

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

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**BOOK THREE**

**CHAPTER ONE**

The Koran, while preserving faith in one God, seeks to appeal to all [readers,] though it nevertheless prefers Christ.

One who reads the Koran is bound to notice that while it preserves the faith that there is no god but God,<sup>1</sup> it aims not to contradict anyone. And so, where it knew that there are dissensions, it varies its [statements] in such way that each [man]—no matter to what heresy or sect he belongs—will find something acceptable. For example, it often states that in-between the death and the resurrection of each [man] scarcely an hour elapses;<sup>2</sup> thus, there need be no question about the status of souls prior to the [Day of] Judgment. Nevertheless, it also inserts [the claim] that during the intervals [between death and resurrection] some [souls] are situated in a pleasant place that abounds with fountains—as it writes in Chapter 32 regarding Christ and the Virgin Mary, as well as regarding the just who have been slain for God’s sake and who, it asserts, are alive in God.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, it also states in the same Chapter 32 that some [souls] are tormented with fire up to the Day of Judgment<sup>4</sup>—in spite of its counter-claim that no [souls] are found in Paradise or in Hell prior to the Judge’s sentencing on the Last Day.<sup>5</sup> It writes these [statements] so ambiguously that it seems to favor contrary opinions—on the part of heretics and the orthodox—about the souls of the dead prior to the Judgment.

**160** [The Koran] attempts to do similarly<sup>6</sup> with regard to all opinions. For example, although it does not say anything about the Kingdom of Heaven, it does speak very often of paradise—as if it meant an earthly paradise and [meant] that after the Day of Judgment he who believes and is deserving will be restored to the place from which Adam was cast out and will remain there forever. Nevertheless, lest it seem to neglect the Paradise of Christians, viz., the Kingdom of Heaven, it posits (in a certain passage)<sup>7</sup> two paradises, and it posits many gradations with respect to these [places]. And sometimes it affirms that in paradise there is found that which Christians believe to

be present in the Kingdom of Heaven, viz., eternal life. Likewise, it states in Chapter 25: “A mundane thing will perish quickly; a divine thing, never. God will reward each [individual] according to the best measure of his works, giving [him] eternal life, whether he be a man or a woman.”<sup>8</sup> (Note that [according to the Koran] eternal life is divine; it is present in the heavenly Kingdom of God, and it is expected by Christians.) Moreover, [the Koran] likewise says in Chapter 18: “At length, all who keep the divine precepts will obtain full and everlasting joy.”<sup>9</sup> Now, this [obtaining] cannot occur except in the presence of God, who dwells in Heaven. Furthermore, [the Koran] says in Chapter 26 that the good shall attain unto paradise, where they will partake of the divine substance.<sup>10</sup>

161 With regard to all [matters, the Koran] proceeds similarly [to the foregoing]. Hence, in the same Chapter 25 it claims that God spoke to Muhammad as follows: “I have entrusted this book to you for no other reason than that you may expose to men their opposing statements.”<sup>11</sup> Again, in the same chapter there follows: “We have sent you in order that you may follow the law of Abraham—nowhere departing [from it,] lest you be an unbeliever. Indeed, we have not imposed [upon you] the keeping of the Sabbath, because associated therewith are opposition and dissension, which God, the future Judge, will arbitrate.”<sup>12</sup> And elsewhere [the Koran] prefers, to others, him who believes the prophets and who does not judge between them. For example, in Chapter 4, near the end, and in Chapter 11 it speaks as follows: “We heap ill and contempt upon those who disobey God and His envoys and who desire to judge between them and who confess that they themselves believe a part but not the whole (supposing that thereby they attain unto the right way)—even as [we also heap ill and contempt] upon unbelievers of the truth. But God, who is a gracious bestower of pardon, will grant an immeasurable reward to those who believe the aforementioned [prophets] and who do not judge between them.”<sup>13</sup> Note that [the Koran] states that in their opposition and discord each of God’s envoys is to be believed, so that the opinion of none [of them] is to be accepted [only] partially; rather, judgment [between these opinions] is to be left to God on the [Day of] Judgment. In this manner [the Koran] very often maintains that doubtful [points] from the laws and the prophets are to be left to the Day of Truth.

162 And because it is stated that the Koran was given successively and in sections (as Chapter 26 says),<sup>14</sup> we must consider that prior to

Chapter 11 (viz., in Chapter 3) there occurred a judging between the prophets;<sup>15</sup> and in that passage Christ is read to be elevated above [all other prophets]<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, in doubtful [matters] we must adhere to Christ, who said that He had come not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it<sup>17</sup> and that whatever things were written in the Law and in the Prophets were about Him.<sup>18</sup> Hence, since Christ is the end and the conclusion of the Law and of all the prophets who prophesied or who will prophesy: if we adhere to Christ's pronouncement, then we adhere to His judging between all the prophets.

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## CHAPTER TWO

Muhammad did not know what ought to be done and what ought to be believed; and he left behind nothing firm.

Now, in the following words Muhammad admits in Chapter 55 that he himself is not the foremost messenger: "I am not the foremost messenger, and I do not know what ought to be done by you and me. However, I will explicate the divine commandments, which you do not at all believe, even though they are God's and even though this [fact] is attested by many sons of Israel who do believe them."<sup>19</sup> Note the kind of prophet that Muhammad is, who does not know what he and others are to do, except for the things that were commanded previously, and who adduces on his behalf the Jews as witnesses that he is explicating the Testament's previously given divine commandments.

Moreover, [Muhammad] says that those who follow the commandments of Moses will obtain happiness.<sup>20</sup> But sometimes he condemns all the Jews because they do not believe [in] resurrection<sup>21</sup> and do not accept Christ. Likewise, he states that Christians, who follow Christ, are saved.<sup>22</sup> But elsewhere he calls both Jews and Christians unbelievers because both ascribe to God a son.<sup>23</sup> (Yet, it is not true of the Jews that they ascribe to God a son.)

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Now, [Muhammad] very often affirms that all unbelievers are damned. For example, he says in Chapter 49: "God's word is established regarding unbelievers: they will enter into everlasting fire."<sup>24</sup> But in Chapter 51 he says: "Perhaps God will confound all unbelievers; perhaps he will pardon many [of them]."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, very often he says that at the resurrection all souls will return unto their respective body. In Chapter 48 he speaks as follows: "From those who are dying God withdraws their respective soul at the hour of death. From [certain] others [He withdraws the soul] at the hour of sleep, return-

ing it to some [of them] at the [fore-]known hour, to others [of them] never—doing all things according to His own will. And the wise must marvel at [all] this.”<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere he says that angels withdraw souls from bodies.<sup>27</sup> In the foregoing way, he leaves in doubt the general resurrection (of which he makes mention in almost every chapter) when he states that God never returns the souls that have been withdrawn from certain [sleeping men].

**165** Accordingly, for Muhammad, no certainty remains except [for the certainty] that there is one God, who is Creator of the universe. And so, [Muhammad] very often asserts that only faith in the one God is necessary for salvation. And, in the end, even calling into doubt this [assertion], he reduces to the following words everything necessary [for salvation]: “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.”<sup>28</sup> And [Muhammad’s] followers add [the word] “great.”<sup>29</sup> [Now,] no one claims that God is small, because there is no end of His greatness. Nor does anyone claim to be false the [statement] that God is God. Even an idolater who worships more than one god admits to be true that God is God, for [this statement] is self-evident. Therefore, [by implication] no one either was or will be an unbeliever. But as for [Muhammad’s] adding “and Muhammad is His messenger”: If it is construed to mean that he is a messenger of the truth of that self-evident proposition, then this [fact] is not important. For it was always true of Muhammad, who announced this [truth,] and of anyone else who would have announced it, that he was a truthful messenger. On any other construal, however, to believe that Muhammad is God’s messenger cannot be necessary [for salvation]. For there was a time when it was altogether true that there is no god except God but was false that Muhammad was His messenger, for [Muhammad] was not yet born.

**166** Therefore, if through the faith that there is no god but God those who believed this [truth] were saved in Muhammad’s day, then, necessarily, all who at any time believe only this [truth] are likewise [saved]. Now, not even in Muhammad’s day was it necessary for *all* who were to be saved to believe that Muhammad was a messenger of God; for Muhammad himself admits that he is a messenger sent to the *Arabs* and to his *own nation*. But not even Arabs were obliged to believe of him that he was God’s messenger unto them, since he did not come with miracles and with such powers as would attest that God’s word was in him. Rather, since he appeared without the power

of miracles and since he led an ordinary life characteristic of sinners and was an idolater (who worshiped Venus,<sup>30</sup> as did others), it is not surprising that they raised against him the [following] objections: [viz.,] that in order to vindicate himself when he was offended by one of the gods, he made up the story that he was a messenger of God (as [occurs] in Chapter 20 of the Koran).<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere, in Chapter 30, they raised against him the objection that he was a man similar to them, since he approached them with the art of magic, and [that] his book was a fantasy or a fiction.<sup>32</sup> And they adduced many such [objections] against him which he was not able to answer otherwise than by his having said, in Chapter 29: “They exclaim: ‘If [only] he had come with divine powers!’ Did I not offer attestation from earlier books?”<sup>33</sup>

**167** Note that he adduces as attestation earlier books, viz., the Gospel and the Testament. For in Chapter 17 he says that in the Testament and in the Gospel mention is made of him and that in them he is named.<sup>34</sup> And in Chapter 70 he says that Christ foretold [the following]: “I announce that after me a messenger by the name of Muhammad will come, whom they will lyingly claim to be a magician.”<sup>35</sup> Note [that this is] the whole of the attestation that Muhammad is God’s messenger. But since this [attestation] is altogether false, clearly nothing remains true except this alone: [viz., that] there is no god but God.

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### CHAPTER THREE

Why those who believe the Koran are called “saved ones”; and that the sword is teacher.

Muhammad saw that he fell short of the truth and that the lies which he alleged regarding the Testament and the Gospel could no longer remain undetected by an uneducated and ignorant people while Christians and Jews were denying that his claim was true. For neither in both of the aforementioned books nor in either one of them is mention made [of Muhammad] or is he named. After [he realized all this,] he resorted to arms and said to the people: “God commanded me to battle against the nations with the sword until they profess that there is no god but God and that I am His messenger. If they do this, they will straightway save their blood and their money.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, many who were struck with fright obeyed his command and became saved from the shedding of blood and from plunder and were named “saved ones,” or “Muslims.”<sup>37</sup>

**169** And note his often asserting that he is the sole native messenger

for the Arabs, who previously did not have a prophet; thereafter, in the chapter concerning the prophets, he states that God speaks *generally*: “We have sent you to no less than to *all* the nations.”<sup>38</sup> In this case, as in others, he ascribes a contradiction to his own God. And, at length, after many [men] joined [him,] he left aside [the statement] that he was a messenger of God, and he caused [the following message] to be proclaimed: “Whoever says that there is no god but God will enter into Paradise.”<sup>39</sup> And as the Arabs are said to maintain: Muhammad’s meaning at the time was that one who makes this profession will enter into Paradise even if he is a fornicator and a thief and has committed other sins—because his faith has saved [him]. Therefore, at the command of his own God in Chapter 76, he left off God’s name from the title of his office as envoy. For in Chapter 76 the following is written: “In order to be shown to be truthful, say that you are only a messenger.”<sup>40</sup> Reproached by God in this way, Muhammad, who called himself a messenger of God, is supposed to call himself only a messenger. But it did not seem to him that it befit his purpose to proclaim “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is a messenger,” since there would remain in doubt *whose* messenger [he was]. Therefore, he left aside all mention of a messenger. Thus [it is that] those who come to the [Muslims] make a profession of one God by the raising of one finger—something which [the Muslims] say suffices [for salvation].

**170** Therefore, the sword is the final decisive proof of whatever is read in the Koran. For thus it is written of Muhammad in the Koran, in the chapter concerning the prophets: “ ‘You have uttered dreams, and you have formulated blasphemies, or perhaps you poeticize. Come to us at least with a miracle, as have previous messengers.’ [Muhammad] replied: ‘We have destroyed, says God, cities before the eyes of those who have not believed. And neither would you believe miracles, except by the sword ... ,’ ” etc.<sup>41</sup> In his own manner [Muhammad here] says that God commanded [him] to use force against men. [Hereby] he makes God—whom He very often writes to have restrained him from such coercion and force<sup>42</sup>—to be changeable, varying, and lying. About this [topic something] will be added hereafter.

