

**NICHOLAS OF CUSA'S DE PACE
FIDEI AND CRIBRATIO ALKORANI:**

TRANSLATION AND ANALYSIS
(Second Edition)

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A SCRUTINY OF THE KORAN (*Cribratio Alkorani*)

1

To Pius II, supreme and most holy pontiff of the Universal Christian Church.

O most holy Pope, accept this book composed with zealous faith by your humble servant. [Accept it] so that when—in the manner of threefold holy Pope Leo,¹ your predecessor, who with angelic genius and divine eloquence condemned the Nestorian heresy through his apostolic spirit—you show through the same spirit, and with equal genius and eloquence, that the Muhammadan sect (which has arisen from this [heresy]) is in error and is to be repudiated, you may readily have at hand certain basic points needful to know. To your judgment—you, who are the leader in the episcopate of faith—I submit not only this book and whatever I have written or shall write but also (as befits a believer) my entire self. And in no respect shall I ever withhold assent from your apostolic throne.

2

PROLOGUE

As best I could, I made a careful attempt to understand the book-of-law of the Arabs—[a book] which I obtained at Basel in the translation commissioned for us by Peter, Abbot of Cluny.² [I obtained it] together with a debate among those noble Arabs, [wherein] one of them, a follower of Muhammad, attempted to win over another of them—who, being eminent among the Arabs and quite learned, showed that the Christian faith, which he zealously observed, ought rather to be accepted. There were also [contained therein] certain other works on the origins of Muhammad, his twelve successors in the kingdom, and on his *Doctrinae ad centum questiones*.³ I left the book with Master John of Segovia⁴ and journeyed to Constantinople, where among the Minorites⁵ who were living at [the Church of] the Holy Cross, I found the Koran in Arabic. These brothers, as best they knew how, explained it to me in regard to certain of its points. But in Pera,⁶ at the Convent of St. Dominic, [I found a copy of the Koran that] was translated in the [same] manner as [the one] I had left behind in Basel. I inquired whether any of the Greeks had written against these foolish errors. And I learned only that John of Damascus,⁷ who lived

a little after the beginning of that sect, had written the very few things which were on hand there.

- 3 At that time there was in Constantinople a merchant, Balthasar de Luparis, who, seeing that I was concerned about the aforesaid matters, told me the following: viz., that one of the most learned and most eminent of the Turks, having been secretly instructed at Pera in the Gospel of St. John, proposed going to the Pope—[going] together with twelve [other] eminent men—and becoming fully instructed [by the Pope] if I would secretly provide them with transportation. That these things were true I confirmed by word of the brothers; and I arranged transportation, just as [these Turks] requested. Because that preeminent man was in charge of the hospitals, he wanted to visit these and thereafter to come down to where the ship was awaiting them and to set out for Rome. But the plague carried him away during his visitation. Lord Balthasar, who presently is a soldier in Bologna, quite often recounted to me that all their learned [men] loved the Gospel exceedingly and preferred it to their book of law.
- 4 At length, I urged Brother Dionysius the Carthusian to write against the Koran. He did so⁸ and sent his huge work to Pope Nicholas. Thereafter, in Rome, I saw the book of Brother Ricoldo,⁹ of the Order of Preachers,¹⁰ who studied Arabic in Baghdad; this [book] was more gratifying than the others. I also looked at the Catholic writings of other brothers on this [same] subject-matter—especially at St. Thomas's [work] *De Rationibus Fidei ad Cantorem Antiochenum* and, lastly, at [the writing] of the most reverend lord and cardinal of St. Sixtus,¹¹ who with cogent reasons refutes the heresies and the errors of Muhammad. But I applied my mind to disclosing, even from the Koran, that the Gospel is true. And in order that this [disclosure] may readily be made, I will here set forth in a few words my overall conception.
- 5 We recognize that in ourselves there is a certain appetite which is called spirit because of the motion present in it.¹² Moreover, [we recognize] that the explanation for this motion is the Good, for by reason of the Good the appetite is moved. Accordingly, we see that by its own power the Good attracts our spirit and that the only reason the Good is desired is because it is the Good. Therefore, the end of our desire is the Good. And our spirit cannot have its appetite for the Good from anywhere other than from the Good. Therefore, the Good is the Creator of our spirit—[creating us] for [the attainment of] it-

self-and is both our spirit's Beginning and its End.¹³ Hence, our spirit is not at rest except in its Beginning. And because our intellectual spirit is not that very Good which it desires (because that Good is not present in our spirit; for if it were present in the intellect, it would be the intellect, just as in our knowledge the known *is* our knowledge¹⁴), the intellect does not know *what* that Good is. Therefore, the intellectual spirit by nature desires to understand that Good. For although [that Good] cannot be lacking to anything that is—since to be is something good—nevertheless, unless the intellect understands the Good, it will be deprived of it and will not be able to be at rest.

6 Since the intellect does not know what this Good is—[a Good] which it does not doubt to exist—it also does not know its name and cannot make any concept of Him whom it does not doubt to be greater and better than every concept.¹⁵ And since we recognize that whatever does not enter into the intellect through the senses is not understood by our intellect¹⁶ (for example, a man blind from birth has no knowledge of color), we know that that Good is not of the region of this sensible world and that in this world our spirit will not find rest. But since we know that we do not possess in vain the appetite for that Good, we are also certain that our intellectual spirit is not of the sensible world but that once the sensible life is removed, the intellect's appetite will be able to attain unto rest. But unless this world were of use to our intellectual nature toward this end,¹⁷ we would have entered into the world in vain.

7 Therefore, we must acknowledge that in this world we can be made fit and unfit for finding, in the future age, rest or lack of rest. But the way through which we are to pass in this world in order to be made fit for apprehending the desired Good should be only a good way; but a way that leads [us] astray will be an evil one. To anyone with understanding, it is clear that these points are true. Now, since there can be many ways that seem to be good, there remains doubt about which is the true and perfect way that leads us assuredly unto a knowledge of the Good (a Good which, indeed, we call God) in order that when we discourse about it we may understand one another. To be sure, Moses described a way; but it is not accepted or understood by everyone. Christ illumined and perfected this way, though many remain who are still unbelieving. Muhammad attempted to describe this same way as quite easy, so that it might be accepted by all, even by idolaters. These¹⁸ are the most renown descriptions of the

aforementioned way, although many other [descriptions] have been made by wise men and prophets.

- 8** But all the aforesaid descriptions hold as their basis the view that that oft-mentioned Good is maximal and, thus, is one; and this One all call God. Moreover, all call their own descriptions good on the [alleged] ground that these descriptions are revealed to them by this same good God. However, it is apparent that since no one who is merely a man can [non-metaphorically] conceive of God, we cannot be certain that anyone who is merely a man can disclose to us the way to the End that is unknown to him. Hence, if while Moses and Muhammad were in this world neither of them ever saw the oft-mentioned Good (for no one has ever seen God), then how could they have disclosed to others the way thereto? However, suppose it were the case that they disclosed certain words that had been infused into them—[words] which symbolized, or signified, God and the way unto Him. Still, neither Moses nor Muhammad nor any other man would have been able to explain [the meanings of] these words. And if some man would have been able, or would be able, to manifest this way, then assuredly he would have to have been the greatest of all men, even as all nations acknowledge the Messiah to be. But if that man were not omniscient Divine Wisdom through which God works all things, then surely he would not be able to reveal that which would be unknown to him.
- 9** But Jesus, the son of the Virgin Mary and the Christ who was foretold by Moses and the Prophets to be coming, did come and did reveal most perfectly—according to the testimony even of Muhammad—the oft-mentioned way, for He was ignorant of nothing. Therefore, it is certain that anyone who follows Christ and His way will attain unto an understanding of the desired Good. Hence, if Muhammad in any respect disagrees with Christ, then it follows either that he does so out of ignorance, because he did not know Christ and did not understand Him, or that there is perverse intent, because he did not intend to lead men to that goal-of-rest to which Christ showed the way but rather sought his own glory under the guise of that goal. A comparison of the law of Christ with the law of Muhammad will teach [us] that both of these [alternatives] must be believed to be true. I believe that the following must be maintained: viz., that ignorance was the cause of [Muhammad's] error and malevolence. For no one who is acquainted with Christ disagrees with Him or detracts from Him.
- 10** Now, my intention is as follows: having presupposed the Gospel of Christ,

to scrutinize the book of Muhammad and to show that even in it there are contained those [teachings] through which the Gospel would be altogether confirmed, were it in need of confirmation, and that wherever [the Koran] disagrees [with Christ], this [disagreement] has resulted from Muhammad's ignorance and, following [thereupon], from his perverse intent. For whereas Christ sought not His own glory but the glory of God-the-Father and the salvation of men,¹⁹ Muhammad sought not the glory of God and the salvation of men but rather his own glory.

11 AN ADDITIONAL PROLOGUE

That noble Arab Christian whom I previously mentioned,²⁰ reports the following:²¹

Sergius, a monk evicted from his monastery, journeyed to Mecca. There he found two groups of people, [viz.,] idolaters and Jews; and there he preached the Christian faith as Nestorius held it, [doing so] in order to regain favor with his [monastic] brothers, [who were also] of the sect of Nestorius. And he succeeded in converting all the idolaters to his own faith. Among these was Muhammad, who, having been converted from idolatry, died a Nestorian Christian. But three very clever Jews attached themselves to Muhammad in order to turn him aside, lest he become perfect; and they induced him to various evils. But after Muhammad's death, when all [the idolaters] returned to their own [respective] sect, these [three] Jews approached Alis—son of Abitalip—to whom Muhammad had sent his collection [of precepts],²² and persuaded him to elevate himself unto a prophet, even as Muhammad too [had elevated himself]. And with regard to Muhammad's book they added and deleted what they wanted to.

- 12 It seems, then, that at the beginning Muhammad was firmly grounded by Sergius, so that he was a Christian and observed the Christian law. The Jews were not able to turn him aside from that way. But in order to hold [him] back [therefrom] as much as they could, they added those [passages] through which Muhammad seemed to be a prophet of his own sect and through which he gave credence to the Old Testament no less than to the Gospel. But as the man who was previously mentioned reports, Sergius got Muhammad to put into the Koran the view that Christians—especially monks and priests—are closer friends [to Muslims] than are Jews. Now, although Muhammad makes these statements, nevertheless being later induced by the Jews, he derides Christians, who [allegedly] worship their prelates and pontiffs in place of God. This [allegation supposedly holds true] because Christians call their prelates and priests by the name by which God

alone is [rightly] called, viz., “lord.” But [according to Muhammad] this name befits no one except God. For in [the book of] Exodus there is found the following: “The Lord Himself is God.”²³

13 [Muhammad] also at times refers to God by ten names—among which is “Adonai,” which means Lord. And by “Adonai” [God’s] ineffable name²⁴ is signified, read, and expressed. And so, in the Koran [Muhammad] ascribes this name to no one except God—indeed, not even to Christ or to the Virgin Mary. And because Christians call Christ Jesus Lord and call Mary lord, [Muhammad] claims that Jesus and Mary are worshiped in place of God. Moreover, just as [Muhammad] was careful always to ascribe the name “Lord” only to God, so he was careful never to ascribe to God the name “Father.” On the basis of his maintaining that God makes all things according as He wills to, [he claims that] the act of begetting does not befit God. Therefore, when he says good things about Christians, he understands [these statements to hold true] of “those dressed in white” (for this is how he refers to disciples) and of believers in Christ (as he considered the Nestorians to be, with [the fact of] whose error he was unfamiliar and with no awareness on his part that there were Christians other [than Nestorians]).

