ordained all things with respect to both Christ's death and His Resurrection) never abandoned Christ, nevertheless it did not die when Christ, according to His humanity, died through the separation of His soul and His body. Moreover, the Wisdom that took unto itself the man Jesus is none other than the Wisdom of God the Father, the Creator.<sup>122</sup> Through this Wisdom [God] created all things; and the Koran seems to call this [Wisdom] God's soul, for it says that men's souls participate in God's soul insofar as Wisdom shines forth in them.<sup>123</sup> But
- 147** Christ's soul is united to the fullness of God's Wisdom. For this reason, the Koran states that God really gave His own soul to Christ.<sup>124</sup> And by reference to assured miracles [the Koran] illustrates that Christ had this [soul] while in His mother's womb. For, as is recorded,<sup>125</sup> He spoke to His mother at the moment of His birth, comforting her. On another occasion, He answered in her defense on that day when relatives suspected something evil of His mother.<sup>126</sup> When He wanted to, He spoke to infants, just as to the aged;<sup>127</sup> and [He spoke] to formed clay, so that it became a man or a bird.<sup>128</sup> (Muhammad, in his *Doctrines* and in the Koran, asserts that these events occurred.) Likewise, He spoke to a man born blind, so that he received sight, and to lepers and others who were sick, so that they became well, and to the dead, so that they became alive.

148 The foregoing [accounts] and many [others] can be drawn from the Gospel and from the Koran. The book [of the Koran] mentions that [Christ] is also wise. And it gives to Him the same name as it gives to God, whom it very frequently affirms to be incomprehensible and wise. Therefore, if [the Koran] confesses that Christ is absolutely wise, just as is also God the Father, then it will not be the case that the Wisdom of the Father-Creator is one Wisdom and the Wisdom of Christ another. Rather, the Father-Creator works all things through His own Wisdom, which Christ is. This is the undiminishing Wisdom that gives life to each intellectual nature, which without wisdom is dead. And so, the aim of creating the intellectual nature is toward [this nature's] apprehending Wisdom. Man can attain unto this [Wisdom] in his own human nature—which is common to himself and to Christ—only by the mediation of Christ, in whom the human nature that is common to all men is indissolubly united to Supreme Wisdom. Hence, Christ is the Teacher who has the instruction and the word-of-life for our intellects. He is the Revealer of all that is contained in God's treasury of Wisdom. He is the Discloser of the Father—who is the Fount of Wisdom—and of the Father's glory. This disclosure is our receiving of Wisdom in ourselves intellectually—[a receiving] that enlivens our intellects eternally and makes them like unto Christ, the Son-of-God, who exists in the glory of God the Father. And this [being enlivened and being Christlike] is being happy and reigning everlastingly in Heaven with the supreme joy of happiness. And these are the very steadfast promises of Christ to all who receive Him.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN  
On Paradise.

An Arab might say: "The things that are read in the Koran about Paradise, and the things that the Gospel promises, are very different. For the Koran promises to believers and to keepers of the law the fulfillment of all desires; and it mentions the desires that are commonly sought by those who are sensual. But the Gospel promises only intellectual happiness, which accompanies intellectual vision, knowledge, wisdom, and cognition."

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I reply that there has always seemed to me to be as much difference between Muhammad's Paradise and Christ's Paradise as there is between sensible things and intellectual things—or between visible things, which are temporal, and invisible things, which are eternal.<sup>129</sup>

A similar distance likewise characterizes the Koran and the Gospel.