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#### CHAPTER FOUR

The God of the Koran seems to be an absolute God; and the other god of whom He speaks is immanent in things.

Let us now inquire into who the God of the Koran is. For in Chapter 24 God speaks to Muhammad as follows: “Having beforehand created from fire the pernicious Devil, we [subsequently] also formed man from earth and clay, when I made known to the angels that I would form him from clay and would breathe into him a portion of my soul,” etc.<sup>43</sup> And in Chapter 26: “To those seeking to ascertain whose soul it is, reply: ‘[the soul] of God, who gives you only a small [measure of] wisdom concerning it.’”<sup>44</sup> And in Chapter 30, where God speaks of John, [the son] of Zecharias, He says that He breathed His own soul into the belly of [John’s] mother and that He made her and her son to be an evident miracle.<sup>45</sup> In Chapter 31 [the Koran] says: “God formed man from clay and formed his descendants from a perishable vapor, and He breathed into man [a portion] of His own spirit.”<sup>46</sup> And in Chapter 47: “God said to the angels that He would make man from clay. And so, into man, who was formed in the best possible way, we breathed [a portion] of our spirit. And by our order all the angels except Beelzebub, who was wayward and unbelieving, bowed down before man. And when Beelzebub was asked why he rebelled against God and was unwilling to bow down [before man,] he answered: ‘I, being of fire, am better than man, who is of clay.’”<sup>47</sup> And in Chapter 26 God says: “To those who believe and to those who merit it: since their deeds are pleasing to me, I will give to them a paradise—granting to both the former and the latter [a portion] of the divine substance, which is not at all small.”<sup>48</sup>

**172** From the foregoing [passages] it is evident that the God who speaks in the Koran makes reference to another god. For He says: “Reply that it is [the soul] of god.”<sup>49</sup> He does not say: “our [soul]” or “my [soul].” Therefore, if the God who speaks in the Koran is the God of gods and if the god of whom He speaks is another god, of whom He says there to be a soul and who apportions his soul to men and shares his divine substance with those who are pleasing to him and breathes his own spirit into the bellies of pregnant [women], then assuredly the God of the Koran is absolute and not able to be participated in, whereas the god of whom this God speaks is immanent in things and is sharable and, hence, is corporeal. And so, since every soul will taste of death (as is stated in the Koran, Chapter 38)<sup>50</sup> and since that god’s soul is the soul of everyone, then he is mortal.

**173** Likewise, angels and daimons will be [inferable to be] of a corporeal and fiery nature. And if both god and men have a soul, then

so too do angels, as [the Koran] acknowledges in Chapter 45.<sup>51</sup> And so, the soul of angels is god's soul that has been imparted to them. And this god will be of the nature of creatures, and all rational creatures will be of the nature of this god, since in them the nature of god is contracted. And so, [god] will be the form of each thing and will be a part of a composite; and [it will follow that] he gives being to each thing and is not God the Creator, who creates *ex nihilo*; rather, he forms all things from out of himself, and so, he is *hyle*, or matter. For just as from his own soul [he forms] souls and from his own spirit [he forms] spirits, so from his own body [he forms] bodies and from his own being [he forms] all existing things and from his own wings [he forms] the wings of angels—two [wings] for one [angel] and four [wings] for another, as the Koran speaks in a certain place about those wings.<sup>52</sup>

**174** But if you say that the soul is [the soul] of the Supreme God, and Sole Creator, and that the God who speaks in the Koran, saying “Reply that the soul is [the soul] of God,”<sup>53</sup> is speaking of Himself (i.e., [is speaking] of the one God who is Creator of all things), then His soul will also be God, since whatever is of God is only God. Therefore, every creature having an intellectual form will be—in a hypostatic union—both God and a creature. [Each will be] God in accordance with its spirit, or form, and [will be] a creature in accordance with its body. But since Christ has God's soul not according to a portion and not figuratively but properly speaking, then assuredly Christ will in the proper sense be God and a creature—i.e., [will be] full and perfect God as well as a full and perfect man. But the case is not similar with regard to other rational creatures. For in them the soul of God is present partly and imperfectly and improperly speaking. And so, they are not properly said to be both God and a creature. And although they can be thus spoken of improperly, only Christ [can be thus spoken of] properly.

**175** Indeed, it is necessary that one who accepts the Koran admit the foregoing. Hence, it is evident that Christ is the absolute perfection of intellectual creatures, all [of whom] partake of His fullness. Therefore, in Christ as the head, there is the perfection of every creature—[a perfection] that cannot be either greater or lesser,<sup>54</sup> because it is all that which it can be; but in other creatures there is a perfection which *can* be greater and lesser. For Christ is as the value of gold in pure gold; and other intellectual creatures are as the value of gold in



other metals—of which the one [metal] has more of the value of gold and the other, less.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

The God of the Koran seems to be less great than all [other] things and to be Muhammad's servant and his conception.

But how will the following hold true?: [viz., that] when the God of the Koran swears by God, he swears by the Lord of the East and the West.<sup>55</sup> For hereby it appears that the God who speaks in the Koran recognizes another God, who is higher and greater than Himself and who is the Lord of the East and the West. Therefore, He will not be the supreme and absolute God—not, indeed, when He swears by a reed, a fig tree, a gnat, and many [other] such things, which are creatures.<sup>56</sup> For the God of the Testament and of the Gospel is not found to have sworn in this manner but [to have sworn] only by Himself,<sup>57</sup> since He has no superior. Moreover, He has not changed His manner of swearing, for He is a steadfast God who is without change. But since the God of the Koran swears by lowly creatures—now by these, later by others—and is unsteadfast and changing, He will be [inferable to be] less great than any creature. For confirmation of a statement is made on the part of someone who is greater and more truthful—by whom one swears. And he is adduced as a [confirming] witness, so that credence may be lent to the statement.

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Furthermore, if one looks at Chapter 42, [he will note that] the God of the Koran is a servant of Muhammad.<sup>58</sup> For He and His angels pray for Muhammad. [Moreover,] God speaks of whatever things Muhammad himself is ashamed to speak. He is a mediator between Muhammad and his wives, fanning the flame of Muhammad's very unclean concupiscence and in this regard granting [him] a dispensation from his lawful oath, from the laws, and from his promises—in order to accede to his will. [Moreover,] He takes upon Himself shame and guilt and sins, in order that Muhammad himself not lose either his renown or his reputation. See how Muhammad makes God his servant! This [fact] is everywhere evident—[evident,] for example, when in Chapter 48 Muhammad says of himself: “It is God's commandment that I invoke Him with a pure heart and that by obeying the law that He has sent I be the first of believers. Otherwise, I will suffer grave ill. And so, I continually obey God and His law.”<sup>59</sup> And in Chapter 52 [Muhammad] says of himself: “I am the first of the believers and

the devout.”<sup>60</sup> [Now,] how, [0 Muhammad,] are these [statements] compatible with your saying that your reason for not keeping either the law or your lawful oath is that God prohibited you from keeping [it]—<sup>61</sup> when, [in reality,] your unclean heart preferred the pleasure of the flesh to the law and the sacrament? Do you [dare to] maintain that God commanded you in this manner? How are you the first of the believers and the devout?—[you] who elsewhere affirm that Moses is the first.<sup>62</sup> From the beginning you were a sinner, and you did not cease to sin, and you died at the home of one of your wives after countless sheddings of blood, pillagings, illicit sexual relations, and oppressions of the poor. If God commanded you to follow the just man Abraham and if, as you claim, you are the last of the prophets,<sup>63</sup> how are you the first of the believers and the devout?

**178** Therefore, the God of the Koran is not the Great God in whom, because He is the Creator of all things, every rational creature ought to believe. Instead, He is *your* God, who through you speaks the things that you conceive. Therefore, whatever we read in the Koran that God [is alleged to have] said: whether it be true or whether it be false, it ought to be ascribed only to Muhammad’s conception. And because [Muhammad] wrote (or caused to be written) many things that he heard from Sergius and Bahira and his Jewish associates<sup>64</sup> but that he did not understand (even as they too, perhaps, who informed him [did not understand]), he did not understand everything. Rather, he ascribed an understanding of the Koran to God alone,<sup>65</sup> who, as is found in Chapter 82, commanded him to read the Koran continually and devotedly even at night<sup>66</sup>—[a command] that, nevertheless, contradicts the statement (located elsewhere in the Koran) that [Muhammad] was ignorant of reading and writing.<sup>67</sup>

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#### CHAPTER SIX

Without cause, and contrary to God’s commands,  
Muhammad persecutes Christ in Christians.

Furthermore, [0 Muhammad,] God has very often commanded you: do not at all use force for the sake of [enforcing] my laws. [God says this] in Chapter 4.<sup>68</sup> And in Chapter 15 [He says]: “Withdraw from unbelievers, inflicting upon them no harm or insults, even though through anger and ignorance they speak evilly of God. For to each nation we have made its own things seem to it to be agreeable and lovely. But when [unbelievers] return to God, they will know their works through

God's disclosing."<sup>69</sup> And in Chapter 19 it is said that the nations are not to be coerced into faith, because no one can believe except with the consent of God, who leaves in their defilement the wicked and the indiscriminating.<sup>70</sup> (In Chapter 19 many things [are said] about this [topic].) And in Chapter 59 [is stated]: "in correcting them, do not use force, but only explain to them the Koran."<sup>71</sup> And [similar things are said] in many other places. Tell [me, O Muhammad]: After [God has so often given you these commands,] how is it that, contrary to your God, who has given you these instructions, you presume to say the following?: [viz.,] that God commanded you to seize, kill, and despoil unbelievers and to force them to believe or else to pay tribute.<sup>72</sup> You cause great injury and insult to God, in whose eyes compulsory services are of no merit. And so, [God] wants servants who of their own free choice are faithful to Him -and believe in Him.

**180** In Chapter 19 you say that God spoke to you: "Tell those who contradict [you] that their business is theirs and yours is yours."<sup>73</sup> [God] does not [there] tell you to use force on them. Elsewhere you say that such contradictions between Jews, Christians, and others will be settled on the Last Day.<sup>74</sup> Elsewhere you maintain that God praises you for your graciousness and gentleness.<sup>75</sup> How is it that you manifest yourself to be other [than gracious and gentle] in your deeds and that you render false God's attestation? Why is it that you make your God to be at odds with Himself as often as you have changed your mind? In Chapter 25 you say: "Someone who by force and coercion has been made an unbeliever after he has attained unto faith will not be damned if in his heart he retains his faith and keeps the law. But if he freely does this [viz., becomes an unbeliever] ..., " etc.<sup>76</sup> For you know that Christians have faith in one God who is without a participant and without another God; and so, according to you they are believers. Hence, even if they seem to agree with you because they are compelled, nevertheless they remain Christians in their hearts and will not be condemned with you. Why, in Christians, do you oppose Christ to such an extent that you persecute those whom you do not deny to be saved through their own law?<sup>77</sup>

**181** There were Christians before you. And by means of those who were faithful to Christ, Christ occupied a large part of this world—as a result of the very steadfast obedience, even unto death, of an infinite number of martyrs for God. Why do your followers persecute Christ in order to do away with His acquired people? But we are com-

forted by the Gospel (against which you offend subsequently to your very many expressions of approval), where Christ says: “Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and, in lying, speak every evil against you for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for great is your reward in Heaven. For thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”<sup>78</sup> Behold, this is our consolation in all our tribulation and distress, for we have passed from death unto eternal life.<sup>79</sup>

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

Muhammad believes that God’s foreknowledge necessitates all actions.

