Apology for Christianity, to the Caliph Al-Mahdi

Timothy I of Baghdad (c. AD 727–823)

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[Translated by Alphonse Mingana] With the assistance of God we will write the debate held by the Patriarch Mar Timothy before Mahdi, the Commander of the Faithful, by way of question and answer, on the subject of the Christian religion. On the one hand I feel repugnance to write to your Lordship,and on the other I am anxious to do so. I feel repugnance, on account |16 of the futility of the outcome of the work. It is true that I could not have acquired a mature experience of such a futility from the single discussion herein mentioned, but I may state that I have acquired such an experience from discussions that took place before the one involved in the present lucubration. I am anxious, in order to confirm and corroborate a traditional habit, inasmuch as the habit of friendly correspondence has acquired the right of prescription from very early times, and has thereby received an additional title to existence; as a matter of fact it is born and grows in us from our childhood, nay even babyhood, and it is very difficult to shake a habit of such a duration. For the reason, however, stated at the beginning I sometimes infringe this law, especially when I am reminded by a wise man who says that it is useless to draw upon that which is difficult to inherit. This is also due to the fact that the subject is to me difficult and is even against my nature, but we know that habit conquers inclination, as a powerful thought conquers a weak one.

We often see that a strong and well rooted branch goes spontaneously back to its former and congenial state after it has been violently twisted, and we do find that when powerful torrents are diverted from their natural channels with violence, they return immediately to their natural and customary course, without the need of any violence. This happens to me in relation to your great wisdom; to put a stop to our correspondence we must needs make use of violence, but after the cessation of this violence, we go back to our natural state, while love conquers all between us and covers the weaknesses of the flesh which are full of shame and confusion, and also many other human proclivities which are known to the mind, but which the speech conceals and hides under the veil of silence. Such weaknesses are well known to your great wisdom, as if you were their father and originator, and are also known to all the members of the Orthodox Church. Love covers and hides all these weaknesses as the water covers and hides the rocks that are under it. But let us now embark on our main subject in the way sanctioned by our old habit and ancient custom.

Let it be known to your wisdom, O God-loving Lord, that before these days I had an audience of our victorious King, and according to usage I praised God and his Majesty. When, in the limited space |17 allowed to me, I had finished the words of my complimentary address, in which I spake of the nature of God and His Eternity, he did something to me, which he had never done before; he said to me: "O Catholicos, a man like you who possesses all this knowledge and utters such sublime words concerning God, is not justified in saying about God that He married a woman from whom He begat a son." —And I replied to his Majesty: "And who is, O God-loving King, who has ever uttered such a blasphemy concerning God?"—And our victorious King said to me: "What then do you say that Christ is? " —And I replied to his Majesty: "O King, Christ is the Word-God, who appeared in the flesh for the salvation of the world."—And our victorious King questioned me: "Do you not say that Christ is the Son of God?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "O King, Christ is the Son of God, and I confess Him and worship Him as such. This I learned from Christ Himself in the Gospel and from the Books of the Torah and of the Prophets, which know Him and call Him by the name of "Son of God" but not a son in the flesh as children are born in the carnal way, but an admirable and wonderful Son, more sublime and higher than mind and words, as it fits a divine Son to be."

Our King asked then: "How?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "O our King, that He is a Son and one that is born, we learn it and believe in it, but we dare not investigate how He was born before the times, and we are not able to understand the fact at all, as God is incomprehensible and inexplicable in all things; but we may say in an imperfect simile that as light is born of the sun and word of the soul, so also Christ who is Word, is born of God, high above the times and before all the worlds."—And our King said to me: "Do you not say that He was born of the Virgin Mary?"—And I said to his Majesty: "We say it and confess it. The very same Christ is the Word born of the Father, and a man born of Mary. From the fact that He is Word-God, He is born of the Father before the times, as light from the sun and word from the soul; and from the fact that He is man He is born of the Virgin Mary, in time; from the Father He is, therefore, born eternally, and from the Mother He is born in time, without |18 a Father, without any marital contact, and without any break in the seals of the virginity of His Mother."