Nevertheless, there are those who allege, by way of excusing the writer of the Koran, the consideration that he wanted to persuade the uneducated Arabs (in order that they would believe in one Creator, who gave them life in this temporal age) that in the everlasting, future age the Creator was also going to give them a life without deficiency—[a life] much better than this present one. Moreover, [they allege] that to this end (as is read in the Koran) the writer introduced many likenesses, which he nonetheless did not explain; rather, he left them as known to the wise. Furthermore, [as is alleged,] unless in foretelling of the joyfulness of the future life he had taken examples from this sensible life, [the Arabs] would not have understood and would not have been moved, because what was promised would have been unknown to them.<sup>130</sup> For [the writer] says in Chapter 51: “Believers and men of good works, who will possess the most beautiful places in Paradise, will obtain whatever they want. And their gain is the greatest. Indeed, what is promised in this manner, foretells unto them supreme joy.”<sup>131</sup>

**151** Hence, [the writer of the Koran] seems to intend to proclaim one conclusion: viz., that God is a rewarder of believers who serve Him—[a rewarder who rewards] in conformity with the expectation and the desires of the [respective] servant. One who serves [Him] for the sake of the temporal will obtain temporal things; [one who serves Him] for the sake of everlasting things [will obtain] everlasting things; [one who serves] for the sake of sensual things [will obtain] sensual things; and one who serves for the sake of intellectual things will obtain intellectual things. For in Chapter 6 [the writer] speaks as follows: “God, who discerns all [men’s] desires and who is rich in all things, gives what is temporal to those who are seeking mundane things and gives the Supreme Good to those who are seeking celestial things.”<sup>132</sup> And in Chapter 51 [the writer] says: “To him who is desirous of the goods of this age we shall grant these [goods]; but he will have no part in the other [age].”<sup>133</sup> And so, at the place in Chapter 1 where [the writer] says that those who are good will enter into Paradise, where they will possess forever very fresh waters, many kinds of fruit, various vegetables, very lovely and very pure women, and every good, we must take note of that which he says: “And they will possess forever ... every good.”<sup>134</sup> Surely, this good is none other than God. Nevertheless, he repeats very often the promises of sensible things. And, at last, in Chapter 64 he says: “And so, let all the wise fear God, who

gives to all believers wisdom and a knowledge of Himself.”<sup>135</sup> And in Chapter 107 he says: “They will attain unto Paradise in the presence of God.”<sup>136</sup> And often he says similar things—viz., that the reward is eternal life, eternal joy, and [eternal] happiness. Moreover, in his *Doctrines* [Muhammad] says that no [true] likeness of the future age can be made.<sup>137</sup>

**152** And so, in last analysis, [Muhammad] does not seem to contradict the Gospel, which asserts that the Paradise of the intelligent and wise is the vision of God and of His Wisdom (i.e., of Christ). And so, the Koran states elsewhere that those who are in Hell are deprived of discernment and of wisdom.<sup>138</sup> And still elsewhere, after [the Koran] lists all the things which seem to be goods in this world and which it often promises to those entering into Paradise, it adds that the goods of the future age are better than all these [earthly goods] since this age is nothing in comparison with the future [age]. Hence, just as [it is] by means of the likeness of torment from sensible fire [that the Koran] describes the punishment of those who are damned, so [it is] by means of [the likeness of] water and of fountains [that it describes] the life of the saved.

**153** However, according to Avicenna in his *Metaphysics*, [the Koran] does not describe a wholly intellectual happiness.<sup>139</sup> For although [Avicenna] was of the law of the Arabs, he maintains that Muhammad describes corporeal happiness and that the much more excellent intellectual [happiness] is described better by the wise. Yet, the Koran does affirm—although not extensively—that the perfect happiness of the wise consists in their knowledge of God and of Wisdom (which is God’s Son, according to the aforesaid), even as maintains also the Gospel on the basis of Christ’s most perfect teaching. For this world with its lusts will pass away.<sup>140</sup> Now, the things of the future, everlasting world are to the things of this world as the everlasting is to the perishable. Hence, the knowledge, or vision, of God the Father and of His Wisdom nourishes the intellect immortally, because Wisdom is undiminishable, as the Book of Wisdom teaches.<sup>141</sup>

**154**

#### CHAPTER NINETEEN

An invective against the Koran.