14 Now, Nestorius accepted all the [teachings] that are in the Gospel, including the doctrine that in Christ there was a body, a soul, and the divinity. But Nestorius erred regarding the manner of the union. He acknowledged that [in Christ] body and soul were united by a natural union, so that [Christ] was a true man. But he claimed that that human nature was united to the divinity through grace—though not through common grace, by which good [men] are united to God, but rather through fullness of grace, because of which fullness the will of God and the will of the man Jesus were one will. [Furthermore, he alleged that] because of this most excellent grace one may truly affirm of Christ that He was the Son of God. But [Nestorius] did not admit that Mary was the mother of God, for in Christ, [so he claimed,] that which is found to have been received from His mother does not befit God. Thus, [Nestorius] claimed that the human nature in Christ was deified. But the Church—because the Gospel says that the Word of God was made flesh and not that flesh was made the Word of God²⁵—condemned this view²⁶ in the third and the fourth universal councils,²⁷ when it gave to the mother of Jesus the name “*theotokos*,” i.e., “begetter of God.” However, the Nestorians do acknowledge [the doctrine of] the eternal begottenness [of the Son from the Father].²⁸

- 15** Accordingly, Muhammad seems to have been unwilling to write anything against [the doctrines of] the most holy trinity and eternal begottenness. Instead, he condemned only [the doctrine of] a plurality of gods, as will be discussed [subsequently]. Moreover, if someone had asked Muhammad in what form God would have sent to men an envoy who was someone greater than an angel, then Muhammad would certainly have answered [that] if God were to send to men an angel as an envoy, He would indue him with human form. And [Muhammad] would reply similarly if [God] were to send someone greater than an angel. Now, according to Muhammad [God] sent Christ, whom [Muhammad] declares to be the Word of God and the son of Mary. Therefore, since the Word of God is of the same nature as God, whose Word He is (for all the things of God *are* God on account of His most simple nature), then when God willed to send a supreme envoy, He sent His Word, than whom no greater envoy can be conceived. And because He sent [Him] to men, He willed for Him to put on a most clean human nature. And [Jesus] did so in the Virgin Mary, as is often found written in the Koran.
- 16** Therefore, there will be no difficulty in finding, in the Koran, the truth of the Gospel, although Muhammad himself was very far removed from a true understanding of the Gospel. Now, [I] must not fail to mention that the chapters of the collection of the aforesaid book of Arab law do not form a continuous sequence with one another. Rather, each [chapter] is a whole in and of itself and is a proper rhyme or a fully metrical song. For the compiler took the utmost care to lure and amaze all [his readers] by the charm of his style and thereby to make the utterances seem divine. Hence, I must be forgiven if I do not seem to hold everywhere to a suitable ordering when I discuss the contents of [this] very confused book.
- 17** I have divided my book into three parts and have recorded below the chapter-titles of each [part].
The chapter-titles of Part I of my book are the following:
- I. On the Koran. That the true God is not its author.
 - II. What the Koran contains, according to its extollers.
 - III. What [the Koran] contains, according to the judgment of the perfect.
 - IV. The Koran is devoid of faith where it contradicts the Sacred Scriptures.
 - V. The Gospel is to be preferred to the Koran.

- VI. The Gospel is the light of truth for the Koran.
- VII. The elegance of style does not prove that the Koran is the word of God.
- VIII. Followers of Christ are preferred to all [others].
- IX. The Koran wrongfully calls Christians unbelievers because they maintain that Christ is the Son of God.
- X. It is shown clearly that Christ is the Son of God.
- XI. Why Christ did not call Himself God but rather the Son of God.
- XII. Commendations of Christ on the part of the Koran, and [the Koran's] manifestation of Christ's divinity.
- XIII. An easy demonstration that Christ, who is the Word of God the Father, is the Son of God the Father.
- XIV. An objection on the part of the Koran, and the solution thereto.
- XV. Because Jesus is the Messiah, He is the true Son of God.
- XVI. Because Christ is the Word of God and is the Supreme Envoy of God, He is the Son of God.
- XVII. Which passages of the Koran contain [the view] that Christ is the Son of God.
- XVIII. How the Koran is to be understood [when it says] that Christ is the spirit and soul of God.
- XIX. How the Koran is to be understood [when it says] that Christ is a good man and the best man and is the Countenance of all nations.
- XX. A digression for guidance with respect to God.

- 18** The chapter-titles of Part II of my book are the following:
- I. On mystical theology, according to which God is ineffable.
 - II. On affirmative theology, according to which God is the trine and one Creator.
 - III. How from the operation of the intellectual nature we see the divine [nature].
 - IV. How we are elevated from the fecundity of the intellectual [nature] to the fecundity of the divine nature.
 - V. Guidance from the things in the world, in order to see God as trine.
 - VI. Guidance from the intellectual trinity unto the Divine [Trinity].
 - VII. Guidance with regard to the same thing—[guidance] through [the illustration of] love.

- VIII. An explication of the Holy Trinity.
- IX. A symbolism, although a remote one, of the Blessed Trinity.
- X. Guidance, this time, from [the consideration of] three persons.
- XI. Arabs must confess the Trinity.
- XII. Christ was truly crucified and truly died.
- XIII. The Crucifixion is an exaltation and a glorification of Christ.
- XIV. How it is that God led back unto Himself Christ's soul and caused Christ to pass over [unto Himself] and took Christ unto Himself
- XV. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- XVI. The mystery of Christ's birth and death.
- XVII. The fruit of the death of Christ.
- XVIII. On Paradise.
- XIX. An invective against the Koran.

- 19** The chapter-titles of Part III of my book are the following:
- I. The Koran, while maintaining faith in one God, seeks to appeal to all [readers], though it nevertheless prefers Christ.
 - II. Muhammad did not know what ought to be done and what ought to be believed; and he left behind nothing firm.
 - III. Why those who believe the Koran are called "saved ones"; and that the sword is teacher.
 - IV. The God of the Koran seems to be an absolute God; and the other god of whom He speaks is immanent in things.
 - V. The God of the Koran seems to be less great than all [other] things and to be Muhammad's servant and his conception.
 - VI. Without cause and contrary to God's commands, Muhammad persecutes Christ in Christians.
 - VII. Muhammad believes that God's foreknowledge necessitates all actions.
 - VIII. The goal of Muhammad's work was his own exaltation.
 - IX. 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.
 - X. Muhammad continually changes [his views], as [is instanced] in his examples.
 - XI. Against [the view] that the law of the Koran is the law of Abraham.
 - XII. The Koran wrongfully states that Abraham was an idolater. The true account is presented.

- XIII. The promise made to faithful Abraham.
- XIV. The covenant between God and Abraham excludes the Ismaelites, and it concludes in Christ, the Mediator.
- XV. Only the Christian, who adores Trinity-in-oneness, can be a descendant of Abraham.
- XVI. Arabs are altogether ignorant of the law of Abraham, and they are persecutors of it.
- XVII. 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.
- XVIII. To the Calif of Baghdad: what the Jews added to the Koran regarding Abraham.
- XIX. A showing of the fact that without Christ one cannot be made happy.
- XX. A showing of the fact that Christ merited immortality for Christians.
- XXI. An explication of the likeness between Adam and Christ.

20**BOOK ONE**

CHAPTER ONE

On the Koran. That the true God is not its author.

There is a book of Arab law which is called the Koran, because of its collection of precepts, and which is called the Furkan, because of its distinct separation of chapters. It has other names as well. Some adherents to [this] book say that it is divided in one way in the East and in another way in the Western regions. For Westerners state that after the prefacing prayer, called the mother of the book, the complete book has 123 surahs, or chapters. But the Easterners say that the first surah lasts until Surah Amram, which is Chapter 5 in the book [used] in Spain. I saw [a copy of] this book (as it is read in Spain) translated into Latin; and where I mention anything from this book of the law, I intend to indicate that it is contained in that Latin [translation].¹

21

The author of this [book] seems to be apocryphal. For some Arabs say that a certain Muhammad of Arabia, of the Ismaelites, composed it. But others say that according to Muhammad this book came down from God by means of seven men, whom they name. Still others claim that after Muhammad's death four different and mutually inconsistent Korans were composed by four [men]—whom they name—who were

adversaries of one another. Moreover, certain [people] affirm that the book presently in use was composed by Merban, son of Elheken, and that Merban committed the other versions to the fire. It is also reported that Elgag, a powerful man, deleted eighty-five statements from the book and added just as many others. In the Chronicles² of Muhammad and of the kings who were his successors we read that Gomar, the second king after Muhammad, ordained that prayers be made in individual temples during the month of Ramadan and that the Koran be read through by the end of the month. Gomar was succeeded by Odiner, who with the help of others first collected the entire Koran. From these [foregoing considerations] it is certain that although Muhammad collected from the Testament³ and from the Gospel certain precepts, which were called the precepts of God, or the Koran, nevertheless that book was collected in its entirety [only] after Muhammad's death.

- 22 Now, in its first chapter that book states the following: "Every adversary of Gabriel, who by [the will of] the Creator revealed this book to your heart—indeed, a book entrusted to your hands by divine commandment . . . ," etc.⁴ These [words] are read as being the words of God to Muhammad; and in [that] book [this] same statement is very often repeated—[a statement] which claims that God alone, the Creator, is the author of the book. But as the wisest Arabs and the true historical accounts maintain, and as the book itself and the [very] name "Koran" show, it is a collection of certain precepts. But, indeed, this collection cannot at all be ascribed to the true God. Whence would He who is Wisdom itself make a collection? Therefore, it is necessary that the collection, which can only be made in the course of time, not at all be ascribed to God, whose meaning is beyond all time and is without succession. To whom, then, should the collection be ascribed except to the man who makes the collection from various scriptural passages and entitles, as he chooses to, that which he has collected (even as this collection is called *Koran*)? And so, certain wise defenders of the book say that the collection is human but that the revelation is of God by way of Gabriel. It is true that the collection is of man; but it cannot be true that God, the Creator of the universe, revealed this book to the heart of Muhammad through Gabriel. For in the book there are contained teachings which—because of their turpitude, injustice, and flagrant lies and contradictions—cannot without blasphemy be ascribed to God.

23 Therefore, the author of the book will be someone other than the true God; but he cannot be [anyone] except the god of this world.⁵ For this god is he who blinds the minds of unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, does not shine [in them]; and since the Gospel is concealed from them, they perish—as the Apostle writes to the Corinthians.⁶ This god, or prince, of this world, who from the beginning is a liar, encountered the man Muhammad through [the person] of some *one* of his own angels who assumed the appearance of light⁷ and perhaps the name “Gabriel.” [This god found] that the idolater [Muhammad], who was worshiping Venus and lusting after all the things of this world, was most suitable for his purpose. And through Muhammad, chiefly, and his successors he put together the deceitful Koran. Moreover, to Muhammad he attached heretical Christians and perverse Jews as counselors suitable for his purpose. For example, there were Sergius the Nestorian, Bahira the Jacobite, and the Jews Phineas and Abdiall-called-Salon (but later called Abdalla)—as the Arabs’ true historical accounts of this matter are found [to indicate]. And although [the Koran] is seen to contain many testimonies of praise for the Testament, for the Gospel, and for the Prophets Abraham, Moses, and especially Jesus Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary, nevertheless since it contradicts all these [writings and writers] with respect to [its account of] the true and salvific end (as will be evident subsequently), these praises are [best] believed to have been placed [in the Koran] in order to deceive.

24

CHAPTER TWO

What the Koran contains, according to its extollers.

Followers of Muhammad say that the Koran was written for a good purpose and that it contains [the following account:]⁸ Muhammad—being an orphan, an idolater,⁹ a pauper, [a man] completely ignorant of the law and of writing, knowing only his native Arabic language, and having many wives—obtained mercy from God and became a rich man and a man with great intelligence which was capable of discerning subtle matters and a man of great repute. God Himself, [they say,] constituted Muhammad a teacher of the uneducated and idolatrous Arabic people, created him to be His envoy to them, and set him over them as a prophet, though [as a prophet who was] without the manifest power of miracles. [God did this] in order that [Muhammad]

25 would lead from error and unto the right way this people which was entrusted to him. God revealed [Himself] to Muhammad, [they say] in order that Muhammad would accept the faith of Abraham, a very just man who departed from the worship of [many] gods and adored the one sole God, the Creator of all things. Moreover, [God revealed Himself] in order that [Muhammad] would persuade the Arabs to accept [this same faith]—[persuade them] however, without [the use of] constraining force—and in order that he would preach the following: that God alone is the sole Creator of all things; that there is no other Ruler and King of the universe; that He is the Giver of all good things, the Omnipotent Dispenser of life and death; that He is wise, incorporeal, incomprehensible, boundless (i.e., infinite), gracious, merciful, the Giver of forgiveness to all believers who adore and invoke Him; and [that He is the one] who on that day of dreadful judgment—[a day] which will be the end for all things—will resurrect the dead with the ease with which He created them, and will judge between the good and the evil, giving to believers¹⁰ in accordance with their merits a perpetual dwelling place amid a paradise of all pleasures and all objects of desire, as well as giving them the best life, but giving to unbelievers and wicked ones, in accordance with each's demerits, Hell and perpetual punishment. [Followers of Muhammad also] say that the book of the Koran¹¹ came down from God and that its mother and most true foundation is the aforementioned faith in the one God. They affirm, too, the return of all [men] unto God's terrifying judgment.