Then our God-loving King said to me: "That He was born of Mary without marital intercourse is found in the Book, and is well known, but is it possible that He was born without breaking the seals of the virginity of His mother?"—And I replied to him: "O King, if we consider both facts in the light of natural law, they are impossible, because it is impossible that a man should be born without breaking the seals of his mother's virginity, and is equally impossible that He should be conceived without a man's intercourse. But if we consider not nature but God, the Lord of nature, as the Virgin was able to conceive without marital relations, so was she able to be delivered of her child without any break in her virginal seals. There is nothing impossible with God, who can do everything."—Then the King said: "That a man can be born withour marital intercourse is borne out by the example of Adam, who was fashioned by God from earth without any marital intercourse, but that a man can be

born without breaking his mother's virginal seals we have no proof, either from Book nor from nature."

And I replied to his Majesty in the following manner: "That He was born without breaking the virginal seals of His mother we have evidence from Book and nature. From Book there is the example of Eve who was born from the side of Adam without having rent it or fractured it, and the example of Jesus Christ who ascended to Heaven without having torn and breached the firmament. In this way He was born of Mary without having broken her virginal seals or fractured them. This can also be illustrated from nature: all fruits are born of trees without breaking or tearing them, and sight is born of the eye while the latter is not broken or torn, and the perfume of apples and all aromatic substances is bora of their respective trees or plants without breaking and tearing them, and the rays are bora of the sun without tearing or breaking its spheric form. As all these are bora of their generators without tearing them or rending them, so also Christ was born of Mary without breaking her virginal seals; as His eternal birth from the Father is wonderful, so also is His temporal birth from Mary." |19

And our King said to me: "How was that Eternal One born in time?"—And I answered: "It is not in His eternity that He was born of Mary, O our King, but in His temporalness and humanity." —And our King said to me: "There are, therefore, two distinct beings: if one is eternal and God from God as you said, and the other temporal, the latter is therefore a pure man from Mary."—And I retorted: "Christ is not two beings, O King, nor two Sons, but Son and Christ are one; there are in Him two natures, one of which belongs to the Word and the other one which is from Mary, clothed itself with the Word-God."—And the King said: "They are, therefore, two, one of whom created and fashioned, and the other uncreated and unfashioned."—And I said to him: "We do not deny the duality of natures, O King, nor their mutual relations, but we profess that both of them constitute one Christ and Son."

And the King retorted: "If He is one He is not two; and if He is two, He is not one."—And I replied to him: "A man is one, while in reality he is two: one in his composition and individuality, and two in the distinction found between his soul and his body; the former is invisible and spiritual, and the latter visible and corporeal Our King, together with the insignia of his Kingdom is also one King and not two, however great may be the difference that separates him from his dresses. In the same way the Word of God, together with the clothings of humanity which He put on from Mary, is one and the same Christ, and not two, although there is in Him the natural difference between the Word-God and His humanity; and the fact that He is one does not preclude the fact that He is also two. The very same Christ and Son is indeed known and confessed as one, and the fact that He is also two does not imply confusion or mixture, because the known attributes of His natures are kept in one person of the Son and Christ."

And our King retorted to me: "Even in this you cannot save yourself from duality in Christ"—And I demonstrated the fact to him through another illustration and said: "The tongue and the word are |20 one with the voice in which they are clothed, in a way that the two are not

two words nor two tongues, but one word, together with the tongue and the voice, so that they are called by all one tongue with the word and the voice, and in them one does not expel two. This is also the case with the Word-God; He is one with His humanity, while preserving the distinction between His invisibility and His visibility, and between His Divinity and His humanity. Christ is one in His son-ship, and two in the attributes of His natures."