Speak further, O Muhammad. Why do you persecute Christians? If you reply “on account of their sin,” then answer [the following]: if you believe that [you] can force someone to become good, then why do you say, in Chapter 9, that God does not at all pardon deadly sins but [only] minor ones?<sup>80</sup> And in Chapter 12 is found: “God will not at all guide depraved men unto the right way.”<sup>81</sup> And why do you state in Chapter 19 that God said “God’s word is truthful, which affirms that unbelievers should never be converted”?<sup>82</sup> And in Chapter 49: “One who is drawn away into error will never be guided by God.”<sup>83</sup> And in Chapter 66: “The only harm you will do on earth to your souls is that which God, who encompasses all things, recorded in the book before your creation.”<sup>84</sup> Don’t these [verses] show clearly that the wicked cannot be guided by you unto the right way, since not even God guides them? However, you often assert what is opposed to these [verses] (even as you [also] do with regard to all [matters]). For those who are your followers understand you to mean that whatever a man does he does because God has recorded in advance that [he] would act in this way. [You mean, that is,] not only that God foresaw all future things but that the foreseeing *necessitates*—[a doctrine] that is altogether erroneous and that would destroy all laws and judgments, [all] rewards and punishments.

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Now, because God sees in eternity and at once all the things that are present in time successively, He sees at once a man’s birth and death and the entire course of life in-between. But this seeing does not *necessitate*—even as when I see you fall, you do not fall because I see you falling, but because you fall I see you falling. Therefore, all

things and whatever a man does are seen in eternity by God, who knows all things. And He makes just judgment concerning the good and the evil free actions that a man does in [the order of] time and that are present with God eternally.

Furthermore, tell [me]: what do you want the believer whom you refer to the Koran to do, since no one, as you say, understands the Koran except God alone and those wise [men] who have divine knowledge?<sup>85</sup> But you also assert the opposite of this [claim]—i.e., [you assert] that the Koran is clear and is easy [to understand].<sup>86</sup> Who comprehends these [conflicting statements]? Indeed, you so entangle all things in contradictions and variations that the argument you make, in Chapter 9, on behalf of the Koran ends up being against the Koran. For you contend: “If [the Koran] were not from God, it would contain many inconsistencies.”<sup>87</sup> So since it contradicts itself so often, surely it cannot be from God.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

The goal of Muhammad’s work was his own exaltation.

But you have seemed to me, O Muhammad, to have sought—under the pretext of religion—the power of dominating. For you reduce all [matters] to the sword; and even by the sword you strive to obtain tribute. You taught that each [man] can be saved by means of his own law and that God loves the steadfastness of believers but does not at all [love] those who are unsteadfast.<sup>88</sup> [But] then you accept the sword,<sup>89</sup> as if you wanted to compel toward unsteadfastness those whom you encouraged to remain steadfast. Yet, you give them the option of either being unsteadfast or paying tribute.<sup>90</sup> Does anyone fail to understand that the goal of your religion—that your zeal and the rite [prescribed] by your law—tends only toward your dominating? For does anyone make satisfaction to God and to you by means of tribute? Your intent was none other than to become great by means of God and religion. You never believed to be true the things that you pretend are God’s commands, for you did not obey them. Don’t you, in the Koran, make God affirm that Christians are better friends of yours than are Jews?<sup>91</sup> Moreover, elsewhere you abhor the persecution which certain [men] inflicted on Christians, and you say, in Chapter 39, at the beginning, that God comforted the Christians: “In a nearby and very wicked land the Christians were vanquished by the pagans. After nine years God, whose commandments are first and last, made the Chris-

tians victors over the pagans.”<sup>92</sup> From [all of] these [considerations] it seems that you persecute those Christians not because of any hostility [toward them] and not on the basis of your law. Rather, you use force against them only because of your desire to dominate. And you have left such an example to your successors—assuredly, an exceedingly bad example. For they persecute Christians everywhere, since they have your same disposition for dominating. Nonetheless, Christians will hope to be victors, in the end, by the gift of God.

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## CHAPTER NINE

At times Muhammad writes that Christ is God and man;  
at times, that He is only a man. Similarly, at times, [he writes]  
that God is one; at times, that He is more than one.

Moreover, the Koran often says of Christ such things as imply that He is a partaker of the divine nature. For example, it states as a basic point that miracles are divine.<sup>93</sup> And it approves [the claim] that Christ, more than all [other men], worked miracles.<sup>94</sup> It not only affirms the miracles recorded in the Gospel, but in other books (which are secret and are called apocryphal because of our ignorance of their author) it speaks, for example, of the creation of living birds from clay and of many other [miracles] which indicate that Christ was of divine nature.<sup>95</sup> For to have the general power of [working] all miracles is [to be] divine. For hereby Jesus proved that He was the Messiah—[proved it] when, from prison, John [the son] of Zecharias sent to Him two [men] who asked: “ ‘Are You the one who is going to come, viz., the Messiah, or are we expecting someone else?’ Jesus answered: ‘Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the leprous are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise up, the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he who takes no offense in me.’ ”<sup>96</sup> See how through [a reference to] His works Jesus answered that He was the expected Messiah. And John, after having heard these [reports,] did not doubt that [Jesus] was the Son-of-God to whom the Holy Spirit bore witness at the Jordan [River].<sup>97</sup>

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Moreover, the Koran likewise endeavors to elevate Christ unto being a participant in the divine nature when it says that Christ was set over all the prophets regardless of how intimate and close they were to God.<sup>98</sup> Assuredly, nothing mediates between the divine nature and Him who is set over all the prophets, even the highest ones. For no one can be posited to be closer to God than is Christ.

- 187** Moreover, the Koran says that God dwells within good men; and it asserts that Christ is good—indeed, is maximally good, i.e., is the best of all.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, God dwells within Christ maximally, so that [He dwells there] most perfectly, with all fullness. Moreover, [He dwells there] to such an extent that [Christ's] human nature is united to the divine nature that indwells<sup>100</sup> it—[united] by a supreme degree of union (even as in a man the body is united to the soul, or as the animal nature is united to the intellectual nature). We call, this [union] a hypostatic, or personal, [union]. Therefore, between the human nature and the divine nature Christ Himself is the mediator. And He is [a mediator] such that just as between Him and [His fellow-]men there can be no mediation (because of an identity<sup>101</sup> of His human nature with the human nature of all [other] men), so also there can be no mediation between Him and God (because of an identity of God's divine nature with His).
- 188** And although the Koran says these things of Christ in such way that the wise can easily elicit them, nevertheless it elsewhere changes and says of Christ things which seem to deny that in Christ there is a partaking of the divine nature. [This occurs, for example,] when it states that the Virgin Mary was his real mother and that together with her he ate human food,<sup>102</sup> although God (as it states elsewhere) does not eat anything.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, it says that God is Christ's Lord and Superior, who, if He willed to, could annihilate Christ and His mother (even as [He could annihilate] other creatures) and says that [Christ] is neither God nor God's son nor God's companion or participant.<sup>104</sup> And it says things such as seem to be in disagreement with its earlier [statements]—things which, if they do not contradict themselves, must be understood in the way in which I set [them] forth:<sup>105</sup> viz., that Christ is not another God, even though He is of the same divine nature as the Creator of all things.
- 189** Likewise, too, with regard to God's oneness [the Koran] very often repeats that there is one, sole God, who is Creator. And yet, oftentimes the Deity speaks plurally in the Koran regarding the work of creating and regarding other [matters]. (For example, [He says]: We created man.) However, if this singularity and plurality also do not contradict themselves, then [we] must understand [them] as I stated earlier:<sup>106</sup> viz., [in the sense] that the trinity, or plurality, that is expressed by we created is not to be affirmed with respect to a number (of), i.e., with respect to plural number, but rather with respect to sin-

gular [number,] which is oneness. For even with the grammarians plurality is not [grammatically] plural in number, since [grammatically] it is a singular oneness. Thus too with the Theologian is plurality present in the oneness of the most simple divine nature.<sup>107</sup> And for this reason there is only the singular and one deity, which is God—as I mentioned briefly in the preceding [sections].<sup>108</sup> And this [same point] seems to be stated in the Koran, Chapter 32, at the end. For *there* [the Koran] prohibits the invoking of another God and says that with God alone a thing's number is complete.<sup>109</sup>

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## CHAPTER TEN

Muhammad continually changes [his views],  
as [is instanced] in his examples.

In the chapter on the seven who are sleeping, [Muhammad] says that with regard to secret and concealed [matters] each [man] may say [by way of interpretation] what seems best to him<sup>110</sup>—as if in so doing he were not reproachable. And so, in the recital of diverse—even of opposing—opinions [Muhammad] seems to embrace first one [of them] and then another.<sup>111</sup> But he regards as concealed all the [matters] in which the prophets, and the books given to them by God (as he alleges), do not agree [with one another]. However, he makes an exception of the command given by God to each [prophet] separately, for he admits that these [commands] ought to be kept by those to whom they were given. But, according to him, that wherein all the prophets agree—beginning with the prophet Abraham [and proceeding down] to Muhammad himself—is their faith in one God, who is Creator and who is Judge on the Day of Resurrection. This [faith] he reduces to the following words: “There is no god but God.”<sup>112</sup> Without this faith, he claims, no one is saved. But if someone unreservedly believes the foregoing and keeps the law given to him by the prophet, then he will be a possessor of Paradise; [and] if he does not believe, then he will be eternally condemned, unless God, who is a generous bestower of forgiveness, pardons him. However, if he believes but does not keep the commands of the law and is unrepentant, then he will be condemned. But if he repents before the moment of death, then he will obtain mercy from the Giver of forgiveness. These [teachings] seem to represent [Muhammad's] intent, as [I] said earlier.<sup>113</sup>

191

However, regarding those who pass from one law to another



[Muhammad] seems to speak in differing ways. For in Chapter 1 he speaks as follows: “It must be generally known that everyone who lives uprightly (whether Jew or Christian or someone who has left aside his own law and who is tending toward another [one]), i.e., everyone who adores God and who is a doer of good, will undoubtedly obtain divine love.”<sup>114</sup> And further along [in the chapter]: “Every sinner who accumulates guilt upon guilt will be forever burned with fire.”<sup>115</sup> He says “every” and “generally” and also “someone who has left aside his own law and who is tending toward another [one.]” etc. But in Chapter 3 he says: “Those who dissent from your law will incessantly wage war on your nation until, if possible, they convert it to their own law. But someone who exchanges your law for another [one] and who remains in this [other law] will [unceasingly] perish in unceasing fire, being guilty here and in the next age.”<sup>116</sup> Note that in opposition to what he said at first in general terms, he now makes an exception of men of his *own* law, [when he says] that they are not saved by means of some other law. And [then] in opposition to this he speaks in Chapter 4 as follows: “Do not at all use force for the sake of the law; for the right way and the depraved way are evident. One who believes in the Creator rather than in idols is led from darkness unto light by the commandments of God, who is wise and attentive and propitious to all who adore Him. But on the contrary, one who does not believe [in the Creator] is taken away to be tormented with everlasting fire.”<sup>117</sup> This quotation agrees with the first one, and it speaks in a general way and without exception. Likewise, in Chapter 5 [Muhammad] says: “Those who believe in God and who ask for forgiveness of their sins and for deliverance from the heat-of-fire and who are abstinent and truthful and who are persistent in prayers and givers of alms—[these] will delight in the joy of Paradise, according to the witness of God and the angels, as well as the witness of the wise, who confess that there is one sole God, who is the incomprehensible and wise Creator, in whose eyes no law is esteemed except only [the law] of men who pledge to God the whole of themselves and [all] their activities.”<sup>118</sup> Note that [Muhammad] speaks in a general way, just as [he does] in Chapter 1. Likewise, in Chapter 12 he says: “Let all who believe in God and who do good works, in expectation of the Day of Judgment, fear nothing.”<sup>119</sup>

**193** In Chapter 37 [Muhammad] speaks otherwise: “Now that you are in possession of the book (viz., the Koran) that was sent to you unexpectedly, do not at all digress further from its commandments, lest

you be an unbeliever or an abettor of unbelievers.”<sup>120</sup> And in Chapter 41: “Who is worse than one who transgresses or deviates after his reception of our commandments? Through Moses we have already handed down to the sons of Israel a book; by following it completely, they will certainly be united to God.”<sup>121</sup> Note Muhammad’s maintaining that God spoke these [words] in the sense that each [man] is supposed to keep the law of God which he received and [that] he will be deemed evil if he does not do so.