While I was reading the Koran, I noticed that very often mention is made of the day of awesome judgment as well as of Paradise and of Hell. And [this mention is] always [made] in different ways and



through likenesses, since that which has never entered into human conception<sup>142</sup> cannot be described otherwise than conjecturally, by reference to sensible things, which are images of intelligible things. And because I likewise saw that the Kingdom of Heaven is befigured in the Gospel and in the Old Testament by means of different likenesses, I told myself that this [befiguring in the Koran] could be excused because of the devout interpretation by the followers of [that] Book. Moreover, I read in the Koran [the following]: that chastity is praised in the Virgin Mary and in John [the son] of Zecharias and, generally speaking, in all individuals; that copulation is forbidden in sacred places; that after copulation washing is commanded prior to praying, because of the uncleanness thereof; that cleanliness is pleasing to God; that those who are good see God and are with Him in Paradise; that God loves exceedingly those who are good and that He will reward them with that [gift] which is the greatest; and that the unqualifiedly greatest [gift] is nothing but everlasting, incorporeal joy.

155 But subsequently I was taken aback by [the Koran's] so often having made mention of maidens and their breasts and of lustful physical copulation in Paradise—saying, [for example,] in Chapter 87 that such copulation is God's best reward for believers.<sup>143</sup> And I was ashamed to read these vile things. And I said to myself: "If Muhammad ascribes to God this book full of vileness, or if he himself wrote [it] and attributes its authority to God, then I am amazed that those wise and chaste and virtuous Arabs, Moors, Egyptians, Persians, Africans, and Turks who are said to be of this law esteem Muhammad as a prophet. [For] his life cannot be emulated by anyone who aspires unto the Kingdom of Heaven, where [people] do not marry but are like the angels, as Christ has taught.<sup>144</sup> For no one speaks so vilely of such vile things unless he is full of all such vileness; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.<sup>145</sup> And that this was true [of his heart] is evident from Chapter 42, where he says that God permitted to him even [pleasures] illicit for others ([illicit] according to the prohibition placed at the end in Chapter 7 of the Koran<sup>146</sup>), as well as permitting to him whatever [pleasures] he wanted.<sup>147</sup> [And it is also evident from the passage where he says] that [God] commanded the annulment of the lawful oath made by him to the effect that he would not commit adultery with Maria Christiana, the Jacobite. [Muhammad] speaks of this in Chapter 75, at the beginning<sup>148</sup>—[a passage that goes] against the things he says elsewhere regarding the condemnation of adulterers and of oath-breakers. For in Chapter 77 he

affirms that oath-breakers who have sworn on their salvation are damned.<sup>149</sup>

**156** How, then, is [Muhammad] not afraid to blaspheme against God, to whom he ascribes having commanded oath-breaking in order that adultery might be continued by him himself? The [vileness of Muhammad's heart] is also proved by many [other] things which he permitted regarding women—as, for example, the following in Chapter 3: “Make your wives to be altogether submissive unto you—for your use wherever you will.”<sup>150</sup> And in Chapter 8 he permits as many wives as each man is able to subject, or chastise.<sup>151</sup> And in Chapter 9 he speaks as follows: “This book sent to you from Heaven has established the following as lawful and as having to be adhered to by you: viz., that with your money you marry chaste women, providing for them. And so, after doing [these things] act [with your wives] in such way as [you] please, being without shame and fear.”<sup>152</sup> And [even] if it is the case that David or other holy men after him acted immoderately with regard to the number of their wives, this [fact] does not excuse Muhammad, who allowed by way of *law*—as if God were thus willing—what previously was unheard of with all the prophets and lawgivers. Moreover, it is blasphemy to impute to God that which is utterly opposed to the law.