And our King said to me: "Did not Jesus Christ say, I am going to My God and to your God?" —And I said: "It is true that this sentence has been said by our Saviour, but there is another sentence which precedes it and which is worthy of mention."—And the King asked: Which is it?"—And I said: Our Lord said to His Disciples 'I am going to My Father and to your Father, and to My God and your God.'"—And our King said: How can this be? If He says that He is His Father, He is not His God, and if He is His God, He is not His Father; what is this contradiction?" —And I replied to him: There is no contradiction here, O God-loving King. The fact that He is His Father by nature does not carry with it that He is also His God by nature, and the fact that He is His God by nature does not imply that He is His Father by nature. He is, however, from His Father by the nature of the Word, born of Him from eternity, as light from the sun and word from the soul; and God is His God by the nature of the humanity of the Word born of Mary. Man is living and rational only by the nature of his soul, which has indeed received from God a living and rational nature, but he is said to be living and rational in his body also, through its association with this living and rational soul.

In reality what be is by nature when his body and soul are separated, is not what he is in its composite state when his body and soul are united. In spite of all this however, he is called one living and rational man and not two. In the same way God is called, and is, the Christ's Father by the nature of the union of Word-God with our human nature, and on the other hand He is called His God by the nature of His humanity that He took from us in union with the Word-God.

"In this way He is then one Son and Christ, and not two. He |21 was not born of Mary in the same way as He was born of God, nor was He born of God in the same way as He was born of Mary. So the Son and the Christ are really one, in spite of His births being two, and the same Christ has God as Father by nature, and as God: Father by the fact that He is Word-God, and God by the fact of His birth from Mary."

Our King showed here marks of doubt as to the possibility of all the above explanations, and I removed his doubt through another illustration, and said: "The letter of the Commander of the Faithful is one, both in the words that are written in it and in the papyrus on which the words are written, and our King, the King of Kings, is called both the father and the owner of his letter. He is called its father through the words born of his soul, which have been impressed on the papyrus, and he is called its owner through his being the owner of the papyrus on which the words have been written. Neither the papyrus, however, is, by nature, from the soul of the King, nor the words are by nature from the papyrus-reed, but the words are by nature born of the soul of the King, and the papyrus is by nature made

of the papyrus-reed, i.e., from πάπυρος. In this same way Christ is one, both in His being Word-God and in His humanity taken from us, but the very same God of Christ is both His Father and His God: His Father, from the fact that He was born before the times of the Father, and His God from the fact that He was born in time of Mary. By nature, however, He is not a man from the Father, nor is the Word by nature from Mary, but He is the very same Christ both from the Father and from Mary, in the first case as God, and in the second case as man."

Then our God-loving King said to me: "How can the spirit who has no genital organs beget?"—And I replied to him: "O God-loving King, how can the spirit then do things and create without possessing organs of creation. As He created the worlds without instruments of creation, so He was born without the medium of the genital organs. If He could not be bora without the intermediary of the genital organs, He could not by inference have created without the |22 intermediary of the instruments of creation. If He created without any instruments of creation, He was, therefore, born without the genital organs. Lo, the sun also begets the rays of light without any genital organs. God is therefore able to beget and create, although He is a simple and not a composite spirit; and without any genital organs and instruments of creation He begets the Son and makes the Spirit proceed from the essence of His person as the sun does for the light and the heat."

And our King said to me: "Do you believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit?"—And I answered: "I worship them and believe in them."—Then our King said: "You, therefore, believe in three Gods?"—And I replied to our King: "The belief in the above three names, consists in the belief in three Persons, and the belief in these three Persons consists in the belief in one God. The belief in the above three names, consists therefore in the belief in one God. We believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one God. So Jesus Christ taught us, and so we have learnt from the revelation of the books of the prophets. As our God-loving King is one King with his word and his spirit, and not three Kings, and as no one is able to distinguish him, his word and his spirit from himself and no one calls him King independently of his word and his spirit, so also God is one God with His Word and His Spirit, and not three Gods, because the Word and the Spirit of God are inseparable from Him. And as the sun with its light and its heat is not called three suns but one sun, so also God with His Word and His Spirit is not three Gods but is and is called one God."