**194** And because, according to Muhammad, Christians switch laws more than do others, he often shamelessly calls them “switchers of law.”<sup>122</sup> Therefore, according to his statement, not only someone who is of Muhammad’s own law but also [someone who is] a Jew or a Christian cannot without transgression and sin switch from his [respective] law once it has been accepted [by him]. For elsewhere [Muhammad] says that God loves, more than others, those who are faithful and who are steadfast in their own law.<sup>123</sup> And, again, he says, in Chapter 48: “Indeed, everyone who fears God and who believes and who does good works in this world will obtain divine mercy.”<sup>124</sup> And in Chapter 51 he speaks quite clearly, as follows: “Even as to Noah and to you and to Abraham and to Moses and to Christ we disclosed the commands and practices of the laws, so too we now teach [them]. Therefore, adhere to them, even as the law commands, neither disputing the law nor departing from it.”<sup>125</sup> Note that he openly acknowledges that he does not want to contradict, but rather to teach, the commands of the laws and of the practices—[commands] that were disclosed to past prophets. And for this reason he instructs [those who are listening to him] to adhere to the commands and to depart in no respect from the law, even as the law itself instructs. Elsewhere he says that Christians and Jews are unbelievers and that all such [men] are condemned.<sup>126</sup> Who can elicit anything solid from these [statements]?

**195**

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

Against [the view] that the law of the Koran  
is the law of Abraham.

But tell [me,] O Muhammad, is faith necessary? You say that God revealed to you that you should follow the law of Abraham, not veering to the right or to the left, lest you be found to be an unbeliever.<sup>127</sup> How do you presume to say that the law which the Koran contains is [the law] of God, since you nowhere show that Abraham gave such a

law? If God revealed to you that the law of Abraham must be followed, and if the law given to Moses and the law given to Christ are contained in the divine books of the Testament and of the Gospel, as you claim, then is it not necessarily the case that [these two laws] do not veer from the law of Abraham either towards the right or towards the left? How, then, do you presume to say that your law is preeminent over others?<sup>128</sup> [The law] of the Testament and [the law] of the Gospel are not two laws but are one divine law, which Christ did not destroy but rather fulfilled,<sup>129</sup> by manifesting the spiritual understanding of the law—[something] which is contained beneath the letter but [which] was not recognized. Moreover, the Testament did not deviate from the law of Abraham but rather explicated those things that were commanded with regard to Abraham—in particular, [the command] that he walk before the Lord, in order to be perfect.<sup>130</sup> Moses explicated this command [by stating] *how* [a man] should walk before the Lord. But Christ explained how one who walks before the Lord, according to the explication of the Mosaic Law, could attain unto the perfection that was commanded vis-à-vis Abraham. Therefore, nothing remains to be explicated regarding the law of Abraham. How, then, can your law, which is called [the law] of the Arabs, be called the law of Abraham, since [your law] veers from the Gospel? Assuredly, you ought not to presume that God gave to you greater knowledge than [He gave] to Christ, whom you esteem more highly than yourself and all prophets.

**196** Therefore, you must acknowledge that there is only one law—[the law] of Abraham and of Moses and of Christ—which promises to those who keep [it] the supreme reward of eternal life. And there cannot be many most perfect things, since each [of the many] would be able to be more perfect. There is only one most perfect way, or law, that leads to a single and most perfect end. This [way] cannot be other than [the way] by which Christ proceeded (who is the most perfect of all [men]) and [by which,] as He taught, we must proceed.

**197** What except an ignorance of Christ makes you so inconstant and vacillating in all [matters]? You say that Jesus the son of the Virgin Mary is the Christ; and in this [opinion] you do not err. But you do not at all know what Christ is. Now, if you knew with most steadfast faith that Christ is the true son of God as His Father and of Mary as His mother, then (1) you would see that eternal life (which is the supreme and most desired happiness) is attainable by man only in

Christ and (2) God would remain in you, and you in God, and (3) you would not fluctuate amid the opinions of those who do not know Christ. If only you had known how to read and write and had studied at least the short canonical epistle<sup>131</sup> of that most beloved disciple of Christ, the evangelist John, then surely you would have been free of laboring on the Koran and would have found repose in that [Johannine] light of truth. Why did God will that those dressed in white—[those] followers of Christ—be so often praised, in the Koran, with highest praise?—[why] except that you worshippers of the book of the Koran would imitate and study their life and doctrine? (Among the number of those [followers of Christ] was the evangelist John, who was most beloved to Christ and who remained a virgin.) Therefore, seek out the light in the indicated epistle, in order to attain unto Christ, who is the true light and who enlightens every man.<sup>132</sup> And [in so doing] you will find the treasure both of wisdom and of an understanding of all the Scriptures.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

The Koran wrongfully states that Abraham was an idolater. The true account is presented.

But I will now endeavor to show that the Gospel has very perfectly handed down to us the law of Abraham. To begin with, the Gospel and the adherents of the Gospel do not detract from the praise of Abraham, as do the Koran and its followers, who say that Abraham was initially an idolater and that after his conversion he reproached Thare, his father, for his idolatry.<sup>133</sup> (Regarding this [topic] the Koran makes many statements.) But the foregoing [account] is made unto Abraham's discredit—as in Muhammad's *Doctrines* we read that Abraham, because of his idolatry, confesses that he is unworthy to be an intercessor with God.<sup>134</sup> Muhammad did not obtain this [account] from the text of the Old Testament but rather from a certain gloss which a certain Jew thought up as a way around an objection that is made regarding the ages of Thare and of Abraham.<sup>135</sup> Christians do not accept this [gloss]; nor does the Jew Josephus, the very great writer of history. Hence, it is not at all to be believed that Abraham, who was brought forth from the city of Ur of the Chaldees, was an idolater. Nor [is it to be believed] that his father or that his grandfather, Nachor, i.e., Heber (from whom he himself and the Jews are called Hebrews), or that Noah or any other predecessor of Abraham's [was an idolater].<sup>136</sup>

**199** At the command of God Abraham immediately departed from his country and from his kindred unto the land of Canaan. And because of his obedience God said: “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and magnify your name, and you will be blessed. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and in you shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.”<sup>137</sup> And again: “I will give to you and to your offspring forever all the land that you behold. And I will make your offspring to be as the dust of the earth. If any man can count the dust of the earth, he will also be able to count your offspring.”<sup>138</sup> And again: “Do not be afraid. I am your protector and your exceedingly great reward.”<sup>139</sup> And again: “ ‘The one born in your household shall not be your heir. Instead, he who will come from your bowels—him you will have as heir. Look at the heavens, and count the stars if you can. That numerous will be your offspring.’ Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as justice.”<sup>140</sup> And again: “ ‘I am God Almighty. Walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.’ Abraham fell flat on his face. And God said to him: ‘I am. And my covenant is with you. And you will be a father of many nations. You shall no longer be called Abram but rather Abraham. For I have made you a father of many nations. And I will make you to increase exceedingly, and I will establish you as nations, and kings will go forth from you. And by an everlasting covenant will I establish my covenant between me and you and between your offspring after you in your generations, so that I will be your God and the God of your offspring after you ....

“ ‘You shall not call Sarai your wife Sarai but rather Sarah. And I will bless her, and from her I will give you a son, whom I will bless. And he will become nations, and kings of people will arise from him.’ Abraham fell on his face and laughed in his heart, saying: ‘Do you think that a son will be born to a man who is one hundred? And will Sarah, who is ninety, give birth?’ And he said to the Lord: ‘Would that Ismael might live in your esteem!’—[Ismael,] whom he obtained from his handmaiden Agar, with Sarah desiring this and praying for it. And the Lord said to Abraham: ‘Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant for him and for his offspring after him. As regards Ismael I have also hearkened unto you. Lo, I will bless him and will increase and multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. But my

covenant will I establish with Isaac.’ Afterwards, according as God [had] commanded, Abraham circumcised himself and Ismael, who was thirteen years old, and all the men of his household.

**200** “Thereafter, the Lord appeared to Abraham in the valley of Mambré while he was sitting at the door of his tent in the very heat of the day. And when Abraham opened his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the door of his tent to meet them; and [falling] on the ground he adored [them] and said: ‘O Lord, if I have found favor in Your eyes, do not pass Your servant by. But let me bring a little water, and let the feet of all of you be washed. And all of you rest under a tree. And let me bring a morsel of bread; and let your hearts be comforted. And later you may all continue on.’ And they replied: ‘Do as you have said.’

**201** “Sarah conceived and bore a son in her old age, at the time at which God had previously indicated to her. And Abraham called the name of his son, whom Sarah had begotten him, Isaac. And being one hundred years old, Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day, just as God had commanded him [to do]. And after Sarah had seen the son of Agar the Egyptian playing with her son, Isaac, she said to Abraham: ‘Cast out this bondswoman and her son. For the son of the bondswoman shall not be an heir along with my son Isaac.’ And God said to Abraham: ‘Hearken unto Sarah’s voice [regarding] all that she has said to you; for in Isaac shall your offspring be called. But I will make even the son of the bondswoman into a great nation, because he is your offspring.’

**202** “Thereafter, God tempted Abraham when He commanded: ‘Take your only begotten son, Isaac, whom you love, and go unto the land of vision, and offer him there as a burnt-offering upon a mountain that I will show you.’ Abraham brought the wood for the burnt-offering and gave [it] to Isaac, his son, to carry. And he himself carried in his hands fire and a sword. Isaac asked: ‘Where is the victim?’ Abraham replied: ‘God will provide a victim, my son.’ And after he had bound Isaac, his son, and had placed [him] on the altar upon the pile of wood, he stretched forth his hand and grasped his sword, in order to sacrifice his son. Behold, an angel of the Lord called down from Heaven: ‘Abraham, do not lay your hand upon the boy or do anything to him. Now I know that you fear the Lord and [that] for my sake you did not spare your only begotten son.’ And Abraham, seeing a ram entangled in the bushes with his horns, sacrificed it in place of his son.

‘I have sworn by my own self,’ says the Lord: ‘Because you have done this thing and for my sake have not spared your only begotten son, I will bless you and will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.’

**203** “Sarah dies. Abraham took another wife, from whom he had sons. And he gave all that he possessed to Isaac. But to the sons of his concubines he generously gave gifts, and he separated those [sons] from his son Isaac. And [Abraham,] waning in strength, died at age one hundred seventy-five. And God said to Isaac: ‘I will be with you and will bless you. For in fulfillment of the oath that I swore to your father, Abraham, I will give to you and to your offspring all these lands, and I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and I will give all these lands to your posterity, and in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my precepts and commandments and observed my ceremonies and laws.’ ”<sup>141</sup>

The foregoing are the true things that are read regarding Abraham.

**204**

#### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The promise made to faithful Abraham.

But Abraham is a father of many nations because he is the father of faith. For he believed God, and it was credited to him as justice.<sup>142</sup> And so, all who believe in God are justified by faith in the way in which Father Abraham was.<sup>143</sup> And because God gave to Abraham, on account of his faith,<sup>144</sup> the son Isaac (who otherwise could not have been begotten according to the course of nature by ninety-nine year old Abraham from ninety year old Sarah, who otherwise was sterile and to whom the ways of women were no longer present), we know that by faith we will obtain—beyond our mortal nature—the coveted things of eternal life.

**205** We wish to have children in order that in them our mortal deficiency may be remedied and in order that we may live in them. We see that Abraham’s desire was made *just* through faith. Therefore, [Abraham] merited to obtain what-he-desired from God, for whom he believed nothing to be impossible.<sup>145</sup> Through faith he obtained life in the son given to him by God—[and obtained it] subsequently in his posterity forever. For God says: “This land will I give to your off-

spring forever.”<sup>146</sup> Therefore, Abraham lives in his own everlasting offspring. But how does he live? Not according to the flesh (in the way in which Father Abraham lived in his son Ismael, who was his son according to the flesh, not according to promise) but rather according to the spirit (in the manner in which the spirit of [Abraham-]the-believer lives in the promises of God). Therefore, Abraham’s covenant with God—[a covenant] which is to be everlasting—is continued through Isaac and not through Ismael (i.e., [is continued] in the offspring of faith and not in the offspring of the flesh).