**157** And I considered the fact that I read in the Koran, Chapter 76, that God commanded Muhammad as follows: “In order to show yourself to be truthful, say that you are only a messenger.”<sup>153</sup> Through an oath God affirms the same thing in Chapter 77, at the beginning: viz., that [Muhammad is] a messenger to the idolatrous Arabs.<sup>154</sup> And in Chapter 27: “To your tongue we have granted no power except to announce to those who fear God a message full of joy, and to unbelievers admonishment.”<sup>155</sup> And in Chapter 32: “Say [that] nothing is imposed upon me except to adore God alone and not to believe that He has a participant. To Him I commend myself; and to Him I shall return.”<sup>156</sup> If these [statements] are true, why didn't [Muhammad] observe [them]? Why did he impose upon others what was not imposed upon him? Why, in Chapter 77, did he (who in accordance with the afore-said was the messenger to the idolatrous Arabs) call himself the teacher of the nations?<sup>157</sup> And why did he illicitly presume to meddle with matters that were not at all entrusted to him? Tell [us], O Muhammad, why do you speak against the Gospel and the Old Testament? Why did you undertake to teach a new law and a [new]

book—as if they were entrusted to you? When you say that to your tongue there is not conceded power except to announce to those who fear God a message full of joy, and to unbelievers admonishment, then regarding these claims it is easy to believe you and anyone [else]. For each [person] can say and can announce this, since it is true; and everything true is from the true God. You yourself and all who say [these things] can easily be believed to have from God the power to say these things.

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But how is it that you presume to speak with regard to other matters, since [to do so] is neither imposed upon you, nor granted to you, by God? Moreover, if you speak, why shall I believe you if [in speaking] you are not obeying God? Assuredly, you are without excuse—unless, as you are accustomed [to do,] you attribute variation to the immutable God, so that you escape [the charge against you] by thus blaspheming. Nevertheless, God Almighty willed that amid all these filthy and vain things, and things- such as are abominable to the wise even among the Arabs, there also be inserted things in which the splendor of the Gospel was so contained as hidden that it would manifest itself to the wise if it were sought for with diligent effort. For, indeed, the light of the Gospel is so bright that without it nothing can appear as true and as clear. But every spoken and written [word] that is deprived of that Light which says, “I am the Light of the world, illuminating every man who comes into this world, so that he who follows me does not walk in darkness”<sup>158</sup> is obscure, disordered, shadowy, and deadly; and it is abominable to the intellectual nature, even though to bestiality and animality, [the light] which is of this sensible world, seems appealing.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- CA *Cribratio Alkorani* [Vol. VIII (edited by Ludwig Hagemann) of *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia* (Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1986)].
- DI *De Docta Ignorantia* [Latin-German edition: *Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues in deutscher Übersetzung*, published by F. Meiner Verlag. **Book I** (Vol. 264a), edited and translated by Paul Wilpert; 3rd edition with minor improvements by Hans G. Senger, 1979. **Book II** (Vol. 264b), edited and translated by Paul Wilpert; 2nd edition with minor improvements by Hans G. Senger, 1977. **Book III** (Vol. 264c); Latin text edited by Raymond Klibansky; introduction and translation by Hans G. Senger, 1977].
- DP *De Possesit* [Latin text contained in J. Hopkins, *A Concise Introduction to the Philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 3rd edition, 1986)].
- DVD *De Visione Dei* [Latin text contained in J. Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation, and Interpretive Study of De Visione Dei* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1985 and 1988)].
- M *Monologion* [by Anselm of Canterbury. Latin text contained in J. Hopkins, *A New, Interpretive Translation of St. Anselm's Monologion and Proslogion* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1986)].
- MFCG *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, edited by Rudolf Haubst. A continuing series published in Mainz, Germany by Matthias-Grünwald Verlag.
- NA *De Li Non Aliud* [Latin text contained in J. Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa on God as Not-other: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Li Non Aliud* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 3rd edition, 1987)].
- P *Proslogion* [by Anselm of Canterbury; see citation under “M” above].
- PF *De Pace Fidei* [Vol. VII (edited by Raymond Klibansky and Hildebrand Bascour) of *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia* (Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1970)].
- S Schmitt, F. S. [Schmitt edition of *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia* as reprinted in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt by F. Frommann Verlag, 1968; e.g., 'S I, 237:7' indicates Vol. I, p. 237, line 7].
- TB Theodor Bibliander, editor. *Machumetis Sarracenorum Principis Vita ac Doctrina*. Basel, 1543 (3 vols.); 2nd, revised edition published in Zurich in 1550. In the notes below, page references are to the Basel edition.
- VS *De Venatione Sapientiae* [Vol. XII (edited by Raymond Klibansky and Hans G. Senger) of *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia* (Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1982)].