26 But as for the other things which are contained in that book, [followers of Muhammad] say that some are proofs of their faith but that some are laws for the Arabs—[laws] which, according to that book, Arab believers are obliged to observe if they want to obey God, whom they worship, and to remain steadfastly in His grace and to obtain, in accordance with their merits, a happy reward in Paradise. Hence, [followers of Muhammad] call all who hold this faith—whether men or angels or daimons—*Muslims*, i.e., ones of sound faith. Therefore, as concerns the necessity of salvation they maintain that all who want to avoid eternal fire must hold to this faith with which, as they claim, the past prophets are in agreement. And so, that book, [they claim,] does not contradict any of the prophets but rather endorses them and corroborates the books transmitted to the prophets by God (viz., the Testament of Moses, the Psalter of David, and the Gospel transmitted by Jesus Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary). And [the book] concludes that all who believe the aforesaid [tenets] and who observe the law

written down in their own books of law¹² will be saved from Hell.

27 [Followers of Muhammad] also say that God sent to all nations indigenous messengers and that [through them] He admonished these nations regarding what they had to believe and had to do in order to be numbered, on the day of judgment, among those who are good and in order to attain unto the Paradise full of joy. [God admonished them] so that on the day of judgment they would have no basis for making excuses for themselves [by contending] that they had not received a teacher or an admonisher. Moreover, [followers of Muhammad maintain] that [these nations] ought to believe those messengers of God and ought to obey the divine precepts made known by them; and in this [belief and obedience the nations] were not able to be deceived. For with respect to anyone who trusts in God (who is most veracious) by obeying His command: how could he find himself deceived on that day [of judgment]? Accordingly, [followers of Muhammad] conclude that if the variety of laws and of rites is found to be present in the identity-of-faith that is exhorted within the various nations by the messengers of God,¹³ then indeed this [kind of diversity] cannot at all prevent one who is obedient from obtaining a fitting reward at the hands of the most gracious and most just Judge. Now, [the Koran] enumerates the prophets and the messengers of God who were supposed to be believed: [viz.,] Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Christ, and numerous others.

The foregoing [account] constitutes a summary of the contents of the Koran according to extollers, of that book.

28

CHAPTER THREE

What the Koran contains, according to the judgment of the perfect.

But among both Arabs and Christians those who by the gift of God have attained unto perfection recognize that [the Koran,] under the pretext of eradicating idolatry, adds that Christ was neither the Son of God nor crucified.¹⁴ Moreover, [they are aware] that this addition seems [to constitute] the purpose of the entire book: viz., to persuade [its readers] that Christ (i.e., the Messiah) was neither the Son of God nor crucified. Now, [the belief] that Christ is the Son of God and died on the Cross is the faith which overcomes the Devil and the world and which alone is true and perfect [faith];¹⁵ and no faith besides that faith can resist the Devil and can give to the believer victory and im-

mortal life in the intellectual and incorruptible Kingdom of Heaven. And so, by means of this [persuading,] Satan attempts to completely eliminate from the world the evangelical faith, even as we see that many realms of Christians have already departed from true faith in Christ and have accepted the Arabs' law. But from both the Gospel and the Koran we know that Muhammad cannot prevail but [that] Christ will conquer in the end, as will become evident later on [in this present writing]. Even now many Christians [who are] subjects of leaders of the sect of Arabs serve Christ quite devotedly. And countless apostate Christians and Arab Christians and Christians who being of the same law as the Arabs pretend to be of the Arab sect because of fear of the sword—[all these,] in the hour of death, will openly acknowledge that they are Christians. And in the end all [others] will do likewise.¹⁶

29

CHAPTER FOUR

The Koran is devoid of faith where it contradicts the Scriptures.

A certain wise man¹⁷ says that [the following] should be noted: [viz.,] that Muhammad, who knew no language except Arabic and who did not know how to read or write (even if more than other [men] he richly possessed eloquence with regard to the art of Arabic rhythm and poetry—for which eloquence the Koran is praised more than all [other] Arabic books), had to have Jews and Christians who reported to him in Arabic the things contained in the Testament,¹⁸ the Psalter, and the Gospel. For [Muhammad] had to be knowledgeable in those sacred writings that are approved and corroborated by the Koran as clear and perfect doctrines. For [those doctrines] are the substance of the Koran and are something presupposed by it. (Some of the [men] who were associated with Muhammad are named above.¹⁹) But when there was raised against Muhammad the objection that he was thus instructed, he fell on his face, and his hands and feet became contracted, and his companions covered him with their vestments. And when he came to himself, he said: “God has sent to reprove you for the word that you uttered to the effect that such [men] taught me.” And from the Surah Eluael, which [name] is translated “Palm,” he read a sentence that states: “We know they will claim that he will be instructed by a man having the tongue of those [who] by means of this [tongue] speak in Persian. But the language [of the Koran] is unmistakably Arabic.” Regarding this [passage Muhammad] asked: “How can it be said that

those [men]—one of whom is Persian and the other of whom is Hebrew—instruct me?” And the objectors answered him: can it be the case that the Persian and the Hebrew speak to you and expound to you in their own style [of Arabic] and that you restate everything in your style?” And [to this question Muhammad] found no reply.²⁰ See, then, that Muhammad was instructed by diverse [men].

30 Now, at the time that Muhammad began (viz., in 624 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Heraclius²¹) there had long since arisen (and been condemned by the synods) many heresies vis-à-vis an understanding of the Gospel and of the Old Testament. Therefore, it is likely that there flocked to Muhammad numerous [men] who possessed the purity-of-understanding of the aforesaid writings [in such way that it was] commingled with the novelty of less true opinions. These men mingled the writings of the Testament with stories from the Talmud and mingled the clarity of the Gospel with apocryphal books. And they recounted [these writings] to Muhammad as they thought right.

31 It is also reported that the previously named Jews²² attached themselves to Muhammad in order to prevent his becoming a perfect Christian. Because of this fact and because of the poetic manner of writing, it seldom happens (according to the reports) that the narratives recorded in the Koran agree with the narratives placed in the Old Testament and in the Gospel. However, to these [charges] Muhammad attempts (so it is said) to respond that he was informed only by God. And wanting to furnish an excuse, he says in Chapter 25: “Since in the Koran there is this exchanging of one word for another (though God knows His own view), unbelievers say: ‘Indeed, you are nothing but a speaker of lies, since you vary your words so much.’ But numerous [unbelievers] are ignorant of this matter. For God Himself and His holy Spirit composed this most true book.”²³

32 But this feigned and mendacious excuse-making does not suffice to keep from finding the author of [that] book inconstant—something which is a blasphemy to say of the true and immutable God. Now, I do not claim that there is inconstancy if there is an exchanging of the words while an identity of meaning remains; rather, [I say that there is inconstancy] where the meaning of the Koran is not the same as [the meaning in] the Gospel or the Testament. For in that case the Koran is not at all excusable, and, accordingly, we must admit that God did not hand down those [teachings], since they do not agree with earlier divine books that are approved even by the Koran itself For example,

the Koran says that the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the sister of Aaron and the daughter of Amram.²⁴ Now, it is most certain that the one who reported these [details] to Muhammad erred and was ignorant of the Gospel's true narrative. For Mary the daughter of Amram and sister of Moses and Aaron was dead and buried in the desert more than a thousand years before [the time of] the Virgin Mary, the glorious mother-of-Jesus-Christ, who lived (as is read in this same Koran) at the time of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

33 And since the Koran makes these statements not once but repeatedly, this one example suffices [to show] that error is contained in [that] book and [to show] that therefore the authorship is not God's. Or again, [the Koran]—in Chapter 75, at the end—states of Mary: “Mary, in her conduct, acted out of no malice or wickedness. Hence, we breathed [our] soul into her, who was confirming our words and [our] book and who was persevering in goodness.”²⁵ Now, it is certain that Mary died almost six hundred years before the Koran [appeared]. How is it, then, that she confirmed the book of the Koran?—of which book the Arabs understand the Koran to be speaking. Likewise, [the Koran] errs in Chapter 35 regarding the story in which (when Moses comes to Pharaoh) Pharaoh says that he reared Moses in his own house, etc.²⁶ For the Pharaoh who had reared Moses died long before the return of Moses to Egypt (Chapter 4 of Exodus). For Moses spent 40 years in Midian, during which time [that pharaoh] died.

34 There are contained [in the Koran] more such discrepancies with the truth of Sacred Scripture, which was handed down by God before [the time of] Muhammad and which is to be preferred to the Koran. And the Koran does not deny this.²⁷ For it speaks in Chapter 19 as follows: “If you have any doubt about the commandments sent to you, then by reading the books of your predecessors you will recognize the truth that is sent to you—[sent] in order that you not be wavering (now denying, now affirming).”²⁸ Note that [the Koran] instructs [one] to have recourse, in cases of doubt, to earlier books. The Koran also acknowledges that truer and better books are revealed and that it itself is based upon them. For in Chapter 37 it speaks as follows: “When your contemporaries maintain that you are a diviner, then reply: ‘Bring a book that is better than this one and that supports your word, and I will gladly follow it.’”²⁹ Note that he does not mean to affirm that the Koran is to be preferred to the Gospel. Therefore, the things contained in the Koran are not to be accepted as the words of God if they

are opposed to earlier books that were handed down by God and that are acknowledged [even] by the Koran itself.

35

CHAPTER FIVE

The Gospel is to be preferred to the Koran.

And so, descending to more specific [points,] in order to arrive at what I intended to (viz., the fact that the Gospel is to be preferred to the Koran), I remark that the man³⁰ who translated the Koran into Latin in Spain mentions that at the beginning of Chapter 5 (i.e., [at the beginning] of Surah Amram), the following [passage] is found: “God—who is gracious and merciful and living and most high, beyond whom there is no other, and who handed down to men as the right ways first the Testament and then the Gospel—to you furnished last of all from on high the truthful book (viz., the Furkan³¹) as the confirmer of your law. This [book] contains certain inviolable and very fixed words, which are the mother and material of the book; but [it contains] certain other [words] ...,” etc.³²

36

Note that [the foregoing passage] states that the Old Testament and the Gospel contain right ways and that it confirms them both. It calls the Furkan truthful and says that the Furkan contains certain very fixed [words] which are the mother and the material of the book. What these [words] are was mentioned above;³³ and they are contained in the prayer at the Koran’s beginning ([a beginning] that is called the mother of the book): viz., that there is one God, the Creator, who is to be adored and who is to be feared as a terrifying Judge on the day of the Last Judgment, when the Resurrection will occur. Other [words contained in the Koran] do not have this inviolable fixedness; hence, where they disagree with the Testament or the Gospel, we ought rather to stand by these latter. With respect to this same [point] we ought to notice attentively that in the Koran, Chapter 12, we read that God said to the Jews: “We sent Christ, the son of Mary, to fulfill your law. To him we entrusted the Gospel, which is light and which is the confirmation of the Testament, as well as the admonishment and the right way for those who fear God.”³⁴ Elsewhere [the Koran] often calls the Gospel lucid and sometimes [calls it] most splendid.