**206** Hence, all believers are called, in Isaac, the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, believers in God are descendants of Abraham insofar as they are justified by faith. And so, the prophet said: “Be glad, O barren one, who does not give birth! Give vent [to joy,] and shout, O you who are not in labor! For many more are the children of her who is abandoned than of her who has a husband.”<sup>147</sup> Hence, [the case of] Isaac—the one promised [to be born] from Sarah, who was free but barren—shows that all Gentile believers, blessed in Father Abraham, are descendants of the promise.<sup>148</sup> So, too, when God promised to Abraham that his offspring would be increased very greatly—[to Abraham,] in whom all nations and tribes of the earth would be blessed—surely He spoke of Christ. The covenant between God and Abraham—viz., that the one Creator would be their God—was kept by all the descendants of Abraham who were prophets, who were especially vigilant with regard to observing that covenant. And, thereafter, [the covenant] was to extend to the greatest of all the prophets, in whom Abraham’s offspring increased very greatly and in whom there was to be the fullness of the promise of blessing. And that [prophet] is Christ, in whom Abraham and all believers live eternally.

**207** And so, when the Virgin Mary, pregnant with Christ, rejoiced in spirit and when her soul magnified God, she said: “Being mindful of His own mercy, He has received His servant Israel, just as He promised to our fathers—to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”<sup>149</sup> And by means of Mary’s song we know that Christ is a son of Israel (who is the “man who sees God”<sup>150</sup>), according to the promise made to Abraham and to his offspring. And the Prophet Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, said of Jesus that He was raised up as a horn of salvation in the house of David<sup>151</sup>—i.e., [raised up as] Messiah, the Saviour—just as [God] promised through the mouth of the saints, who are from the beginning, and [promised] according to the oath that



He swore to Abraham our father, [saying] that He would give Him to us.

**208** Therefore, Christ, the descendant of Abraham, is that promised offspring—i.e., is the immortal Son—in whom all believers live eternally. Since all the believing tribes of the earth are blessed in Father Abraham<sup>152</sup> and since Abraham himself lives in his own descendant Jesus, who is his blessed offspring, all who are blessed live in Father [Abraham] and in his blessed descendant. Therefore, Christ said to the Jews that He knew them to be descendants of Abraham<sup>153</sup>—[descendants,] that is, according to the flesh. But because this [fact] did not suffice for true sonship of spirit, He said: “If you are descendants of Abraham, do the works of Abraham.”<sup>154</sup> [Hereby] He teaches us that the true descendants of Abraham are the descendants who do Abraham’s works, i.e., who believe and obey God. [Christ] also teaches that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and that he saw [it] and was glad.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, in his spirit Abraham saw the coming of the Messiah, i.e., [saw] his own blessed offspring, and was glad. Therefore, [Abraham] saw that Christ was antecedent to him and was promised to him and would be born after him of his own progeny. And when he saw this day of advent, he was glad. And by this vision he was made certain that all the promises made to him would be fulfilled. And these promises were made to him not because of [his keeping] the Law or because of his circumcision but rather, before circumcision, only because of his faith. These mysteries, which are hidden from the world, have been manifested to us by Christ and His disciples.

**209**

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The covenant between God and Abraham excludes the Ismaelites, and it concludes in Christ, the Mediator.

Take note now, O you Arabs, that as ones begotten from Ismael according to the flesh, you are not [included] in the covenant<sup>156</sup> of Abraham with God, as are the descendants-of-promise, [who are begotten] from Isaac. And you have no part in the inheritance of Abraham, because you are begotten from the handmaiden Agar and are adversaries of the spirit,<sup>157</sup> even as the flesh is always opposed to the spirit. And you cannot be blessed in the offspring of Abraham unless by faith you become Abraham’s descendants in spirit. Thereupon you will be able to obtain the promise-of-blessing in Christ, who is the goal and the fulfillment of the promise. Understand, therefore, that faith is attained

by the spirit and comes to its destination in the living Christ, who is everlasting and immortal Life; for Christ is the son of man in such way that He is also the Son of God, who alone is immortal.<sup>158</sup>

**210** Now, we read in Chapter 1 of the Koran that Abraham prayed as follows: “O God, raise up from our offspring a descendant who is mediator and prophet, and who will make known to others, in writing, Your virtues and what should be done, and who will bless them. For You are the excellent teacher who knows and hears all things.”<sup>159</sup> Note that Abraham prays as he does—and that he speaks of Christ, the Mediator between God and man. And [his prayer] cannot be understood to be about anyone else [than about Christ] since he speaks of a prophet who is a descendant of his offspring—i.e., [a descendant] of Isaac, whom God calls Abraham’s only begotten. And this [descendant] is the Mediator between God and man, because He alone is the one between whom and God no one mediates. For the supreme prophet is Christ, who alone makes known God the Father (because He is God the Father’s Son) and who alone, as supreme priest, blesses those who believe in Him.

**211** See here, O Arabs: How are you followers of Abraham if you do not hold Abraham’s faith? How do you walk before God, and how are you perfect, if you are not descendants-of-the-promise in Christ Jesus? Inquire and you will find it not to be the case that God ever sent an envoy or a teacher or a prophet or a messenger who was not from among the observers of the covenants<sup>160</sup> that God concluded with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. For all those to whom God gave the spirit of prophecy were from the lineage of these [men] and not from the lineage of Ismael, with whom God did not enter into a covenant. On the contrary, while excluding Ismael [God] chose Isaac, although for Abraham’s sake He blessed Ismael and multiplied his offspring; and twelve rulers were born from him, so that he abounded in the blessings of this present age. But Isaac obtained the everlasting blessing of the everlasting future age, as well as [obtaining the blessing] of this present age.

**212** Do not be influenced by the fact that in Chapter 11 of the Koran Ismael is placed—among the prophets—after Abraham but before Isaac and that in Chapter 28 he is called a messenger and a prophet.<sup>161</sup> For [the Koran] does not have, for this statement, support from Scripture—whether from the Testament or from the Gospel. Instead, we read regarding Ismael that the angel foretold to Agar, when she was

pregnant with him, that he would be a fierce man who would pitch his tents against his brothers.<sup>162</sup> Now, Muhammad put these [statements] into the Koran in order more easily to convince the Arabs that he was a prophet and a messenger—by proving that anyone who is an Ismaelite is of the race of a prophet. But failing in this [attempt] he shows the kind of [man] he must be held to be.

Now, [the Koran] states in Chapter 46 that Abraham said to Isaac: “O my son, I was instructed through a vision to behead you. Tell [me] what you want me to do in this regard.”<sup>163</sup> Isaac answered: “Do what you were instructed to. For, indeed, you will find that I will bear everything courageously.” If the case is such as is there recorded, then surely Isaac, who obeyed God and his own father even to the point of death, deserved to be the one through whom God summoned an offspring-of-blessing for all believers. For, assuredly, Abraham’s faith was very great. [For] since he believed God regarding the fact that his offspring were to be exceedingly multiplied through Isaac—[believed Him] even when he was commanded to offer his son Isaac as a burnt-offering to God—he did not reply that this [action] would go against God’s promises. For he had no doubt about these [promises] even in the case where [Isaac] would be offered as a burnt-offering. Instead, he was confident that God would fulfill His promises if he himself would obey God with regard to slaying his son.<sup>164</sup> For he knew that with God, who can very easily raise the dead, nothing is difficult or impossible.

## 213

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Only the Christian, who adores Trinity-in-oneness,  
can be a descendant of Abraham.

Therefore, Abraham’s faith was most perfect. The true successor and heir to this [faith] was Isaac, who is a type of that most perfect offspring, the Messiah, who was obedient to God His Father even unto the point of [undergoing] a most shameful death. But what more is to be noted? Assuredly, [we must note] that the ram was sacrificed in place of Isaac.<sup>165</sup> That ram, which was found by Abraham and which Abraham sacrificed in place of his son, signified the offering and sacrifice of Christ, who truly was sacrificed and truly died in order that faithful Isaac and the entire lineage of believers might live. Therefore, Isaac signified Christ because of his willingness to obey, even unto death—[a willingness] which ought to be present in all who truly are

believers. But [also] the ram signifies Christ insofar as [Christ] is a sacrifice who by His own death saves all the sons of God through His perfect faith and who frees them from everlasting death. In Muhammad's *Doctrines* it is stated that the ram was born without any union of the sexes, even as was Christ.<sup>166</sup>

**214** But if you rightly understand, O Arab: it is not the case that Abraham existed before Christ—as the Koran alleges in a certain place<sup>167</sup> and consequently denies that Abraham was a Christian.<sup>168</sup> Instead, Christ, who is the Son of God and is co-eternal with God His Father, existed before Abraham. Thus, we read in the Gospel that Christ said: “Before Abraham was, I am.”<sup>169</sup> Therefore, [Abraham] saw through a prophetic spirit that at some time the Messiah would come into the world as mediator and saviour. And Abraham believed that without the Messiah neither he himself nor anyone [else] would have access to God the Father. And so, Abraham was a Christian, and he hoped that by means of Christ he would certainly obtain immortal life. This is the sole and perfect faith of Abraham. It ought also to be [the faith] of all those who want to have a sound faith and who happily expect to be saved through faith.

Abraham saw three [persons] in the valley of Mambre. And [falling] flat on the ground, he adored [them] and said: “O Lord, if I have found favor in Your eyes, do not pass Your servant by.”<sup>170</sup> [Abraham] adored one Lord in three persons. Assuredly, this is the adoration that is characteristic of Christians. Unless you Arabs practice this [adoration] you are not successors of Abraham. How do you suppose that you who persecute the descendants of Abraham are following in the footsteps of [that] just man Abraham?

**215**

There is one descendant of Abraham who is the heir of all things—[viz.,] Jesus Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary, who herself is [also] a descendant of Abraham. Christ, of whom Isaac is a type, is the true heir of all things. For [this] same Christ is also the Son of God; He is the true God, who is Abraham's exceedingly great reward.<sup>171</sup> God gave to Abraham Isaac as a son because [Abraham] believed that God was truthful with regard to His promises. But [God] gave to Abraham Christ as a descendant—Christ, who is King and Lord over all things—because of the obedience that [Abraham] showed with regard to offering his son. But you, O Arabs, do not believe that Abraham obtained such a reward from God because of his justice and his obedience. Therefore, you believe something less regarding Abraham than do Christians, who are true descendants of

Abraham. Therefore, you who refuse to be believing descendants of Abraham will not be joint-heirs with Christ, who Himself is a descendant of Abraham.

216

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Arabs are altogether ignorant of the law of Abraham,  
and they are persecutors of it.

Is it enough that you are circumcised?—as if hereby you fulfilled the law of Abraham. Circumcision does not prove that you are descendants of Abraham, who believed God and it was credited to him as justice.<sup>172</sup> Rather, the *faith* of Abraham justifies. Abraham was *just* when he was not yet circumcised. But God, who chose Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and their posterity as His own special people, wanted the covenant (to the effect that He would be their God) to be confirmed by means of the obedience of [undergoing] circumcision. [He wanted this confirming sign] (1) so that because of that shedding-of-blood made on account of obedience to God such a covenant with each [person] could not thenceforth be denied and (2) so that one who departed from the worship of the accepted God would carry around in his own body the evidence of his transgression. But since Christians, who are circumcised in Christ, have become [members of] the mystical Body of Christ through faith and baptism: being now circumcised in Christ,<sup>173</sup> they manifest to all—by their name—that they are believers in God. If circumcision is a sign [of] the shedding of the pleasures of the flesh, then surely [circumcision] shows that your law, which abundantly indulges the pleasures of the flesh, is not [the law] of Abraham.