## PRAENOTANDA

1. All references to Nicholas of Cusa's works are to the Latin texts—specifically to the following texts in the following editions (unless explicitly indicated otherwise):

- A. Heidelberg Academy edition of *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia: De Concordantia Catholica; Sermones; De Coniecturis; De Deo Abscondito; De Quaerendo Deum; De Filiatione Dei; De Dato Patris Luminum; Coniectura de Ultimis Diebus; De Genesi; Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae; Idiotia* (1983 edition) *de Sapientia, de Mente, de Staticis Experimentis; De Pace Fidei; De Beryllo* (1988); *Cribratio Alkorani; De Principio; De Venatione Sapientiae; Compendium; De Apice Theoriae*.
- B. Texts authorized by the Heidelberg Academy and published in the Latin-German editions of Felix Meiner Verlag's Philosophische Bibliothek: *De Docta Ignorantia*
- C. Editions by J. Hopkins: *De Visione Dei* (1988); *De Possess* (1986); *De Li Non Aliud* (1987).

The references given for some of these treatises indicate book and chapter, for others margin number and line, and for still others page and line. Readers should have no difficulty determining which is which when they consult the particular Latin text. E.g., 'DI II, 6 (125:19-20)' indicates *De Docta Ignorantia*, Book II, Chapter 6, margin number 125, lines 19-20.

*N.B.*: The arabic-numeral references to *De Pace Fidei* are to the bold-faced margin numbers and to line numbers within each division by bold-faced margin numbers. E.g., 'PF XVII (62: 1)' indicates *De Pace Fidei*, Section XVII, bold faced margin number 62, line 1. The only exception to this system of citation occurs in the Addenda et Corrigenda, where reference to *De Pace Fidei* is by page number and line number on that page.

2. All references to the Koran are in terms of the English translation by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1980 printing). A reference such as 'Surah 7:29' indicates Surah 7, verse 29. The Koran chapter numbers used by Nicholas of Cusa do not correspond to the numbers that have become standard and that are found in Pickthall's translation.

3. References to the Bible are given in terms of the Douay version. (References to chapters and verses of the Psalms include, in parentheses, the King James' locations.)

4. The locations of Nicholas of Cusa's allusions to the Koran are, for the most part, the ones to be found in the respective translations of *Cribratio Alkorani* by Paul Naumann and Gustav Hölscher and in the Latin text edited by Ludwig Hagemann. If some of these locations in the Koran seem not to correspond to Nicholas's Latin allusions, it is because the Latin translation used by Nicholas was frequently inaccurate.