37

Since the Gospel contains everything necessary for salvation and fulfills what remained to be fulfilled with respect to the law of the Old Testament, then beyond that which is contained in the Gospel nothing necessary for salvation is present in the Koran; and in the

Koran everything necessary [for salvation] accords with the Gospel. Moreover, a certain devout man knowing Arabic, who in Baghdad applied himself to the study of the Koran, states that the following [passage] is found in Chapter Elmeide: “Through Jesus, the most truthful son of Mary, we have clearly determined the footsteps of men; and we gave to Jesus the Gospel, wherein guidance and light and truth are manifested.”³⁵

- 38** From the foregoing [considerations] it is evident that the Koran refers the Arabs to the Gospel as to a light and a right way for those who fear God. For the Koran says: “Indeed, it must be known that men-of-laws do not attain unto the perfection of any law or unto the perfection of faith unless they obey the precepts of the Testament and of the Gospel and of that book handed down by God.”³⁶ Now, this [passage] cannot be understood to be about those Christians who follow the most lucid book-of-the-Gospel. For, as the Koran attests in many places, those disciples of Christ, who are dressed in white, are most perfect. Therefore, [the passage] has to be understood to be about Jews and Arabs, who are men of laws. Moreover, in Chapter 70 of the Koran it is commanded that all good [men] serve God, even as Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, taught.³⁷ If, then, good Christians strive to do as the Koran there indicates, then most assuredly they cannot be reproached by those who believe the Koran.

39

CHAPTER SIX

The Gospel is the light of truth for the Koran.

Unless the Gospel is included in the Koran, one cannot say that the Koran suffices and is the right way; moreover, it is evident that, within the Koran, only that which agrees with the Gospel ought to be called the light of truth and of the right way. Furthermore, the author of the Koran did not have any doubts about the Gospel; for he cited passages and contents of the Gospel regarding the fact that some [men] turned away from Christ when He expounded the parables³⁸ regarding the grain of wheat,³⁹ regarding the man born blind,⁴⁰ and regarding other matters. For that Gospel of which he spoke and which was cited by him is found perhaps even today in parts of Arabia and thereabouts; and it was written down in an ancient volume before the Koran was composed.

- 40** From the beginning of the Christian faith and throughout so many centuries prior to Muhammad, the Gospel was made known to the

world; and until the present day it remains unchanged. Moreover, we do not read that even Muhammad then entertained doubts about it. Therefore, we must wonder why in order to understand the Koran, the Arabs have not generally adduced the Gospel for reading and study (even as many wise [men] among them secretly embrace the Gospel with supreme devotion). For without a knowledge of the Gospel [the Arabs] cannot perfectly extract from the Koran any [teaching]. But as a certain knowledgeable [man] states, there is no other reason [for this failure to study the Gospel] than that the wise among the Arabs know that the falsity of the Koran would easily be detected if [the people] were permitted to read the books called sacred and truthful.⁴¹ Hence, if one considers the matter rightly, [he will realize that] an envoy to the nation of Arabs was not necessary for teaching any other [faith and law] than the faith and law of the Gospel. For subsequent to Christ (the highest of all the prophets, even according to the Koran) and subsequent to the book of the Gospel (the most perfect of all books), nothing better remained to be expected from God.⁴²

41 Hence, if any beauty or truth or clarity is found in the Koran, it must be a ray of the most lucid Gospel. And this [fact] is seen to be true by anyone who, after having read the Gospel, turns to the Koran. From where does contempt for this world and a preference for the future age come? [From where does] the persuasion to justice, to works of mercy, and to love of God and of neighbor [come]? Whence comes the conviction that the selling to God of all one's possessions and even of one's soul is of maximum profit? Whence comes the view that to die for God is to live eternally? Whence did both the Koran's love of virtue and its prohibition of usury, murder, perjury, fornication, adultery, and lusting for married women receive the splendor of their brightness except from the Gospel's perfection and fittingness? Why are many other things which are promised⁴³ in the Koran regarding sensual pleasure and impurity of flesh deemed by all the wise (even by wise Arabs) to be shady and abominable and vile?—[why] except because they are at variance with the Gospel's promises (as will be discussed later).

42 Therefore, in the Koran the splendor of the Gospel shines forth to the wise, i.e., to those who are led by the spirit of Christ—[shines forth] even beyond the intent of the [Koran's] author. But [the Gospel's splendor does] not [shine forth] to lewd Muhammad and to those antichrists who prefer the present age to the future one and who

judge that nothing is good unless it is conformed to this world and to their own lusts. They think that God, as author of the Koran, confirms their corrupt desires; and they do not recognize that whatever in the Koran contradicts the Gospel is not true.

43

CHAPTER SEVEN

The elegance of style does not prove that
the Koran is the word of God.

Moreover, that which [the author of the Koran] states elsewhere⁴⁴ ought not to influence anyone: [viz.,] that on account of the eloquence of its admirable style the book of the Koran could not have been written either by any men or by any daimons and that therefore the Koran is to be deemed divine. For grant that Muhammad had this gift,⁴⁵ which is thought by other Arabs to be unique, divine, and [humanly] unattainable; and grant that this [fact] proves that [that] book is the gift of God because of [the book's] beautiful style and its sweetness and charm of expression—[a sweetness and charm that is] amazing and wondrous to all. Nonetheless, one ought not on these grounds to affirm that all [the words] written in this book are words of God, who is truthful and steadfast and never opposed to Himself. Accordingly, since many things in the Koran are so different from the things contained in the Testament and in the Gospel that they cannot be true together with them, assuredly it would be necessary for ignorance and unsteadfastness and falsehood to be ascribed to God. But even in the Koran this [ascribing] is regarded as the greatest sin. Now, the fact that a sweet composition of words does not imply that the statements are true is evident from Chapter 3 of the Koran, where the following is said: “Numerous eloquent and suave [men,] whose voices do not agree with their hearts, invoke God as the witness of their hearts, despite the fact that they endeavor to bring ruin and infamy upon the people and to bring pestilence to the fruit. [Men] such as these will be consigned to the pit of Hell, being tormented on all sides with punishments.”⁴⁶

44

But suppose we admit—as the followers of the Koran claim ([a claim] whose denial all the wise and zealous believe, as was made evident above)—that the goal and intent of the book of the Koran is not only not to detract from God the Creator or from Christ or from God's prophets and envoys or from the divine books of the Testament, the Psalter, and the Gospel, but also to give glory to God the Creator,

to praise and to bear witness to Christ (the son of the Virgin Mary) above all the prophets, and to confirm and to approve of the Testament and the Gospel. [If so,] then when one reads the Koran with this understanding,⁴⁷ assuredly some fruit can be elicited [from it]. To be sure, there occur variations which offend the reader—as if that book, because of the contradictoriness which it has both with itself and with the Gospel and the Testament, could not be from God, and as if Muhammad (a man who was effeminate and lewd and a complete lover of this world and of sensible things) ought not to be believed to have been assumed by God from out of idolatry and ignorance unto being an envoy of God and having a prophetic spirit ([though] without the power of miracles), and as if his simple report ought not to be credited ([being the report of one] who is found to be unsteadfast and fluctuating and who admits that he does not know the secret things of God). And to be sure, there are many strong objections which in various respects are raised against Muhammad in the Koran and which are not resolved there.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, when all the foregoing [objections] are considered in such way that they [are viewed as] serving the previously mentioned intent, then some fruit can be elicited [from the Koran]. For example, when someone reads the [record-of-] Muhammad's-life that is written in the Koran, he understands immediately that it was inserted with God's permission in order for there to be known that Muhammad is neither to be compared to, nor preferred to, Christ or Moses or other prophets. For when the life and knowledge of other prophets are compared to Muhammad's life and knowledge, one sees immediately that no one ought to follow Muhammad rather than Christ—something which even the Koran manifestly acknowledges.

45

CHAPTER EIGHT

Followers of Christ are preferred to all [others].

The Koran admits that followers of Christ are preferred to all [others,] since [in the Koran] Christ is placed above all the most holy prophets. For in the Koran, Chapter 4 God speaks as follows: “Of all the prophets—the one of them having been elevated by me above the other, and certain of them having spoken with God—we have provided strength and power to Christ, the son of Mary, more than to the others, and we have especially conferred upon him our soul”⁴⁹ Note that [God] says, “we have provided [to Christ] more than to the others”

Therefore, if we are obliged to hearken unto, and to follow, the prophets sent to us by God, then assuredly we are obliged to follow Christ in preference to the others.

- 46** The Koran, with regard to its intent, most clearly aims at the following: viz., that we ought, preferably, to cling to Christ. For elsewhere the Koran mentions that Christ said: “Follow me, you who fear God. For God is my Lord and yours. In adoring Him you proceed along the right pathway.”⁵⁰ And it adds that the men who were dressed in white garments and who followed Christ were placed by God higher than all others. And elsewhere it is written in the same [book] (as I indicated above⁵¹) that the Gospel is the light and confirmation of the Testament and is the admonishment and right way for those who fear God, as well as being the fulfillment of the law. Note that to follow Christ and His Gospel is to follow the light and to proceed along the right way—[the way] of those who fear God. And still elsewhere [the Koran says]: “Even now the divine truth that has been given to us shows the right way to those who are proceeding. The observing of this [truth] brings well-being to the observers; but, indeed, straying away [from it brings] harm.”⁵²
- 47** Note that, assuredly, the divine truth is manifested through Christ in the Gospel. Elsewhere [the Koran] speaks as follows about the same matter: “At last, to Christ-the-son-of-Mary, who was sent and whose followers were altogether obedient to him and were possessed of steadfast and humble and faithful hearts, we gave the Gospel for no other reason than that through him they might obtain God’s love and grace. But they did not observe [the Gospel] as was fitting.⁵³ And although numerous of them are unbelievers, nevertheless we grant to those-of-them-who-believe a deserved and very great reward.”⁵⁴ Again, [the Koran says] elsewhere: “Let all good [men] serve God, as Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, taught when he inquired of the men dressed in white garments: ‘Who will assist me on God’s behalf by following me?’ They replied: ‘We [will].’ Now, certain of the sons of Israel believed. These we preferred to the others, who remained unbelievers; and we elevated them far above the unbelievers.”⁵⁵
- 48** I have now shown sufficiently from the Koran that one must follow Christ rather than Muhammad, the Gospel rather than the Koran. Particularizing now, let me ask whether everything written in the Koran tends toward the glory of God. For the Koran attests that all men are created for glorifying God. But he who posits numerous gods

seems to will to obscure God's brightness and glory. And so, as the Koran states,⁵⁶ according to the interpretation which the Arabs give to it: to posit—for God—associates and participants and sons, and [also to posit] other gods, is to detract from the glory of the Great God and to confound and divide the universe and to cast all things into schism and confusion and woe.

49

CHAPTER NINE

The Koran wrongfully calls Christians unbelievers because they maintain that Christ is the Son of God.

Since you, O author of the book of the Koran, condemn only a plurality of gods, why do you call Christians (who believe that Christ is the Son of God) unbelievers? Didn't the Koran—after it frequently denied that God took unto Himself a son—explain itself in Chapter 32 when it spoke as follows?: “God did not at all take unto Himself a son, or a participant, as another God; for in that case each [of the two], coming with his creatures, would rise up against the other.”⁵⁷ It says “...[as] another God,” whereby it declares that Christians are not unbelievers if they affirm that Christ, the Son of God, is not another God. For insofar as communion, participation, and sonship do not detract from the glory of God, the Koran ([even] according to you) does not intend to deny these things of God, to whom no perfection can be lacking. But insofar as these things bespeak another God and assign to him (or to them) the glory due to the sole Creator, then they do take away glory from God, the Creator, and apportion it to another, and God, the Creator, does not remain God, since He does not have all glory and could be greater in glory. And so, in no respect can this⁵⁸ [alternative] be affirmed. For that there are several Gods implies a contradiction, since it follows [therefrom] that none [of them] are God, since each [of them] lacks supreme glory, which befits only God.