217

Circumcision is commanded to be performed on the eighth day after birth in the manner in which Isaac was circumcised. But not heeding the commandment of God, you, in order to be Ismaelites, perform it in the thirteenth year, since Ismael was circumcised at that time.<sup>174</sup>

You know that Abraham, in order to free his brother, justly took up arms but, nevertheless, did not wish to be enriched with spoils and booty and with the goods belonging to others. However, you yourselves seek to be enriched with booty through unjust aggressions. And you claim that [these aggressions] are permitted to you by your law, which, nonetheless, is presumed [by you] to deviate in no respect from the law of Abraham.<sup>175</sup> When you falsely maintain that these [ag-

gressions] are conformable to the law of Abraham, you blaspheme, with your reference to Abraham, against the God of Abraham. Your law gives to God, to whom belong all things, a fifth part of the spoils.<sup>176</sup> What is more ridiculous? You say: “These [aggressions] are committed against unbelievers.” According to your law isn’t it a hidden [matter] as to who walks better [than others,] even though each regards himself as walking more uprightly [than others]? For, as the Koran says, God granted to each race that its own things seem pleasing to it.<sup>177</sup> And so, this hidden [matter] concerns the Judge of hidden [matters] at the Last Judgment. Point out [the text] where Abraham either committed plunder or commanded that it be committed. Because you will not find [any such text,] you are wrong to say that you follow the law of Abraham.

**218** How often your book says [the following]!: “If God [so] willed, all [men] would be of the same law and rite. But He permits [the situation] to be as we see [it to be].”<sup>178</sup> Why do you presume to deal with the world differently from [the way that] God [does]? [Why?—except because according to your corrupt desires you misrepresent God, blaspheming [Him] more than do all [others]?

Perhaps you will say: “We tithe, as did Abraham. Did not Abraham give tithes to Melchisedech the priest?”<sup>179</sup> What did “King of Salem, priest of the Most High God” befigure other than Messiah?<sup>180</sup> In Psalm 109 David the Prophet states that God said the following with reference to the Messiah: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.”<sup>181</sup> And in the Gospel Jesus Christ Himself expounded this Psalm in this way.<sup>182</sup> If you give tithes to Christ, the Eternal Priest, then you are following the tithes-[giving] of Abraham; if you do not give tithes to Christ, then even if you do tithe, you are not followers of Abraham. But you persecute Christ, and you despoil Him, and you oppress Him in His [Christian] members. And so, you do injury to Abraham, whose successors you pride yourselves on being.

**219** Would that you understood the mysteries (1) of the sacrifice of this bread and wine, (2) of the Eternal Priesthood, (3) of the Pasch, and (4) of the heavenly meal which [is read] about in the Koran!<sup>183</sup> [For] then you would see perfectly that just as the bread’s and the wine’s [respective] substance, which is not alive, is refined by the work of nature and is assumed, by the human substance, into a living union with itself (since the substance of the nutrient passes over into a union with

the substance of the one who is nourished), so too the living substance of a man is refined by the work of the Word of God and, ultimately, is assumed into a union with the Word Himself, so that it is alive with a higher life than previously—viz., with divine and eternal [life]. And by this [illustration] we see that through the aforementioned union both the Word of God, who is Christ, and His mystical Body are alive with a single immortal and everlasting life. But these very hidden mysteries cannot be grasped by you, who do not believe in the personal union, in Christ, of the human nature and the divine nature. Nor will you ever be able to taste of the aforementioned fruit, because [you are] unbelieving and without hope.

220

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

An attempt to persuade the Sultan to command that the Virgin Mary be believed to be *theotokos* and that [Muslims] embrace the light of the Gospel.

Now, after these [matters,] consider, O Sultan of Babylonia,<sup>184</sup> Prince of a great nation, why you say that there was committed to you the guardianship of the law of the Arabs. At one time you were a Christian, but you denied the Christian faith in order to become fit for rulership. You claim not to have renounced Christ but rather to believe something less about Him than [you believed] previously. For previously you believed that He is the true Son of God; but now, in accordance with the law of the Arabs, you no longer believe [this]. You have not repudiated your faith in the oneness of God—[a faith] that you formerly had and that you continue to have [even] now. Formerly, you believed that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, is *theotokos*, i.e., the begetter of God; but now you say that the Virgin Mary is the mother of Christ but is not the mother of God. Formerly, you believed that Christ was crucified in Jerusalem by Pontius Pilate for our salvation. You visited the site of His tomb in Jerusalem. You saw the signs that occurred at the time of His death—e.g., the cleavage in the rock, as a result of the trembling of the earth. But now you deny that Christ died, and you teach that He is still alive. Formerly, you viewed, repeatedly and devotedly, the site of His birth in the stable in Bethlehem; but now you deny that this [location] is the correct one, saying that Christ was born beneath a certain palm tree in a solitary place.

221

[What] a strange thing it is! You did not become Sultan in order to diminish the praise and exaltation of Christ and His mother, the Vir-

gin Mary. Those places that were constructed for praise you allow to stand as an everlasting memorial to the crucifixion and the nativity of Jesus—[places] that have borne continuous witness for a thousand years and more. [You do so] lest you detract from [that] praise. Yet, you are not ashamed of being convicted [of error] by those [very monuments]. At one time you believed that Gabriel was sent by God to the Virgin Mary in Nazareth and that he announced to her that she would bear Jesus, the Son of God. But now you believe that Amram was the father of Mary and, consequently, that she is not the one of whom the Gospel speaks—[the one] who followed after the first Mary by more than a thousand years.<sup>185</sup> If you say that the Koran erred in this regard, then it follows that the Gabriel of the Gospel is truthful and that the Gabriel of the Koran is a liar. Consider [the following]: if Muhammad was deceived by the Jews who assisted him [and] who persuaded him that the sister of Aaron was Mary the mother of Christ, then they were also able in many [other] respects to deceive him, as being one who was totally ignorant of the history of [those] times.

**222** The glorious Virgin Mary asks of you that you restore the honor given to her by God and declared in the third synod under the Emperor Theodosius and in the fourth under the Emperor Martianus. Look at those glorious emperors Theodosius, Martianus, Constantine, and the others, who with supreme zeal sought an increase of glory for the Virgin, the mother of Christ. If you are a prince, take note that it is to your honor to act similarly.<sup>186</sup> For to this very [action] you are obliged by the Gospel, which was previously professed by you and which is now approved and confirmed anew [by you] in your acceptance of the Koran. Perhaps you might say: “Far be it, far be it that I refuse to give due honor to the Virgin Mary! For I do not understand the Koran in that [dishonoring] way; and so, I command that those who blaspheme against Mary be delivered over to punishment by death. Nevertheless, an understanding of the manner of Christ’s begottenness from the Virgin is lacking.” I answer: The manner of the incarnation of the Word exceeds human understanding. But since the Gospel says “The Word was made flesh,”<sup>187</sup> surely you must believe this [statement] if you believe that Gospel. And the following suffices: viz., [that] I believe that Mary is the mother of Christ—Christ, who is the Word-of-God, incarnate within the Virgin in the manner in which God accomplished these things.

**223** Hence, if within your whole empire you command all to believe



the Gospel in such manner as the Egyptians, the Africans, the Romans, and the Asians believed and glorified the Virgin Mary at the time of Muhammad—and as have all Christians (or the majority of them) before and after [Muhammad]—then your command will be just and will be pleasing to God, to Christ, and to the chaste Virgin, and it will afford salvation and rest to countless souls, as well as immortal praise and everlasting life to you yourself. The time is to come (as was stated earlier<sup>188</sup> on the basis of the Koran<sup>189</sup>) when there will be only the faith of Christ. Begin to draw near [to this faith,] and all the princes of the earth and of that [Muslim] sect will follow you. Then there will be said: “Behold, God permitted evil things to be done in order that good things might result.”<sup>190</sup> The faith of the Gospel was despised everywhere by the idolatrous Orientals. The law of the Arabs came as someone unwilling to consent unto the faith [of the Gospel,] and it led the Arabs unto the worship of one God; nevertheless, the Gospel was secretly approved [by the Koran].<sup>191</sup> And now it has pleased God that the approved Gospel, covered over in the Koran by many foolish things, should come to light, even as it was often approved of in [that] same book. In this way, those who previously were the most strongly resistant will be led from the law of the Arabs unto the Gospel—[led] for the glory of the Great God, the King of kings, the Creator and Lord of the universe.

224

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

To the Calif of Baghdad:<sup>192</sup> that the Jews added to the Koran regarding Abraham.

The first thing I ask of Your Prudence, [you] who are the overseer of the law of the Koran, [is the following]: whether or not you believe that God is the Author of the Koran? If not, then why do you command that such careful study be made of this book in the school at Baghdad?—a book which gives false testimony about itself. For it says that it was written by God—something which you do not believe. On the other hand, if you do believe that that book contains the words of God, how can the book state, in the following words, that God made it itself known to Muhammad<sup>193</sup> through Gabriel?: “... of Gabriel making this book known to your heart by [the will of] the Creator.”<sup>194</sup> How can these words be ascribed to God “who is the Creator) as speaker? You know that throughout the course of the book such statements are found very often. They show self-evidently that they are

not the words of God as speaker.

- 225** Suppose, then, that in spite of these and other objections you fully believe that God is the compiler of that book. Accordingly, you must believe that everything contained therein is completely true. Tell [me]: whom do you understand by “I” when we read in Chapter 16: “Indeed, I, to whom God disclosed and introduced that right and straight way, viz., [the way] of Abraham, who was not an unbeliever, ...” etc?<sup>195</sup> If you answer “Muhammad,” then surely these words are not [the words] of God, nor must they be believed. Therefore, since Muhammad is testifying concerning himself, he proves nothing; but you also said that those words, since they are written in the Koran, are God’s [words]. These [claims] are incompatible with each other.
- 226** Furthermore: Isn’t [the following] placed in Chapter 6?: “Make known to others that God truly has commanded that they imitate the sect of Abraham, who was neither an unbeliever nor an idolater, ...” etc.<sup>196</sup> If God commanded these things of Muhammad and thereafter, in Chapter 16, first introduced and disclosed to him the way of Abraham<sup>197</sup> (for the Koran descended [from Heaven] successively and by steps, as [we read] in Chapter 26),<sup>198</sup> how are these [claims] compatible? And how are the following compatible?: what [Muhammad] says in Chapter 6 to the effect that Abraham was neither an unbeliever nor an idolater and [the fact that] he elsewhere often asserts that Abraham was an idolater.<sup>199</sup> (And in the *Doctrines* he affirms the same thing.) Tell [me]: since at age forty Muhammad was converted from idolatry through Sergius, the Christian and Nestorian monk,<sup>200</sup> how is it true of Muhammad, who is also said to have accepted a religious habit and to have died in that [Christian and Nestorian] faith, that he held to the law of Abraham? Where in the Koran have you read the commandment concerning circumcision or that Muhammad was circumcised? Surely, [he was] not [circumcised] on the eighth day after his birth, as was commanded for Isaac and the descendants of Abraham; nor [was he circumcised] in his thirteenth year, as was Ismael (for at that time he was an idolater); nor is he read to have been circumcised afterwards. But because he was a Christian, even though a Nestorian, assuredly he was baptized. For Nestorians embrace the Gospel and are baptized.
- 227** Moreover, it is implausible that Muhammad wrote the foregoing things [contained] in the Koran. For, as is evident from the Koran, praise of the Gospel is placed in Chapter 12—even *before* those chap-

ters which say that the law of Abraham was introduced to Muhammad.<sup>201</sup> The same thing holds true regarding the praise of Christ in Chapter 4—[praise] which can be believed to have been put [into the Koran] by Muhammad, since he was a Christian, as was stated previously. Now, it is certain that Muhammad preferred Christ to all the [other] prophets and preferred the law of the Gospel to all other laws.<sup>202</sup> And so, it is not at all consistent with reason or at all plausible that, having abandoned Christ and the Gospel, he was redirected by God to Abraham. For Christians do not doubt that in their observance of the Gospel there is contained the entire perfection of the faith and the law of Abraham. Therefore [let] these things [suffice] regarding the law of, and the way of, Abraham. In all likelihood, the Jews added [such things] to the Koran after [Muhammad's] death; for Muhammad's collection was in their hands, as was mentioned earlier.<sup>203</sup>

**228** Now you see, O Calif, that you [Muslims] have been led astray by cunning and perverse Jews who were blasphemers of God. For [you know that] during the lifetime of Muhammad the Koran was never published; nor are its contents ever found to have been fully communicated to anyone [during that lifetime]. After Muhammad's death, before those Jews who attached themselves to Muhammad and who had the collection of his commandments in their control handed the collection over to Ali (to whom Muhammad ordered it given), they inserted those [statements] about Abraham (whose descendants they pride themselves on being) and many other [statements,] which remained in the Koran in that form. Since you know these [facts] perfectly well, put on a manly spirit in the fear of God, and choose the truth in preference to a lie.