NOTES TO THE TRANSLATION OF  
*CRIBRATIO ALKORANI: BOOK TWO*

1. *DI I*, 26.
2. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, Chap. 1 [*Dionysiaca* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937), I, 9-11]. Cf. *NA* 14 (57).
3. *DVD* 13 (especially 58:9-12).
4. Surah 20:98. The Latin translation used by Nicholas does not here accurately render the Arabic—as is so often true elsewhere also.
5. Surah 55:26-29.
6. *DI I*, 24.
7. *DP* 8.
8. *DP* 3.
9. Regarding Nicholas's belief that God freely created the world, see my remarks on pp. 65-66 (including related notes) of my *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism*.
10. In this chapter Nicholas interchanges the expressions “*in arte*” and “*in scientia*,” as well as the expressions “*in mente*” and “*in comprehensione*”.
11. *CA*, Prologue (5:11).
12. *De Mente* 7.
13. *CA II*, 2 (91).
14. Genesis 1:26 and Exodus 20:5 respectively.
15. Surah 77-20.
16. Surah 51:47.
17. Surah 15:49. Nicholas is making the point that in this passage, unlike in the immediately foregoing ones that he mentioned, the grammatically singular number is used of God.
18. *CA II*, 3 (9 5).
19. *DI II*, 2 (104-7).
20. Cf. *DP* 38:13-14.
21. The contemplatives are the mystics.
22. *CA II*, 4 (97:3-9).
23. Here, as earlier, “*mens*” is translated by “reflection”. Nicholas is influenced by Ricoldo's terminology in *Contra Legem Sarracenorum*, Chap. 15.
24. See Augustine, *De Trinitate* 10.1.2 - 10.2.4 (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 50:312-316).
25. *CA II*, 1 (88:16). *DI I*, 26 (88:16-20). See especially Sermon 1 (8:6-10).
26. Regarding the translation of “... *quod non possit esse perfectior*” cf. *CA II*, 7 (104:1-2).
27. I.e., by an essential equality.
28. I.e., co-essential—of the same essence, or substance.
29. I.e., shall we deny that in God there is love?
30. The single English word “Love” here translates “*caritas seu amor*.”
31. I.e., since it is essentially Love.
32. *VS* 14.

33. John 5:21. John 6:64.
34. Isaiah 66-9. *PF IX* (25).
35. Surah 2-136. In the Koran Isaiah is not explicitly listed among the prophets.
36. Surah 21-30.
37. *DP* 11.
38. According to Nicholas oneness is not a number. That is, it is not a plurality, a number of ... [*DI I*, 5 (14:1-8)]. The Trinity is not three *in number* [*DI I*, 19 (57:10-11)]. *PF VIII* (23:14-15)].
39. Surah 42-52.
40. Surah 26:193-195.
41. Surah 4:171.
42. Surah 16:102.
43. See the reference in n. 39 above.
44. John 1-3.
45. See the reference in n. 42 above.
46. Surah 5:46-48. *CA I*, 5.
47. Matthew 19:17.
48. John 3:16.
49. John 14:26.
50. John 15-26.
51. Matthew 28:19.
52. *DI III*, 6.
53. Surah 4-157-159.
54. John 10: 16.
55. Surah 4:159. See Nicholas's text at the place marked by n. 53 above.
56. John 12-44.
57. Matthew 25:31-46.
58. I.e., in the passage alluded to—viz., Surah 4:159.
59. Surah 39:69.
60. John 5:22 and 27.
61. Surah 3:7.
62. See the reference in n. 53 above. *PF XIV* (47-49). Note especially *CA II*, 14 (129), where Nicholas construes the Koran's statement that Christ did not die on the Cross to mean that He did not die on the Cross at the hands of the Jews.
63. *CA I*, 5.
64. I.e., 62 times 7, or 434 years. Daniel 9:25-26.
65. See, above, the reference in n. 4 of Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Book One.
66. I Corinthians 1:23.
67. John 10:18.
68. Surah 3:54-55.
69. Surah 4:158.
70. Surah 5:117.
71. Matthew 27:46. Luke 23:46.
72. I Timothy 6:16.
73. Surah 5:114.
74. Surah 4:157.