50

According to you the Koran agrees with the foregoing view, and the Koran states that all the prophets agree therewith; nor do Christians and Jews contradict [one another] with respect thereto. Moreover, the Koran says that Muhammad was sent to the idolatrous Arabs in order to lead them to worship the one God, who is Creator. Therefore, if Muhammad was sent to the idolaters of his nation only to this end, then why do Christians—who are neither Arabs nor worshippers of more than one God—suffer persecution?⁵⁹

- 51 It is clear enough that the Koran, according even to the interpretation which the Arabs assign to it, does not deny that God has a son (or has sons), provided that [the son (or the sons)] is not another God (or are not other Gods). For Christians and Jews are not blameworthy with respect to the fact that in their prayers to God—the Creator and Originator of all things—they call Him Father. And just as this [appellative] is read both in the Old Testament and in the Gospel, [so too] the book of the Koran intends to repudiate only that which seems to it absurd: [viz.,] that men call themselves sons of God. For in Chapter 12 it speaks as follows: “You Jews and Christians: if you are sons of God and God’s beloved, as you say [you are], then why does [God] inflict punishments and woe upon you when you make errors and commit sins? Surely, you are nothing other than men created by God, the Giver of forgiveness and of very great reward—[a Giver] to whom there will be a return of all things.”⁶⁰ Herefrom it seems that the Koran objects to the presumptuousness and the manner of speaking—as if sonship meant consubstantiality. But where [consubstantiality] is not intended, then [the Koran] does not repudiate [sonship]. And because in the Old Testament and in the Gospel we never do read that Christ or anyone else is called Son of God in the sense that he is another God than the Father, who is Creator, not even any Christian rejects the proof of the Koran: viz., [the proof] that God cannot take unto Himself a son either from a wife, since He does not have [one], or by taking unto Himself a most noble creature as a son. For a creature cannot be of the same nature as the Creator—as, necessarily, a son is [of the same nature as his father]. And if God took unto Himself a son, then surely at the time that such a taking occurred, the son would be a creature. Therefore, the Koran concludes that it is impossible for God to have a son who is another God.⁶¹ And Christians do not at all call this conclusion into question.

The Koran, however, denies that Christ is the Son of God, although it exalts Him above every [other] prophet. But I ask you, who are subject to the book of the Koran: why is the Messiah denied to be the Son of God, seeing that in the Gospel, which is approved by you, one quite often reads that Christ is the Son of God? Perhaps you will answer, on the basis of the Koran,⁶² that when Christ was placed before God to account for his having called himself God, he repeatedly denied this [accusation], and so, [the Koran] does not at all admit that anything contrary to this [denial] is found in the Gospel. I wonder about *when* Christ was accused before God of having called Him-

self God and about how Muhammad—who never saw the invisible God, as he himself admits—could have been present. Was God ignorant of the truth, and did He put a falsehood on Christ? Or did He first know of the truth after Christ exculpated Himself? According to the Koran isn't Christ alive in mortal flesh at a certain pleasant place that is well-furnished with water?⁶³ And doesn't He say that in the end He will come again into this world and will die and arise and at the future judgment will answer for His works?⁶⁴ How are the following consistent?: [viz.,] that there have *already* occurred those things which, according to the Koran, are expected to occur at the future judgment. And doesn't the Koran say that no living man can approach unto God and speak with Him?⁶⁵

- 53 Note that to the foregoing statement⁶⁶ of the Koran credence is not to be lent. In order that this [judgment] may be seen to be true—[seen] from the text of the Koran itself—note that the following is stated in the text, Chapter 13, with God as speaker: “ ‘0 Jesus, son of Mary, you teach men to esteem and to worship—as two gods and in place of God—you yourself and your mother.’ Jesus answered: ‘God forbid that I say anything except the truth; and if I have made any statement, You know [it], because You who know the secrets of all hearts penetrate the hiddenness of my heart, but I do not at all [penetrate the hiddenness] of Yours. Therefore, You know that I have told men nothing except the things You commanded: viz., that they invoke and adore You, who are my God and theirs. As long as it pleased You, I was present as a witness of their [deeds]. But now, after You have elevated me from out of their midst unto Yourself, You who are the witness of all things are their judge. If You afflict them, they are Your people; if You pardon them, You are incomprehensible and wise.’ God replies: ‘Now the day is at hand on which the Avenging Truth will finish His work. For since they have followed me, I will grant them, as a kindness, that in preference to others they will have a very great reward, as well as a most delightful paradise—with flowing water—where they may remain.’⁶⁷ For I, God Almighty, determine for the heavens and the earth and all things what their capability includes.’ ”⁶⁸ Note [this] text, which makes no objection to the divine sonship of Christ. Moreover, the Gospel does not state, and Christians do not believe, that Christ ever taught the worshipping of Himself and His mother in place of God. For Jesus came only to give glory to God His Father: He did not in any way seek His own [glory].⁶⁹

54

CHAPTER TEN

It is shown clearly that Christ is the Son of God.

An Arab might say: “If Christ were God, then surely when the Jews answered ‘... because although you are a man you make yourself God,’⁷⁰ he would not have exculpated himself by indicating that in the Law⁷¹ those to whom the word of God was spoken are called gods; instead he would have replied clearly.” I maintain that He did answer clearly, for He said: “If [scripture] called gods those to whom the word of God is spoken and if Scripture cannot be broken, then do you [presume to] say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world ‘You blaspheme’ simply because I said ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of my father, then do not believe me. However, if I do [them] but you do not want to believe me, then believe my works, so that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father.”⁷²

55

Note how clearly He spoke: viz., [He stated] that it was not blasphemy if He called Himself the Son of God; and so, He tacitly confessed that He is God. For if those who are able to receive the words of God are called gods, then there is no doubt that He whom the Father qua Father sanctified from eternity and sent in due time into the world does not blaspheme if He calls Himself the Son of God. For the Father qua Father begets and sanctifies and sends only the Son. But⁷³ He who was sanctified by the Father before the world and who then was sent into the world is assuredly co-eternal with the Father. Now, His works show that this⁷⁴ can be known to a sufficiently creditable extent—[works] which no man before Him [ever] did, so that they cannot be ascribed to human nature or to a creature but [only] to the Creator. Therefore, unless the Father *qua* Creator were present in Christ, how could Christ have done His Father’s works? Therefore, the Father’s essence, which works all things, was in Christ. And if God the Father is essentially present in Christ, Christ will be the Father’s Son, since [Christ will be] of the same essence [as the Father]. Therefore, because He is the Son, Christ will be in the Father, since a son cannot exist apart from the essence of his father. Likewise, if I see a sender’s authority to be the sender, and if in the one sent I see an equal authority to be the one who is sent, then surely because of [this] equality the sender is in the one sent, and the one sent is in the sender. About this [topic I shall speak] more extensively later.⁷⁵

56

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Why Christ did not call Himself
God but rather the Son of God.

Furthermore, consider attentively that the Christian faith affirms that the Omnipotent Father is God the Creator and that Christ calls this Creator-God His Father. For in the Gospel [Christ] says to the Jews: “My Father—whom you state to be your God—is the one who glorifies me”⁷⁶ The [Koran] correctly understands that Christ did not call Himself God, because He would have been calling Himself His own father. However, since Christ always referred to as *Father* Him whom the Jews referred to as *God*, He showed sufficiently that He is the Son of God. Hence, He called Himself the Son of God and not God, since the designation “God” is the designation of the Father of Christ. Therefore, Christ is not God the Father but is the Son of God the Father. And He is the true Son of God the Father and is, therefore, also consubstantial with the Father, although He is not another God than the Father.

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Hence, Christ is not God the Father, who creates all things. Rather, He is the most true Son of God the Father and is of the same nature as the Father, and is the one through whom God the Father creates all things.⁷⁷ Therefore, Christ is God only because He is the only begotten Son of God and is, accordingly, of the same essence and nature as God the Father. For it belongs to the nature of the son of a father that [the son] be of the same essence and nature as the father. For example, the son of a man is of the same essence and nature as is his father, viz., of the same human nature. But it is not the case that the human essence is the same thing as the man—as the divine essence, because of the maximal simplicity of the divinity, *is* the same thing as God. And so, although the son of a man is of the same human nature as his father, nevertheless he is not the same man but another man. However, the Son of God is the same God as the Father and not another God. These points are revealed most clearly by the sacred Gospel, of which the Koran approves in general and does not contradict in particular—as will be shown from the considerations that follow.

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CHAPTER TWELVE
Commendations of Christ on the part of the Koran, and
[the Koran’s] manifestation of Christ’s divinity.

For in the following words it is written in the Koran that Jesus Christ

is the son of the Virgin Mary:

“O Mary, more splendid, more pure, and more delightful than all [other] women and men, to you the Creator of the universe sends the joy of a supreme annunciation with respect to the Word of God, whose name is Jesus Christ and who in this world and the next is the Countenance of all nations and a wise and most excellent man.” She answered: “O God, since I have not had contact with a man, how shall I have a son?” The angels reply: “Nothing is impossible for God, who works all things according as He wills to. He will teach your son (who will come with divine power) the Law Book, the Testament, and the Gospel, as well as the mastery of every skill. Your son will heal the blind and the mute, will cleanse the lepers and those afflicted with morpew, and with the Creator’s assistance he will enliven the dead—all of which [works] are deemed to be miracles by those who believe in God. He will confirm the Old Testament. And disclosing that he has come with divine power, he will say: ‘Follow me, you who fear God. For God is my Lord and yours; those who adore Him will proceed along the right pathway.’ ”⁷⁸

59 Again, [the Koran] elsewhere [speaks] as follows: “Jesus, the son of Mary, is God’s messenger and His spirit and the Word sent to Mary from Heaven.”⁷⁹ Note that Jesus is the Messiah (or the Christ) and the Word sent to Mary from Heaven. Hence, since He is the Word of God sent from Heaven (i.e., sent from the God of Heaven), then assuredly He is of the same nature as God, who sends [Him]. For since the Divine Word is the Word of God, we cannot say that it is something other than the most simple God. For God and His Word are not two gods but are [one and] the same most simple God. So then, it is evident that God, who sends, and His Word, who is sent, are of the same divine nature. But since God, who sends, does not send Himself and does not send another God, He who sends will not be He who is sent, nor will He who sends be one God and He who is sent another God.

60 CHAPTER THIRTEEN

An easy demonstration that Christ, who is the Word of God the Father, is the Son of God the Father.

Furthermore, it is likewise certain from the Koran that all things were created by means of God’s Word.⁸⁰ Therefore, the Word of God is uncreated, since all things were created through it. Therefore, the Word is eternal and uncreated. Hence, that Word is not a perceptual word; rather, it is more than intellectual. Now, an intellectual word—through which word the intellect works all things—is an intellectual concep-

tion. For unless the intellect looks to its own conception, which it begets intellectually, it does not make anything intellectually. (By way of illustration, the builder of a house looks to a word, or a conception, through which he builds.) Now, [here] one says “word”; for just as an outward, perceptual word is begotten from an inward, intellectual word, so a conception is begotten from the intellect and is called the word of the intellect. Therefore, the intellectual nature forms all things through its word, and through its word it re-forms [all things]. For example, through an [intellectual] word⁸¹ a builder forms a house, and if [the house] collapses, he re-forms it through the same word. Similarly, God forms and reforms through His Word.

61 This Word [of God] is also called Wisdom, for God makes all things through Wisdom. Even the Koran states: “Coming with divine powers, Christ says: ‘Behold, I am present with wisdom and will settle your disputes. Fear God, and follow me.’”⁸² Thus, that which the Koran first called *word*, it now calls *divine power* and *wisdom*. Likewise, the Word is called [by the Koran] *Ratio*, for all things are made with respect to a rational ground; for there is not anything whose prescribing rational ground did not precede [it]. Similarly, the Word, through which God makes all things, is called [by the Koran] *Expression*, *Art*, or *Magisterium*. But the Gospel calls that without which nothing was made⁸³ *the Word*; and it calls this Word the only begotten of God, through whom [God] made even the ages.⁸⁴

62 But why does the Koran call Him through whom all things were made *Word* rather than *Son*? Perhaps [it is] for the following reason:

Since it wanted to eradicate from uneducated idolaters all manner of [belief in a] plurality of gods, it did not want to give occasion-for-error to those who could not grasp intellectual sonship in any other way than as [sonship] is observed in the sensible world. Now, “word” more closely corresponds to intellectual fecundity than does “son.” [Indeed,] “God has a son” is not even a fitting expression. For God is the Omnipotent Father, the Creator of all things. [Moreover,] He *is* all that which He *has*, since He cannot lack anything. Therefore, the reason “God has a son” is not a fitting expression is that it seems to be the same as saying that God the Father is a son, since in God having is being.