**229**

#### CHAPTER NINETEEN

A showing of the fact that without Christ  
one cannot be made happy.

Secondly, [O Calif,] consider how it is that even according to [the teaching of] Muhammad you should be subject, without any doubting, to Christ Jesus and His Gospel if you hope to arrive at eternal life. For without Christ this [attainment] is impossible for any man. In order to show this [fact] I will premise—also in accordance with the Koran—that mortal man cannot in any way by means of an effort or a practicing of virtue become immortal.<sup>204</sup> For if mortal nature could make itself immortal, it would also be making itself God, who alone

is by nature immortal, even according to the Koran.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, no man can do works so virtuous that on account of them he deservedly and rightfully becomes immortal. And since we all desire immortality, no one will be happy with utmost happiness unless he attains unto immortality. Nor would it suffice [for him] to have immortality undeservedly; for he who does not attain unto the Kingdom of Immortality as heir and lord, through justice, is not yet happy. For it is not the vassal (who by grace has that which he has) who is happy, for he is a servant; but rather it is the lord and heir [who is happy]. Therefore, how will it be possible for a man to arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven and of Immortality in order to be king and lord and heir of that Kingdom if the mortal cannot merit immortality in such way that immortality is owed to it?

**230** By way of illustration: The perceptible life of any brute animal can never by any exercising ascend unto becoming an intellectual and intelligent [life]. Even though one brute animal more than another seems to ascend (through man's teaching) unto conformity with intelligence, nevertheless it will never be possible for a beast to become an intelligent being. Now, if a certain animal of a bestial species were found to be capable of learning in such way that by continued practice it would attain unto an understanding of those things which a man understands, and if it showed this [attainment] by its actions, then it would not at all be true that that animal was a mere beast but [would rather be true] that it had an intellect, to which, as to its hypostasis, the animality of its brute-species was united. And so, by making suitable efforts [the animal] would have been able to merit [to have]—in the brute species that was assumed—that which it possessed naturally in that root which I am calling the hypostasis. And just as these [facts] are true regarding a brute being and an intelligence, so they must also be asserted regarding a man and the divinity, which is also called immortality. For howsoever much any man seems to be more like Immortality, or God, than does another [man,] nevertheless he never would arrive at divinity, or immortality, through whatsoever practice of virtue, even if [thereby] he were to become progressively more holy. And if anyone is believed to have arrived, then it was necessary that the root, or hypostasis, of that man was divine, so that by a fitting practicing of virtue he could merit [to have,] in the assumed humanity, the immortality which he had in his root, or hypostasis.

**231** But in accordance with the Koran you [Muslims] do not doubt that by faith and works a man can merit [the following: viz.,] that on the day of the Last Judgment eternal life be awarded to him by the verdict of God, the Judge.<sup>206</sup> Therefore, you do not at all doubt that this is a true [occurrence] with regard to Christ, than whom no one is more worthy. Therefore, since the mortal man Christ merited immortality in His human nature, it is necessary to admit that in Him the human nature was rooted and hypostasized in the divine [nature,] as was stated.<sup>207</sup> And in no other man was human nature elevated to such an extent that its hypostasis, was divine. For Christ alone is the most exalted [man]. Therefore, no other man *was* able, or *is* able, to merit immortality for his human nature. Only Christ was [thus] able. Therefore, [Christ] merited immortality for all men-of-the-same-human-nature who are conformed to Him. And so, we understand through Gabriel's angelic annunciation, made to the Virgin Mary and recorded in the Gospel, that Christ was named by God *Jesus* (because He is the Saviour who saves His people)<sup>208</sup> and that He is the Messiah, or Christ the King, to whose Kingdom belong all those who will obtain eternal and immortal life.

**232**

#### CHAPTER TWENTY

A showing of the fact that Christ  
merited immortality for Christians.

Understand, O Calif, that Christ merited [to have] this Kingdom of Immortality in the human nature assumed from the Virgin, for in His root, or hypostasis, He was [already] immortal by nature. Hence, just as in accordance with the divine hypostasis, He was naturally immortal, so He merited to be immortal in His assumed nature. Therefore, in Him the human nature was made immortal not only from the grace of its union with the divine hypostasis but also from the exercise of virtue. For having laid aside mortality through His death, which He underwent out of obedience to God, He merited to become more fully immortal. Therefore, the Messiah, or Christ the King, who was anointed more than His fellow-men,<sup>209</sup> is both by nature and by merit King of eternal, or immortal, life. Indeed, this Kingdom belongs to Christ, who is the King of hosts and of glory.<sup>210</sup> And all believers<sup>211</sup> are called by Him unto His Kingdom—[called] to be rulers together with Him. And those who hearken unto His voice and follow Him become

possessors of immortality.

**233** You now see clearly that Christ is the Mediator between God and men<sup>212</sup> and that except through Christ no man merits eternal life by faith and by works. Christ is heir to the Kingdom of the immortal God—[a Kingdom] which God alone inhabits and to which all men aspire. Indeed, [Christ is] heir—in every manner of speaking—both by nature and by appointment. Because He is heir by nature, He is said to be the true Son of God, for a son is a natural heir. He is also heir by appointment; and, [as such an heir,] He is said to be Son of man, anointed more than His fellow-men. Now, an appointment is of two kinds: one kind that depends simply upon the choice of the one who does the appointing, and another kind that depends not only upon the choice of the one who does the appointing but also upon the merit of the one who is appointed. For example, suppose that a king who had both a son and a powerful enemy were to make a proclamation to the effect that he would appoint as an heir that soldier who defeated his enemy. And suppose that the natural son, having taken on the lowly form of a soldier, became the victor [over the king's enemy]. In that case, the son would in every way be the heir both by nature and by appointment. Similarly, Christ is the heir to all things both by nature and by appointment. For He took on the lowly form of a man and defeated the Prince of this world,<sup>213</sup> the enemy of God; and from that enemy's hand He freed captive human nature, which was created in the image of God and for contemplating God.

**234** You see that Christ is both the most perfect heir of God and the most perfect Son of God both by nature and by merit and that all men who are Christ-like are, through Him, heirs of God and sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ.<sup>214</sup> And the inheritance is the Kingdom-of-eternal-life, wherein God the Father is seen in His own glory and wherein Christ the Victor is seen in the glory of God His Father.

There cannot be a different true understanding of the Koran, as with a clear mind you yourself will recognize. If you rightly perceive these [matters,] then you see that in Christ there is only one divine hypostasis, in which human nature is rooted. But the hypostasis of the divine and immortal nature draws unto itself a human nature. Because of this hypostasis Christ is one divine person, although He is of both a divine nature and a human nature.<sup>215</sup> And

there are predicated of Him—by a sharing of the respective modes of speaking [about the divine nature and the human nature]—things which we ascribe to the divine nature and likewise things which we ascribe to the human nature.<sup>216</sup> If you wish, you can become sufficiently informed about this [truth] by many learned Christians.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

An explication of the likeness between Adam and Christ.

Since the imagination does not attain unto that which excels all understanding, many people have incorrectly envisioned the manner in which the human nature [in Christ] is united to the divine hypostasis. Therefore, lest you err, [O Calif] by following either Nestorius or Eutyches or someone else who does not rightly understand, you ought to know a few things (according to a sound understanding) about the fact that in a certain manner Jesus bears a likeness to Adam, as is recorded in Chapter 5 of the Koran.<sup>217</sup> Conceive, in the following way, that this [likeness] holds true: Adam was created by God in order to rule over the animals. He was king and “messiah” of the animals. For in him there was a higher hypostasis than in the brutes (viz., [an hypostasis] of an intellectual nature) that drew unto itself, and united unto itself, a brute animality. Because of this hypostasis of the intellectual nature [Adam] was *one* person, although he had both an intellectual and a brute’s nature. Now, whatever is the more perfect is prior in the order of nature [to the less perfect]. (For example, God does not precede all things temporally, since He is not in time, but [rather He precedes them] by nature, because He is more perfect [than anything else]). Therefore, God is prior to intellect, intellect is prior to sensibility, or bruteness, and sensibility is prior to vegetativeness. (I do not mean prior in time but rather prior in order and in dignity and in perfection.) In this manner of speaking, the intellectual nature in Adam, being prior to the sensible [nature,] united unto itself a sensible nature; and [Adam] became king of all things that are alive with a sensible life. For [the hypostasis] assumed the sensible life into a union with the prior intellectual life, and it moved the body—which was alive with a sensible life—in accordance with the activities of the intellectual life.

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Likewise, in a certain manner and by means of such a likeness, Christ can be conceived to be Messiah and King of all things that are alive with an intellectual life. For the divine life, being prior to

intellectual [life,] united unto itself the intellectual life of a man and moved that human intellectual nature in accordance with divine operations. But we say that Christ is similar to Adam in a *certain* way, not in *every* way. For example, in Adam the intellective life not only united to itself a sensible life but also became, in the aforementioned union, a form that formed the sensible life that was united to itself (For between the intellective [life] and the sensible [life] there was able to be a comparative relation, since both [of them] are finite and created.) However, in Christ the divine life, although it hypostatically united unto itself a human intellective life, did not do so with respect to form. (For between the divine life, of whose magnitude there is no end, and the finite intellective [life] there cannot be any comparative relation—[a relation] which is necessary between a form and that which it forms.

**237** Nevertheless, since [in Christ] the hypostasis is of infinite power, it never abandons the nature that is drawn unto it. By way of illustration, the power of a magnet never abandons the iron that is drawn unto its own hypostasis; and by means of the attracted iron [the magnet] draws other iron [unto itself];<sup>218</sup> and it would continue to do this *ad infinitum* if its power were infinite. Nevertheless, the power of the magnet does not become the form of the iron; nor does it pass over into the iron, so that it becomes iron; nor does it become a composite with the iron, so that it becomes a third thing that is composed of the magnet and the iron. Rather, while both natures remain unconfused, the iron so adheres to the hypostasis of the magnet's power that it does not fail to adhere thereto whether [the magnet] is moved upwards or downwards or sideways. By means of these symbolisms, although remote ones, apprehend Christ to some extent.

**238** Moreover, the earthly Adam enfolded within himself every man who was going to come into this kingdom, i.e., into this sensible world, so that in Adam all men were present by way of enfolding and from Adam they all received the capability to be men belonging to this world. Similarly, in Christ, the second and heavenly Adam, all who are predestined to the immortal life of the other world, i.e., of the Kingdom of Heaven, are present in an enfolded way. Necessarily, [it is] from Christ [alone that] they receive all things, so that they can be citizens and family members of that incorruptible Heavenly Kingdom. You will find these [points] to be



very clearly<sup>219</sup> and obviously true, if God will deign to open your eyes in order that you may read and understand the most sacred Gospel. May God, who is gracious and merciful and forever blessed, grant this [enlightenment] to you.

## 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 THREE*

1. CA III, 2 (165-166) and III, 10 (190:12). Surah 37:4 and 73:9.
2. CA II, 14 (127).
3. Surah 23:50.
4. Surah 23:100 (wrongly translated by Ketton).
5. Surah 23:103-104.
6. I.e., the Koran attempts to state matters ambiguously.
7. Surah 55:46. Cf. Surah 18:30-31 and 18:107.
8. Surah 16:96-97.
9. Surah 9:112.
10. Surah 17:19-20.
11. Surah 16:64.
12. Surah 16:123-124.
13. Surah 4:150-152.
14. Surah 17:106.
15. Surah 2:213.
16. Surah 2:253.
17. Matthew 5:17.
18. John 1:45.
19. Surah 46:9-10.
20. Surah 46:12-14.
21. Here Nicholas seems mistaken about the Koran's teachings.
22. Surah 2:62.
23. Surah 9:30-31.
24. Surah 40:6.
25. Surah 42:34.
26. Surah 39:42.
27. Surah 6:93.
28. See the references in n. 1 above. Also see n. 46 of Notes to the Introduction.
29. The passage that Nicholas has in mind is unknown.
30. CA I, 1 (2 3:8).
31. Surah 11: 13-14.
32. Surah 21:3-5.
33. Surah 20:133.
34. Surah 7:157.
35. Surah 61:6.
36. Nicholas takes this passage not from the Koran but from Chapter 7 of Ricoldo of Montecroce's *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* (Codex Cusanus 107, fol. 205<sup>r</sup>, lines 24-27, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 108). See the reference in n. 72 below.
37. CA I, 2 (26:5-6).
38. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 6 (Codex Cusanus 107, fol. 204<sup>v</sup>, lines 5-6, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 106).