75. Surah 39:68.
76. Surah 46:35.
77. Surah 2:154.
78. Surah 2:207. Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Koran—the translation upon which Nicholas depends—does not adequately capture the meaning of this passage.
79. Surah 3:169.
80. Surah 29:57.
81. Matthew 10:28.
82. Surah 78:39.
83. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>, column b, lines 19-25, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 199). Surah 28-88. In the prologue to *CA* Nicholas refers to *Doctrinae ad Abdallah* as *Doctrinae ad centum questiones*. Elsewhere he refers to it simply as *Doctrinae*.
84. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>, column b, line 46, to fol. 30<sup>r</sup>, column a, line 5, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 199).
85. Surah 4:157.
86. In harmony with the ms. (of the Koran) that he is using (viz., Codex Cusanus 108), Nicholas here speaks of the middle of the Koran.
87. Surah 19:32-34.
88. Surah 19:15.
89. See the references contained in n. 83 above.
90. Surah 39:68.
91. *Chronica Mendosa* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 15<sup>v</sup>, column a, lines 35-38, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 213). Bibliander's printed text ascribes 62 years to Mary's life, whereas Codex Cusanus 108 indicates 56 years. In *CA* Nicholas says 53 years.
92. Matthew 10:28.
93. I Timothy 6:16.
94. Surah 35:25. Surah 3:3. *CA* I, 5.
95. *DI* III, 6.
96. Surah 85:13.
97. The words "the power of God" translate "*hanc potestatem et dei virtutem*."
98. John 1:12.
99. "... in that case": i.e., in the case of man's belief that Christ was God's Son and Word.
100. John 14:6.
101. Luke 24:27. John 5:39.
102. Galatians 3:27.
103. *DI* III, 6 (219). Romans 12:5.
104. Isaiah 59:2.
105. Psalms 118:113 (119:113).
106. Psalms 50:7 (51:5).
107. Job 25:4.
108. Surah 70:19-20.
109. Surah 3:47.
110. Isaiah 53:9.
111. Exodus 4:22.



112. John 3:18.  
 113. John 3:16.  
 114. I Peter 1:18-19.  
 115. Surah 7:22-25.  
 116. The Prince of this world is the Prince of darkness, viz., Satan. Cf. Colossians 1:13. Ephesians 6:12.  
 117. Romans 6:7-8.  
 118. Isaiah 53:4.  
 119. Romans 8:32.  
 120. Colossians 1:18.  
 121. Here the one word “know” translates “*sapiat et sciat.*”  
 122. *CA I*, 9 (last part of 51). See, above, n. 28 of Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Salutation and Prologues.  
 123. Surah 17:85.  
 124. Surah 2:253.  
 125. Surah 19:24.  
 126. Surah 19:27-33.  
 127. Surah 3:46.  
 128. Surah 3:49.  
 129. II Corinthians 4:18.  
 130. The foregoing interpretation is an example of what Nicholas elsewhere calls devout interpretation (*pia interpretatio*). It places the theologically and religiously most satisfactory interpretation upon the text. Cf. *CA II*, 1 (86:4); II, 12 (119:1); II, 13 (124:34); II, 19 (15 4:8). *PF* 15 (5 1  
 131. Surah 42:22.  
 132. Surah 3:145.  
 133. Surah 42:20.  
 134. Surah 2:25.  
 135. Surah 65: 10.  
 136. Surah 98:8.  
 137. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, column b, lines 4-7, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 193, lines 29-31  
 138. Surah 7:179.  
 139. Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia Prima IX*, 7 [fol. 106<sup>v</sup>, column b, of *Avicenna Opera* (Venice, 1508). Reprinted in Frankfurt, W. Germany: Minerva Verlag, 1961]. A critical edition is that of Simone Van Riet, *Avicenna Latinus*, published in Leiden by E.J. Brill. See Vol. 4, p. 507, lines 95ff. for the passage presently cited.  
 140. I John 2:17.  
 141. Wisdom 6:13.  
 142. I Corinthians 2:9.  
 143. Surah 78:33-36. Cf. *PF XV* (51).  
 144. Luke 20:35-36.  
 145. Matthew 12:34.  
 146. Nicholas may have in mind Surah 4, verse 3. For nothing at the end of Surah 3, which corresponds to his allusion to “Chapter 7 of the Koran,” coheres with the point he is making.  
 147. Surah 33:50-51.

148. Surah 66:1-2.
149. Surah 68:10.
150. Surah 2:223.
151. Surah 4:3.
152. Surah 4:24.
153. Surah 67:25-26.
154. Surah 68:1-2.
155. Surah 19:97.
156. Surah 13:36.
157. Surah 68:52.
158. John 8:12.