It is not the case, however, that on the basis of the foregoing reasoning [the Koran] intended to contradict either the Gospel or the testimony of John, the son of Zacharias. [Indeed,] it approves of John and calls him a confirmer of the Word—[John] who in the Gospel confirms that Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Hence, because the one

whom Christians call *Christ* and *Word of God*, or *Son of God*, and *son of Mary* the Koran calls *Christ*, *Word of God*, and *son of Mary*, [the Koran] seems at variance with Christians only in this respect.⁸⁵

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

An objection on the part of the Koran,
and the solution thereto.

Someone might say: "Don't we read the following in the Koran?: 'Isn't it by lying that the majority have said that God has a son?'"⁸⁶ How is it that these [words] do not contradict the Gospel?" I maintain that the Koran explains itself, for it adds: "Did God love daughters more [than sons]? What is your judgment [about it,] O unmindful ones? Do you have a firm basis for your claim? Indeed, if you are truthful, adduce your [authoritative] book."⁸⁷ Note that God's not having a son in the human manner does not contradict the Gospel, since God is a spirit, which does not have flesh and bones. But I can adduce the book of the Gospels [to attest] that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and I will be found to be truthful.

Furthermore, you might say: "Doesn't the next to the last surah have the following [words]?: 'Say to them repeatedly that God is one and is necessary for all things and is incorporeal. He neither begat nor was begotten; nor is there anyone like unto Him.'" ⁸⁸ I reply that this surah ought to be understood in such way that through it [the Koran] intends to give glory to God and not to take away praise from Christ. Hence, since the incorporeal God and His deity are the same, then if God (of whom the surah speaks) is understood to be the deity, [the surah] does not contradict the Gospel. For since the deity is the divine essence, it neither begets nor is begotten nor does it have another deity equal to itself. Rather, the Father begets a son who is of the same essence.

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Hence, you must consider that although God and His deity are the same thing (God being altogether incorporeal and incomposite, since He is most simple), nevertheless if you consider the deity, you do not see the begottenness, but if you consider God, you do see it. For in the Testament, the Psalter, and the Gospel we read clearly that God is called Father; but we do not read that the deity is called Father. Therefore, if it befits God to be called Father and if in this respect no lie is imposed upon Him, then since it is true that God Himself is Father, it is not incompatible with God that He be called Son, for a father is

not understood to be a father apart from a son. Moreover, the foregoing surah was written down to preclude [the doctrine] of many gods; for the entire book is deemed by its followers chiefly to tend toward this end, and with respect to this end [the book] is judged by them to be irreproachable. Nevertheless, even according to the evangelical truth the surah—viz., that God neither begat nor was begotten—can be accepted. For since in God the begottenness is within eternity, it is not the case that the begottenness ever became past and that, resultantly, God is called begotten or generated. Rather, God the eternal Father begets God the eternal Son as God-by-means-of-the-same-deity and as eternal-by-means-of-the-same-eternity.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Because Jesus is the Messiah, He is the true Son of God.

Furthermore, I say: in that the Koran calls Jesus-the-son-of-Mary *Messiah*, or *Christ*, it itself acknowledges all that the prophets acknowledge of Christ. Now, the prophet Micah says: “And you, Bethlehem Ephrata, are very small among the thousands of Judah. [Nonetheless,] from out of you will come forth unto me he who will be ruler over Israel; and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.”⁸⁹ Here the prophet speaks of the begottenness of the Messiah. And he posits a twofold begottenness: a temporal one in Bethlehem and an eternal one. From the beginning of the world it was prophesied that God would send into the world a Messiah as Saviour. It is certain that the Messiah precedes the foundation of the world—as Christ, speaking about Himself, attests in the Gospel, when He says to the Father: “Glorify me, Father, with the glory which I had before the foundation of the world.”⁹⁰ Note that He says, “Glorify me, Father.” Hence, if God was going to send as Messiah Him who was glorified before the foundation of the world, then assuredly this Messiah, who was awaited as the supreme and greatest Saviour of all, was the Son of God—[i.e.] was someone other than the Father, who was going to send Him. Therefore, before all creation He was God—i.e., was of the same nature as the Father. For if He existed when only the divine nature existed, assuredly He was of that nature and, accordingly, was God. Hence, the prophet Isaiah said: “God Himself will come and will save us. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.”⁹¹ And there follows there [the passage] about the right pathway,⁹² which will be called holy—[a pas-

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sage] referring in this way to the Gospel, as does the Koran also. Likewise, the prophet Baruch [fore]saw that the Messiah would be God and that the Wisdom of God would come and would dwell among men.⁹³ Similarly [with] the other [prophets]. And it is not difficult for this⁹⁴ to be seen to be true. For before the Messiah's birth from the Virgin Mary the prophets saw, and the Jews believed, that He would come into this world (even as today [the Jews] continue to believe that He will come). But it cannot be said that when [the prophets fore]saw the Messiah and foretold that He would come, they saw a creature. Rather, they mentally perceived the divine power and might, which they expected to come unto man and to be manifested in the world. And just as they believed and prophesied, so it happened. And there is not *one* Messiah who was born from Mary and *another* Messiah whom the seers, or prophets, [fore]saw. Rather, the very same [Messiah] whom they mentally viewed in eternity appeared in time.

67 At present it is not necessary to say many things about the Messiah, since Jesus is the Christ of whom all the Scriptures have spoken. Indeed, they attest that He is [the Messiah], even as the Gospel states [this very thing] of Christ. Now, the Koran does not intend to affirm less of Christ than do the Gospel and the Prophets. Hence, when it states that Christ came as the supreme messenger of God with the power of God and states that Christ would make known that He had come with that power, or might,⁹⁵ it affirms of Christ the greatest things. How is He an envoy who is capable of having the power of God, who sends Him, unless He is so supreme that there cannot be a greater [envoy]? How⁹⁶ is He a pure creature [unless He is a creature] than which a purer and nobler cannot be created by God? How would the fullness of divine power be able to be communicated to a creature that was not unqualifiedly maximal, [and] thus [was not such that] a greater [creature] could not be made by God?

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Because Christ is the Word of God and is the Supreme Envoy of God, He is the Son of God.

Therefore, the Word that received a human nature in the Virgin Mary was none but the Omnipotent Word of Omnipotent God the Father, unto whom no creature is able to attain. Accordingly, the Koran speaks correctly in ascribing to this Word wisdom and every magisterium.⁹⁷ Moreover, [the Koran] speaks rightly in affirming [the following: viz.,]

that Christ made known to the world that He had come with divine power, in order that, as the Envoy of God, who placed all things in His power, He would be able to do whatever men can ask of God.⁹⁸ For the miracles that Christ worked made known that in Him was the same power which is in God the Father, who sent Him. And in order that the Koran might better exhibit this revealed [power] to the uneducated, it cites briefly His curing of diseases that are incurable by men and His resuscitating of the dead.⁹⁹ And it even adds—as if to say that He lacked nothing that we ascribe to God—that by breathing into birds made of clay, He gave them life.

- 69 Likewise, in his *Doctrines*¹⁰⁰ Muhammad maintains that Christ, in the name of His Father, raised up from out of the earth Japheth, the son of Noah, so that Japheth might report on his father Noah's deeds in the Ark. Through these words [of the Koran] it is also evident that Christ is the Son of God, whom He said to be His Father. Moreover, the Koran seems to draw a conclusion about the end to which this revelation [of God's power] was made: viz., so that [one] might have faith. For since no messenger who is a mere man is such that he must be believed (given that for any rational creature, howsoever truthful, God can create one who is more truthful), doubt [always] remains as to whether anyone ought to give these [messengers] such
- 70 credence as to follow them. But no one doubts that God is truthful and that His Son, since He is of the same nature, is not any the less truthful than is God, the Creator. Therefore, Jesus made known that He was the Christ and [God's] Envoy, having the whole power and might of God as regards the salvation of men, unto whom He was sent. For for this reason Jesus added, as the Koran says, "Follow me, you who fear God. For God is my Lord and yours."¹⁰¹ For after the King's only begotten Son—the heir to all things—was sent to the kingdom and after He made known that He is the Son and the Envoy of His Father, all [men] know that He is the Supreme Envoy, than whom the Father was able to send no greater [envoy]. And [they know] that since He is the only begotten and most beloved Son of the King-His-Father, He came with all power and might and He ought to be believed and obeyed completely. Assuredly, this Son could fittingly say: "You who fear the King, my Father, follow me by obeying me. For the King is my Lord and yours."
- 71 Hence, those who claim that in the Koran Muhammad often repeated these words (viz., that Christ called God his own Lord and the

others' Lord) in order to show that Christ did not affirm that he was God (since he calls God his Lord) interpret the Koran wrongly. For to agree that Jesus is the Christ and that the Gospel is true and to deny that Christ is the Son of God involves a contradiction. Now, it is perfectly befitting for Christ, the Son of God, to call His Father His Lord. For, as the Gospel attests, He confessed that He had come as Son and Envoy in order to increase the honor and glory of God and not at all [in order] to seek His own [honor and glory].

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Which passages of the Koran contain [the view]
that Christ is the Son of God.

Someone might ask: "What does the Koran mean when it acknowledges that the Divine Spirit was an aid and a witness to Christ, the son of Mary?"¹⁰² John, [the son] of Zacharias attests that the Divine Spirit bore witness to Christ, as is written in the Gospel. For [John] says: "I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven as a dove and remaining upon Jesus. And I did not know Him. But He who sent me to baptize with water said unto me: 'Upon whom you will see the Spirit descending and remaining, He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bore witness that this is the Son of God.'"¹⁰³

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Therefore, the Divine Spirit, descending in the form of a dove upon Christ in the Jordan [River], bore witness—[a witness] which John also bore—that Christ is the Son of God. Moreover, the Divine Spirit bore witness in all the apostles and all other saints—even unto their deaths—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Now, those who have studied attentively the Gospel and the writings of the saints know what kind of aid [the Divine Spirit] gave to Christ, whom the Holy Spirit conceived in the Virgin Mary, and [what kind of aid He gave] in all who received the Holy Spirit as a pledge of the promises of Christ. And [students of the Gospel] know how it is that the Divine Spirit assisted believers in understanding the truth of the things whereof Christ spoke, since [the Divine Spirit] is the Spirit of truth.¹⁰⁴ In my judgment the following must be noted: viz., that the Koran praises John, [the son] of Zacharias, as him who must be completely believed. It speaks of him both as a good man who remained a virgin and as a great prophet confirming the Word of God; and in similar ways it bears witness to the Holy Spirit. For God, who is merciful, wanted all these things inserted [into the Koran] so that in this way

[the Koran] would refer the wise to the testimonies of truth, lest otherwise] it detract from Christ were it not to make known openly to an uneducated people the following: [viz.,] that on the basis of the foregoing considerations Christ is the Son of God.

- 74 For, to be sure, [the Koran] stated that God is invisible, incorporeal, and He whom no one has ever seen face to face. [It did so] in order that each [man] would be able to understand correctly that Christ, who was visible to the sensible eyes, was not God in accordance with that visible and corporeal condition. Nevertheless, because [the Koran] feared that unbelievers would not be able to attain unto the spiritual divine nature of the Word of God, it quite prudently considered that to these unschooled and unlearned [men], (to whom it was necessary to speak as to those who by means of such sensible things detect nothing concerning intelligible things) there ought to be said, negatively, that Christ, the son of Mary, was not the Son of God; for the son of Mary was a corporeal and visible man, and corporeality and visibility are not compatible with the divine nature. Nevertheless, [the Koran] openly affirmed that Christ had divine power-and-might, which could be seen by faith alone and which was attested to by those miraculous works that no [other] man before Him [ever] did.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

How the Koran is to be understood [when it says]
that Christ is the spirit and soul of God.