39. *Ibid.*, Chap. 7. See *TB*, Vol. II, p. 108.
40. Surah 67:25-26.
41. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 7 (Codex Cusanus 107, f. 205<sup>v</sup>, lines 12-16, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 109).
42. See the references in notes 68-71 below. Nicholas returns to the topic of force in *CA* III, 6 and 8.
43. Surah 15:26-29.
44. Surah 17:85.
45. Surah 21:91.
46. Surah 32:7-9.
47. Surah 38:71-76.
48. Surah 17:19-20.
49. See the reference in n. 44 above.
50. Surah 29:57.
51. Nicholas's reference seems unfounded. See p. 253, n. 171 of Ludwig Hagemann's edition of the Latin text of *Cribratio Alkorani*.
52. Surah 35:1.
53. See the reference in n. 44 above.
54. Cf.. *CA* II, 6 (102:5-6) and II, 7 (104:1-2).
55. Surah 70:40.
56. Surah 68:1. Surah 95:1. See p. 319, n. 4 of Gustav Hölscher's German translation of Book Three of *CA*. The Koran, notes Hölscher, does not mention an oath taken upon a gnat.
57. Genesis 22:16. Hebrews 6:13.
58. Surah 33:56. Surah 33:50.
59. Surah 39:11-13.
60. Surah 43:8 1.
61. Surah 33:50.
62. Surah 43:81. Surah 7:143.
63. Surah 33:40.
64. *CA* I, 1 (23:12-13). Second Prologue (11-12).
65. Surah 3:7.
66. Surah 73:1-4.
67. *CA* I, 2 (24:4). See, above, n. 78 of Notes to the Introduction.
68. Surah 2:256.
69. Surah 6:108.
70. Surah 10:99.
71. Surah 50:45.
72. Surah 9:29.
73. Surah 10:41.
74. Surah 2:113.
75. Nicholas's reference seems unfounded.
76. Surah 16:106. In the Latin text (180:9) I am reading "*hoc*" in place of "*haec*".
77. Surah 5:82-85. Surah 2:62.
78. Matthew 5:10-12.
79. I John 3:14.
80. Surah 4:48.

81. Surah 5:2.
82. Surah 10:33.
83. Surah 40:33. The Latin sentence corresponding to the translation of this sentence is amphibolous. I construe it in the way that I suppose Nicholas to have meant it—a construal that agrees with the Paris edition. However, the following translation is more accurate from the point of view of the Koran’s meaning: “One who is drawn away into error by God will never be guided [by anyone].”
84. Surah 57:22.
85. Surah 3:7.
86. Surah 44:58.
87. Surah 4:82.
88. Surah 2:62.
89. See the reference in n. 41 above.
90. See the reference in notes 36 and 72 above.
91. Surah 5:82.
92. Surah 30:1-4.
93. Surah 41:53. Surah 17:59.
94. See *CA II*, 17 (147) and the references found therein.
95. Surah 5:110.
96. Matthew 11:2-6.
97. John 1:32-34.
98. Surah 2:253.
99. Surah 3:45-46.
100. In the corresponding Latin sentence (187:4-5) I am reading “*inhabitantii*” in place of “*inhabitantis*”.
101. Nicholas here speaks not of a numerical identity but rather of a specific and generic identity. However, the identity of Jesus’s and God-the-Father’s divine nature is an absolute oneness. See *CA II*, 10 (111) and I, 11 (57). Also see *CA III*, 19 (especially 231:8-10). *DI III*, 8 (227:12-16 and 228:1-3).
102. The single word “food” translates the Latin “*cibis et comestibilibus*” at 188:5.
103. Surah 5:75. The passage that Nicholas has in mind, in referring to God as not eating, is uncertain.
104. Surah 5:17. *CA I*, 9 (49).
105. *CA I*, 9 and 11.
106. *CA II*, 3.
107. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, Chap. 1 [*Dionysiaca I*, 22-24 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937)]. Cf. *NA* 14 (58). [Nicholas refers to (Pseudo-)Dionysius as “the Theologian,” believing him to be the one mentioned in Acts 17:34. Note *NA* 15 (72:2) and 14 (54:2).
108. *CA II*, 1 (88-89).
109. Surah 23:117.
110. Surah 18:22.
111. *CA III*, 1.
112. See the references in notes 1 and 39 above.
113. Nicholas’s emphasis is different in *CA III*, 3 (169).
114. Surah 2:62.

115. Surah 2:8 1.  
 116. Surah 2:217.  
 117. Surah 2:256-257.  
 118. Surah 3:15-18.  
 119. Surah 5:69.  
 120. Surah 28:86-87.  
 121. Surah 32:22-23.  
 122. It is uncertain to which passages of the Koran Nicholas is referring.  
 123. Surah 2:62.  
 124. Surah 39: 10.  
 125. Surah 42:13.  
 126. Surah 9:30-31.  
 127. Surah 16:123.  
 128. It is uncertain to which passage of the Koran Nicholas is referring.  
 129. Matthew 5:17.  
 130. Genesis 17:1.  
 131. Viz., I John.  
 132. John 1:9.  
 133. Surah 19:41-50. Surah 6:74. By implication Abraham was at first an idolater, since his father was one. See also the reference in n. 134 below.  
 134. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 30<sup>r</sup>, column a, lines 39-42, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 199).  
 In the passage signaled by this present note, viz., *CA III*, 12 (198:9-10), Nicholas refers to Muhammad's work in the singular ("*Doctrina*") rather than, as usual, in the plural ("*Doctrinae*"). However, I use the plural in translation.  
 135. Cf.. Genesis 11:26; 11:31-32; 12:4. According to this chronology Abraham left the city of Haran without his father, who died there later. The gloss referred to by Nicholas attempts to explain why Thare did not accompany Abraham—why he was excluded from God's promise.  
 136. Nicholas fails to take account of Joshua 24:2, which refers to Abraham's father as an idolater.  
 137. Genesis 12:2-3.  
 138. Genesis 13:15-16.  
 139. Genesis 15:1.  
 140. Genesis 15:4-6.  
 141. The preceding excerpt is a conflation of portions of Genesis 17:1 - 26:5.  
 142. Genesis 15:6.  
 143. Romans 4:1-5. The expression "*deo credere*" can be translated both as "to believe God" and "to believe in God"—depending upon the context. In the second and the third English sentences of this chapter (viz., *CA III*, 13) I have used both translations.  
 144. Hebrews 11:8-12. Romans 4:19-20.  
 145. Matthew 19:26. Hebrews 11:19.  
 146. Genesis 13:15. Genesis 15:18.  
 147. Isaiah 54:1.  
 148. Galatians 4:28.  
 149. Luke 1:54-55.

150. Genesis 32:30.
151. Luke 1:69.
152. Genesis 28:14. Romans 4:16. Galatians 3:8-9.
153. John 8:37.
154. John 8:39.
155. John 8:56.
156. The single English word “covenant” translates the Latin “*foedere et pacto*.”
157. Galatians 4:22-31.
158. I Timothy 6:16.
159. Surah 2:129.
160. The single English word “covenants” translates the Latin “*pacta et foedera*.”  
Note Deuteronomy 13, which implies three tests for distinguishing between true and false prophets: the true prophet will (1) come from among the people of God, (2) will perform a miracle or wondrous work as a sign of his having been divinely sent, and (3) will teach nothing inconsistent with previous revelation. In accordance with these criteria Jesus was insistent upon the fact that He had come not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it; for had He come to destroy it, His fellow Jews would have been obliged to reject Him as a false prophet. Likewise, in accordance with the foregoing criteria Nicholas of Cusa declares Muhammad to be a false prophet. For, as Nicholas argues, not only does Muhammad work no accrediting miracle but he also does not come from the people of God, i.e., the people of the covenants; and what he teaches contradicts, in places, previous revelation.
161. Surah 4:163. Surah 19:54.
162. I.e., he would war against his brothers. Genesis 16:12.
163. Surah 37:102.
164. Hebrews 11:17-19.
165. Genesis 22:13.
166. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>, column a, lines 42-44, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 194).
167. Surah 57:26-27.
168. Surah 3:67.
169. John 8:58.
170. Genesis 18:3.
171. Genesis 15:1.
172. Genesis 15:6. *PF XVI* (60).
173. Colossians 2:11.
174. Genesis 17:25.
175. *CA III*, 11 (195).
176. Surah 8:41.
177. Surah 6:108.
178. Surah 42:8.
179. Genesis 14:18-20.
180. Hebrews 7:1-3; 7:21-22.
181. Psalms 109:4 (110:4).
182. Cf.. Matthew 22:41-46 with Psalms 109:1-2 (110:1).
183. Surah 5:112-115.
184. Viz., Muhammad II (1451-1481), to whom Constantinople fell in 1453. The



epithet “Sultan of Babylonia” is used by Nicholas symbolically to indicate Muhammad’s might; it is not used literally to indicate his actual jurisdiction. At the outset of *PF* Nicholas refers to Muhammad as “King of the Turks.”

185. See, above, the reference in n. 24 of Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Book One.

186. In the corresponding Latin sentence (222:5-8) I am reading “*hoc*” in place of “*haec*”.

187. John 1:14.

188. *CA* I, 3 (28:13-15).

189. The view that there will be only the faith of Christ and that it will prevail over the faith of Muhammad is not found in the Koran. Nicholas, however, argues that this view is implied by the Koran’s teachings. See *CA* III, 11.

190. Genesis 50:20. Romans 8:28.

191. *CA* III, 1.

192. Nicholas erred in believing that there was a calif of Baghddad during his day.

193. In the corresponding Latin sentence (224:7-10) I am reading “*Muhameto*” in place of “*Muhametum*”.

194. Surah 2:97. *CA* I, 1 (22).

195. Surah 6:161.

196. Surah 3:95.

197. Surah 6:161.

198. Surah 17:106.

199. See notes 133 and 134 above.

200. *CA*, Second Prologue (11-12).

201. Surah 5:46 praises the Gospel. Surah 6:161 speaks of being led from previous beliefs unto the law of Abraham. Nicholas here assumes that the Koran is arranged chronologically, even though in his Second Prologue (16) he recognizes that there is no such arrangement. Having made this assumption, he concludes that Muhammad’s conversion from the Gospel to the law of Abraham is implausible, because the entire perfection of the law of Abraham is contained in the Christian faith.

We must continually keep in mind that Nicholas’s chapter numbers differ from the chapter numbers that have now become standard.

202. *CA* I, 8.

203. *CA*, Second Prologue (11-12).

204. Surah 104:1-3. Surah 3:185.

205. I Timothy 6:16. Surah 112:1-4.

206. Earlier, in the passage marked by n. 204, Nicholas indicated that even according to the Koran no man can merit eternal life by means of his own merits (alone). In the present passage he indicates that in conjunction with faith (which is given by grace, according to Ephesians 2:8) a man’s merits can result in the reward of eternal life. Thus, the two passages are not inconsistent. See especially *CA* III, 20 (233:1-3).

See *CA* II, 18.

207. See the end of the preceding paragraph.

208. Matthew 1:21.

209. Psalms 44:8 (45:7).

210. Psalms 23:10 (24:10).

211. The one English word “believers” translates the Latin “*creduli et fideles*.”
212. I Timothy 2:5. *DI* III, 3 (197-199). *DVD* 19 (86).
213. The Prince of this world is Satan.
214. Romans 8:17. See Nicholas’s *De Filiatione Dei*.
215. *DI* III, 2 (194). *DI* III, 3 (202).
216. *DI* III, 7 (223).
217. Surah 3:59.
218. *PF* XII (40).
219. Here the Latin word “*clarius*” has the force of a superlative. In this respect Cf.. “*sapientiores*” at *CA* I, 1 (22:6) and “*sapientiorum*” at *PF* VII (20: 10).