You might ask: “Why does the Koran state that Christ is the spirit of God and state elsewhere that God really bestowed His own soul on Christ?”¹⁰⁵ I reply that the Koran oftentimes takes soul and spirit as the same thing. (By “soul” and “spirit” I understand the intellectual life that is wisdom.) For on Christ God bestowed His own gracious and merciful soul—i.e., His life—not figuratively but really. Thus, Christ Himself says in the Gospel: “As the Father has life in Himself, so He granted to the Son to have life in Himself”¹⁰⁶ Note that unto Christ God the Father really gave His own soul, or life—as a natural father really gives his own natural life to his son, so that [the son] has life in himself, even as his father, from whom he receives life, has life [in himself]. Therefore, the living nature of God the Father and of His Son, Christ, is one nature—something which the Koran expressed through [speaking of] one soul common to both of them. And because there is omnipotent life in the Father, so that [the Father] en-

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liveness whom He wills to, so too [the Father] gave [omnipotent life] to the Son, so that [the Son] too enliveness whom He wills to. And on account of its vital motion that [omnipotent] life is called God's spirit. For every motion-deriving-from-a-hidden-cause (including the wind) is called a spirit. For unless there were present in life a vital and most delightful motion, life would not be lively. Therefore, Just as drowsiness is a symbol of death, so wakefulness, because of its mental motions, is a symbol of life. Therefore, the Koran rightly aimed to say the thing which Christ says of Himself in the Gospel: viz., "I am the life and the resurrection" from the dead.¹⁰⁷ And elsewhere: "The words that I have spoken are spirit and life."¹⁰⁸ For the spirit of Christ is a good spirit that moves toward the good, immortal Life, which is God. But the spirit of the Devil is an evil spirit that moves toward everlasting death.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

How the Koran is to be understood [when it says]
that Christ is a good man and the best man
and is the Countenance of all nations.¹⁰⁹

Someone might ask: "What is signified by the Koran's saying that Christ is a good man and the best man and the Countenance of all nations in both this and the future age?"¹¹⁰ I reply that the Koran exalts the Virgin Mary above all [other] men and women—and rightly so, because she is the mother of Christ, the Son of God. But it is certain that Christ is exalted above Mary, His mother. Therefore, He will be a good man and the best man, since He [is so good that He] is not able to be better. It is not the case that any man, howsoever good he is (as long as he is not so good that he cannot be better), is unqualifiedly the best man either potentially or actually. And since God alone is unqualifiedly good (and thus is the best and is goodness itself), it will be certain that no one can mediate between God and the man who is so good (by means of participating in goodness) that He is also the best. Rather, *that* man will be so good that He will also be goodness itself. Hence, because Christ is a man,¹¹¹ He is good by means of created goodness, which is not goodness itself; and (in conjunction herewith) because Christ is so good that He is the best [man], who cannot be better, He is good by means of uncreated goodness, which *is* goodness itself. It is evident that [this] same Christ, insofar as He is the son of Mary His mother and has a human nature, is good by means

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of created goodness and, insofar as He is the Son of God His Father and has the divine nature, is best—i.e., is good by means of uncreated goodness, which is best, because it cannot be better and cannot be otherwise [than it is], since it is actually all that which it can be.¹¹²

79 But in saying that Jesus is the Countenance of all nations both in this age and in the future one, [the Koran] especially praises Christ. For hereby it expresses the fact that He is the one of whom the prophet David said: “[You are] beautiful-in-appearance above the sons of men. Grace is diffused upon Your lips. Therefore, God has blessed You forever.”¹¹³ Where is the reflection of life’s beauty except in the face? What is more beautiful than the face of all virtues? What else is Christ, according to the prophet David, except. the Lord of virtues and the King of all glory, brightness, and beauty? Therefore, He is the Son of God, in whom the Father takes supreme delight,¹¹⁴ and He is the Christ, anointed above His associates.¹¹⁵

80 Accordingly, in his *Doctrines* Muhammad says that on the Day of Judgment those who are perfect will arise in the stature of Adam and in the form of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁶ For this form, which is the Countenance of all nations,¹¹⁷ is the perfection of those who are perfect. Therefore, Christ is the one by whom the perfect will be judged; and His form is the form which alone besuits immortal life. Hence, those who will be like unto Him will enter into the joy of the Lord. Wherefore, the Koran elsewhere often repeats that on the Day of Judgment the faces of some—viz., of the perfect and the blessed—will gleam and be made brilliant but that the faces of others—viz., of the unbelieving and the evil—will be darkened. And in a word: Christ is all that which in all nations is truly and justly praised with respect to both the present age and the future one. Hence, He is the lovely Countenance of all [nations]—in whom all nations find rest and are blessed.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

A digression for guidance with respect to God.

The Koran calls Christ *ruhella*, whose meaning some say to be *breath of God*, others [say to be] *spirit of God*, others *word of God*, and others *soul of God*. Now, these meanings do not alter the truth; for howsoever [“ruhella”] is translated—whether as “breath of God” or “spirit of God” or “soul of God” or “word of God”—necessarily it is the case that [Christ] is God, as is sufficiently evident in the foregoing [considerations]. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the translation

“word of God”—i.e., “intelligible word of God,” which word we call a concept—ought to be accepted as right, because it agrees with the most sacred Gospel.

82 Now, in order that the more simple [individuals] may be guided by a perceptual example through which, from afar, they may see to some extent the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: one must consider—for understanding the preceding and the succeeding [points]—how it is that a master who makes glass objects proceeds with his work. For glassblowing is a work of the intellect; and those devoid of intellect will not grasp this art. Now, [the glassblower] employs an iron blowpipe, and he causes the appropriate material to adhere thereto, and he blows into the blowpipe and makes a glass vessel in accordance with his aim. With regard to the breathing out, we must consider the fact that it works on the material and gives it form. For this work [of forming] bears a likeness to the working of nature; for art works from without, but nature [works] from within, as everyone knows and observes. Therefore, with regard to this breathing out, I will consider two things. One thing is external to the breathing out and is perceptible: viz., the wind, or air, that is breathed out by the craftsman. But with regard to [the second thing, viz.,] what is internal to the breathing out, I will consider the intellect, because the craftsman works toward the end of making a glass vessel; for he understands that which he is making. His intellect would not understand either itself or that which it is making unless it begat from itself the concept of the vessel that it is making. And we call this concept an intelligible word.¹¹⁸

83 For the intellect articulates its intention and concept, which it sees within itself and [subsequently] renders visible to the senses. This [intelligible] word is begotten from the intellect, which unfolds itself therein—just as the [subsequent] audible word is begotten from the concept, which unfolds itself [therein]. And just as without a breathing out [*flatus*] no audible word is unfolded, [so] the audible word can be called the breath [*flatus*] of a human concept, and, likewise, the concept can be called the breath of the intellect. Therefore, from the intellect and its [intelligible] word there proceeds an intelligible motion that completes the activity. Assuredly, everyone can discern with his intellect that these matters occur in this way. Therefore, in the exhalation of the glassblower I see an intelligible nature (viz., the intellect), its word, and the spirit (or motion) of both. Were these [three] not present, the exhalation would never give form to the vessel. Nev-

ertheless, it is not the case that because the intellect, its word, and the spirit-of-both are seen in the exhalation they become absent from the glassblower. Likewise, all the intelligible operations are performed (not, to be sure, by the corporeal exhalation, but rather by the intellect, its word, and the motion, or spirit, of both) on things perceptible by means of things perceptible: [i.e.,] on a perceptible material and by means of a perceptible medium and a perceptible device, or instrument.

But from the Creator all things proceed into existence by means of the Divine Word and its Motion, or Spirit. For just as the Creator is free from all contraction,¹¹⁹ so without an external medium He creates—absolutely and as He wills to—intelligible natures and all [other] things.

- 84** But we must consider how it is that in III Kings 19 God taught Elijah that He would not be present in the strong spirit, or wind, that overthrows mountains, and not in the earthquake following it, and not in the fire following the earthquake, but rather in the whispering of the gentle breeze following the fire.¹²⁰ Therefore, the Lord's being present in the subtle whispering of the gentle breeze shows that He is a Spirit more subtle than any [other] most rarefied spirit whatsoever. But God the Spirit is present in the gentle whispering in no other way than invisibly, without occupying space—just as the intellect is present in the audible word. Moreover, the Spirit that is God is not someone else's spirit and is not an accident insofar as an accident happens to a substance, but rather is the Substantial Spirit, or Substantial Motion, that creates every substance and all [other] things. In this Spirit there is present the Knowledge, or Art, of all things, and [in this Spirit] the Father is the Understanding of the Knowledge and Art—as will be discussed later in its own section.¹²¹ Therefore, it is evident that the substance [of a thing] is spirit and is a closer likeness unto God, who is spirit, [than is a perceptible accident]. Indeed, a certain philosopher noticing that a kernel of grain (after the drying up of its spirit, [a process] in which its nature lost its fecundity) was unable to be fruitful when sowed, stated that the substance [of any thing] is spirit.¹²²
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Let the foregoing statements have been made in the foregoing manner in order that the less well educated who are subject to the Koran may elevate their minds unto spiritual matters by considering [the following]: (1) that God the Spirit is imitated by every substance, and (2) that substantial things, which can be viewed by the intellect alone, are surely to be preferred by far to, perceptible accidents (for

an accident has no being except adventitious being), and (3) that in the study of God we ought not at all to proceed (a) by comparing begottenness in the case of God and of intelligible things with perceptible begottenness or (b) by comparing the joys of the divine life, to which we aspire, with the joys of mundane life—since intelligible things exceed perceptible¹²³ things incomparably. Thus, [by elevating their minds] through these considerations, [the less well educated among the Arabs] may pass from the Koran to the whole Gospel-of-Christ, which is intelligible and divine.

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 Possest* [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-Grünewald 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; Idiota* (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*: SALUTATION AND PROLOGUES

1. Leo I, who was pope from 440 to 461, was active in the movement to condemn Nestorianism. Pius II was pope from 1458 to 1464. *Cribratio Alkorani* seems to have been written sometime during 1460 and 1461.

2. The expression “book-of-law of the Arabs” refers to the Koran. In 1141 Peter, abbot of Cluny (Peter the Venerable), commissioned a Latin translation of the Koran. It was made in Spain by the Englishman Robertus Ketenensis (i.e., Robert of Ketton, archdeacon of Pamplona), whose work was completed during the summer of 1143. A copy of this translation is found in Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 31^r - 107^r. In citing the Koran, Nicholas is, for the most part, making use of this translation and this codex. The first printed copy of this Latin translation is found in Vol. I of Theodor Bibliander’s three-volume edition entitled *Machumetis Sarracenorum Principis Vita ac Doctrina*, published in Basel in 1543. (A second, revised and expanded edition, was published in Zurich in 1550.) The 1543 edition is hereafter abbreviated simply as *TB*.

In undertaking his translation, Robert of Ketton was not assisted by Herman of Dalmatia, though he may have had the help of a native arab speaker. See James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 33—especially n. 107.

Ketton’s divisions of the Koran differ from what have become the standard ones. In all references to the Koran I have cited Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall’s English translation, entitled *The Glorious Koran* (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1980 printing).

3. The debate that Nicholas refers to (viz., *Disputatio Christiani*) is contained, in part (together with the other works that he mentions), in Codex Cusanus 108. A printed edition of these same texts is contained in Vol. I of *TB*. The *Disputatio Christiani* consists of two parts, by two fictional authors: (1) a letter from Al-Hashimi, a follower of Muhammad, and (2) a reply by Al-Kindi, who defends Christianity. Only the latter, often referred to as “*Rescriptum Christiani*,” is found in Codex Cusanus 108 and in Bibliander’s printed edition.

In *Cribratio Alkorani* II, 14 (128:10) Nicholas refers to the *Doctrinae Mahumeti* as “*Doctrinae ad Abdallah*.” In referring to this work, Nicholas ordinarily uses the plural (“*Doctrinae*”), though in *CA* III, 12 (198:9) he uses the singular (“*Doctrina*”).

4. Among other things John of Segovia is known as canon of Segovia, professor of theology at the University of Salamanca, delegate to the Council of Basel, and author of *De Mittendo Gladio Divini Spiritus in Corda Sarracenorum*.

His Latin translation of the Koran (a translation made from Spanish) is lost (except for the prologue).

See Rudolf Haubst’s comments at the end of Anton Schall’s “Die Sichtung des Christlichen im Koran,” *MFCG* 9 (1971), pp. 85-86. Also see Haubst’s “Johannes von Segovia im Gespräch mit Nikolaus von Kues und Jean Germain über die göttliche Dreieinigkeit und ihre Verkündigung vor den Mohammedanern,” *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*, 2 (1951), 115-129.

5. The Order of the Friars Minor, or Minorites, was founded by St. Francis of

Assisi.

6. Pera was a suburb of Constantinople.
7. The works of St. John of Damascus (ca. 675 - ca. 750) are found in *Patrologia Graeca*, Vols. 94 and 95. See especially *De Haeresibus*, Vol. 94, columns 764 A to 773 A.
8. Dionysius the Carthusian (ca. 1402 - 1471) wrote *Contra Perfidiam Mahumeti*. A copy thereof is found in Codex Cusanus 107, fol. 1^r - 193^v. A modern edition is contained in Vol. 36 of *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani Opera Omnia* (Tournai, 1908).
9. Toward the beginning of the 14th century Ricoldo of Montecroce (1243?-1320), a Dominican monk born in Florence, where he became prior of the monastery of Santa Maria Novella, wrote *Contra Legem Sarracenorum*, found on ff. 194^r- 232^r of Codex Cusanus 107. A printed edition of this text is found in Vol. II of *TB*, pp. 83-165.
10. The Order of Preachers is the Order of the Dominicans.
11. In 1439 John of Torquemada (Juan de Torquemada, 1388-1468), a Spanish Dominican, became Cardinal of St. Sixtus in Rome. He is the author of *Contra Principales Errores Perfidi Machometi* (1459), as well as of *Defensorium Fidei contra Iudeos, Hereticos, et Sarracenos*.
12. *DI I*, Prologue (1:19-24).
13. *DI I*, 6 (15:10-11).
14. *DI II*, 5 (119:15-19). *Cribratio Alkorani II*, 2 (92).
15. *DI I*, 26 (87:1-6; 88:16-20).
16. *DVD 24* (107:14-15).
17. "... toward this end ...": i.e., toward the end of attaining unto rest.
18. Viz., the descriptions provided by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.
19. John 7:18; 8:50.
20. *CA*, Prologue (2:2-7).
21. Nicholas takes this account from the *Disputatio Christiani*-in particular, from the portion called *Rescriptum Christiani*. (See the reference in n. 3 above.) The information on Sergius is found on f. 116^{rb} of Codex Cusanus 108. Cf. Peter the Venerable's *Summa Totius Haeresis Sarracenorum*, Codex Cusanus 108, f. 13^{va}.
22. See the opening sentence of *CA I*, 1.
23. This passage is not found in Exodus. Note Deuteronomy 4:35.
24. Cf. *DI I*, 24 (82:6-8).
25. John 1: 14.
26. Cf. *PF XI* (29:13-16) and *DVD 23* (100:4-5).
27. Viz., the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451).
28. When interpreting Nicholas's Christology as set out in *DI III*, one must remember that Nicholas rejects Nestorianism. His language, however, sometimes there sounds Nestorian. See p. 33 of my Introduction in *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia*.

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

1. See, above, n. 2 of the Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Salu-

tation and Prologues.

2. The *Chronica Mendosa* is found in Codex Cusanus 108 on fol. 15^r - 19^v. (A printed edition is contained in *TB*, Vol. I.) Nicholas, in this present chapter, also draws both from Ricoldo's *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* (Codex Cusanus 107, fol. 194^r-232^r) and from *Rescriptum Christiani* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 109^r - 131^v). A printed edition of both texts is contained in *TB*, Vol. II.

3. *CA I*, 2 (26:11). By "Testament" Nicholas here means the Testament of Moses, i.e., the Books of Moses, or the Pentateuch. Sometimes, however, "Testament" is used to refer to the Old Testament as a whole. Cf. *CA I*, 4 (30:6) with *I*, 4 (30:3).

4. Surah 2:97.

5. I.e., Satan.

6. II Corinthians 4:3-4.

7. John 8:44 and II Corinthians 11:14 respectively.

8. See the references in the third sentence of n. 2 above.

9. The single English word "idolater" translates the Latin "*erroneum seu idolatram*."

10. The single English word "believers" translates the Latin "*fidelibus et credulis*."

11. In the corresponding Latin sentence (25:14-15) I am reading "*Librum vero Alkorani*" in place of "*Librum vero Alkoranum*." Hagemann states, in a note on p. 3 of his edition *Nicolai de Cusa Cribratio Alkorani*, that none of the Latin mss. ever decline the word "Alkoran," or "Alchoran." Strictly speaking, however, this claim is incorrect, since this word is declined ("*alkoranum*") in Codex Cusanus 219 in the place that corresponds to 25:15 of Hagemann's edition of the Latin text.

12. Literally: "in the books of their own law"

13. Note Nicholas's use of the formula "*una religio in rituum varietate*" in *PF I* (6:2-3).

14. See *CA II*, 12.

15. I John 5:4.

16. I.e., all men will one day acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. Cf., below, n. 189 of the Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Book Three. Nicholas's claim that the Koran shows that Christ will prevail over Muhammad should be viewed in the light of *CA I*, 8 (especially 48:1-2) and of *II*, 12 (117:3-5). Nicholas is making an inference from the Koran rather than claiming that the Koran expressly elevates Christ over Muhammad.

17. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 6 (Codex Cusanus 107, f. 203^v, lines 3-5, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 105; see also the remainder of the chapter).

18. See n. 3 above.

19. *Cribratio Alkorani I*, 1 (23:11-13).

20. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 6 (Codex Cusanus 107, f. 204^r, line 19, to 204^v, line 1, and *TB*, Vol. II, pp. 105-106).

21. Heraclius was Roman emperor of the Eastern Empire from 610 to 641.

22. See the reference in n. 19 above.

23. Surah 16:101-102.

24. Surah 3:35-36.

25. Surah 66:12.

26. Surah 26:18.

27. I.e., means Nicholas, the Koran does not deny that Scripture is to be preferred to the Koran itself.
28. Surah 10:94.
29. Surah 28:48-49.
30. Viz., Robert of Ketton. See, above, n. 2 of Notes to the Translation of *Cribratio Alkorani*: Salutation and Prologues.
31. I.e., the Koran. See the opening sentence of *CA I*, 1.
32. Surah 3:2-3 and 3:7.
33. See *CA I*, 2 (25) and also the reference in n. 32 above. Muslims call Surah 1 the Mother (or Essence) of the Koran.
34. Surah 5:46.
35. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 16. (Codex Cusanus 107, f. 229^r, lines 1-3, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 159). See n. 34 above.
36. Surah 5:68.
37. Surah 61:14.
38. Surah 43:57. (Pickthall's English translation and Robert of Ketton's Latin translation here differ.) John 6:67.
39. Surah 48:29. Mark 4:26-32.
40. Surah 3:49. John 9:1-7.
41. Ricoldo of Montecroce, *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* 15 (Codex Cusanus 107, f. 226^v, line 29, to 227^r, line 3, and *TB*, Vol. II, p. 155).
42. I.e., no better prophet than Christ, no better book than the Gospel, is to be sent from God.
43. I.e., these things are promised for the next life.
44. Surah 17:88. *CA*, second prologue (16) and I, 4 (29:4-6).
45. Viz., the gift of style.
46. Surah 2:204-206.
47. I.e., when one keeps in mind the goal and the intent of the Koran, then he can glean something profitable from the Koran.
48. *CA I*, 4 (29:11-21).
49. Surah 2:253. *PF* 12 (39:14-16).
50. Surah 3:50-51.
51. *CA I*, 5 (36:9-11). See the reference in n. 34 above.
52. Surah 10: 108.
53. Here the Paris edition has the preferable reading: "... *non ut dignum erat*"
54. Surah 57:27.
55. Surah 61:14.
56. Surah 23:91.
57. Surah 23:91.
58. I.e., it cannot correctly be said that within God there is communion, participation, and sonship, insofar as these notions imply a plurality of Gods.
59. I.e., why do Christians suffer persecution at the hands of *Muslims* by Muhammad's command.
60. Surah 5:18.
61. Surah 23:91.
62. Surah 5:116-117.
63. Surah 23:50.

64. Surah 4:157-159. CA II, 12 and 14-16.
65. Surah 42:51.
66. Viz., to the statement denying that Christ is the Son of God.
67. The Latin text governing this English sentence and the preceding one is corrupt in the sense of not capturing the meaning of the Arabic.
68. Surah 5:116-120.
69. John 8:49-50.
70. John 10:33-34.
71. Psalms 81:6 (82:6).
72. John 10:35-38.
73. With regard to the corresponding Latin sentence, I follow the Paris edition in reading “*autem*” in place of “*ante*”.
74. I.e., His works show that He is co-eternal with the Father.
75. CA I, 11 (57).I, 12 (59). I, 14 (64).
76. John 8:54.
77. John 1:3. Colossians 1:16.
78. Surah 3:42 and 3:45-51. Nicholas cites this passage not from the Latin translation of the Koran but rather from Dionysius the Carthusian’s *Contra Perfidiam Mahumeti*, Book I, article 1 (Codex Cusanus 107, fol. 2^r, lines 14-28, and *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani Opera Omnia*, Vol. 36, pp. 239-240).
79. Surah 4:171.
80. Surah 2:117 and 6:73.
81. The term “word” here indicates plan, design, pattern. Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Monologion* 9 and 10. See CA I, 20 (81-83).
82. Surah 43:63.
83. John 1:3.
84. Hebrews 1:2. Colossians 1:16.
85. “... only in this respect”: i.e., only with respect to the Koran’s hesitancy to call Christ Son of God.
86. Surah 37:151-152.
87. Surah 37:153-157.
88. Surah 112.
89. Micah 5:2.
90. John 17:5.
91. Isaiah 35:4-5.
92. The word “pathway” translates “*semita et via recta*.”
93. Baruch 3:38.
94. I.e., it is not difficult to see that the Messiah is God and that He would dwell among men.
95. Surah 3:45 and 49.
96. In the corresponding Latin sentence (67:9) I am reading “*Quomodo*” in place of “*Quae*”.
97. Surah 43:63. See n. 98 below and also, above, n. 62 of Notes to *De Pace Fidei*.
98. Surah 3:48-49.
99. See n. 98 above.
100. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 29^r, column a, lines 4-19, and

- TB*, Vol. I, p. 197).
101. Surah 3:50-51.
 102. Surah 2:87.
 103. John 1:32-34.
 104. John 16:13.
 105. Surah 4:171. Surah 2:253.
 106. John 5:26.
 107. John 11:25.
 108. John 6:64 (6:63).
 109. Surah 3:45. (The Latin “*faciem omnium gentium*,” i.e., “Countenance of all nations,” mistranslates the Arabic.) *PF* 13 (43:2-3).
 110. See n. 109 above.
 111. The word “man” translates “*vir seu homo*.”
 112. “... is actually all that which it can be”: in *DP* Nicholas explores more generally the significance of this expression.
 113. Psalms 44:3 (45:2).
 114. Matthew 3:17.
 115. Psalms 44:8 (45:7).
 116. *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Codex Cusanus 108, fol. 28^v, column b, lines 18-20, and *TB*, Vol. I, p. 196).
 117. See, above, n. 109.
 118. *CA* I, 13 (60).
 119. See, above, n. 61 of the Notes to the Translation of *De Pace Fidei*.
 120. III Kings 19:11-12 (I Kings 19:11-12).
 121. *CA* II, 2-4.
 122. Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Mundo* 394^b. See p. 58, lines 12-14 of William L. Lorimer, editor and introducer, *The Text Tradition of Pseudo-Aristotle ‘De Mundo’* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924).
 123. Throughout *CA* I translate “*sensibilis*” both as *sensible* and as *perceptible* without intending any distinction between the two. Sometimes I use “perceptible” in order to avoid confusion in English. (E.g., “sensible word” might be understood in English to indicate a meaningful word rather than a perceptible word.) At other times my switching from “sensible” to “perceptible,” or vice versa, is more arbitrary.

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