Then the King said to me: "What is my word? It is something that vanishes and disappears."—And I replied to him: "As God does not resemble in His nature the Commander of the Faithful, so also the Word and the Spirit of God do not resemble those of the Commander of the Faithful. We men sometimes exist and sometimes do not exist because we have a beginning and an end, as we are created. This is the case also with our word and our spirit, which at one time exist, and at another cease to exist, and have a beginning and an end. God, however, who is higher and more exalted than all is not like us in this respect, but He exists divinely and eternally, and there was no time in which He was not, nor will there be a time in which He will not be. He has no beginning and no end, because

He is not created. |23 In the same way are His Word and His Spirit, who exist divinely and eternally, that is to say without beginning and without end, as God with God, without any separation."

Then our King said to me: "Are the Word and the Spirit not separable from God?"—And I replied: "No: never. As light and heat are not separable from the sun, so also (the Word) and the Spirit of God are not separable from Him. If one separates from the sun its light and its heat, it will immediately become neither light-giver nor heat-producer, and consequently it will cease to be sun, so also if one separates from God His Word and His Spirit, He will cease to be a rational and living God, because the one who has no reason is called irrational, and the one who has no spirit is dead. If one, therefore, ventures to say about God that there was a time in which He had no Word and no Spirit, such a one would blaspheme against God, because his saying would be equivalent to asserting that there was a time in which God had no reason and no life. If such adjectives are considered as blasphemy and abomination when said of God, it follows that God begat the Word in a divine and eternal way, as a source of wisdom, and had the Spirit proceeding from Him eternally and without any beginning, as a source of life. God is indeed the eternal source of life and wisdom; as a source of wisdom He imparts by His Word wisdom to all the rational beings, and as a source of life He causes life to flow to all the living beings, celestial and terrestrial alike, because God is the creator of everything by means of His Word and His Spirit"

And our powerful King said to me: "Tell me from which books you can show me that the Word and the Spirit are eternally with God."—And I replied: "We can demonstrate this first from the Books of the Prophets, and afterwards from the Gospel. As to the prophets, David said first thus: 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all His hosts by the Spirit of His mouth.' In another passage he glorifies the Word of God as if it were God, in the following terms: 'I shall glorify the Word of God.' Further, in speaking of the resurrection of the dead he said of God, 'Thou sendest |24 forth Thy Spirit and they are created, and Thou renewest the face of the earth.' The prophet David would not have glorified a created being, nor would he have called creator and renewer some one who was created and fashioned. In another passage he speaks of the Word of God as itself God, without a beginning and without an end, because he writes: 'Thou art for ever, O Lord, and Thy Word standeth in Heaven;' he teaches here that as God is for ever in heaven, so also the Word of God is in heaven for ever and without an end, because he who is without an end is also without a beginning, and he who has no beginning has no end.

"Afterwards comes the prophet Isaiah who speaks of the Word of God in a way similar to that of David, in saying thus: 'The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God standeth for ever.' Other prophets also speak of this point in several passages. So far as the Gospel is concerned we gather the same conclusion from the following passage: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' We are taught here two things: that the Word is eternal, and that the same Word is God by nature. All these the Gospel teaches about the Word, and it teaches us also the same thing

concerning the Spirit in the very same chapter, 'In Him was life,' i.e., in the same Word—God was 'life' which means "(in Him) was Spirit" or "He was it." In saying of the Word in the first passage that He "was," does not refer to any beginning, and so is the case with regard to the second passage referring to the Spirit. Indeed the Gospel in using this "was" is not speaking of His creation but of His eternity. If Spirit is life and life is eternally in God, the Spirit is consequently eternally in God. And Jesus Christ (Holy Ghost?) is the Spirit of God, and the life and light of men.

"In one passage Christ said to His Father, 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' He said here, 'with the glory which He had before the world was, and not which came to Him;' if He had said, 'With the glory which had come to me with Thee before the world was,' He would have taught us that He was a created and made being, but since He said 'with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' He clearly taught us that while |25 all the world was created He alone was without a beginning, as the Word of God.

"In another passage while He was about to ascend to Heaven He said to His disciples, 'Go and teach all nations and baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Jesus Christ would not have allowed Himself to count created and made beings with the One who is uncreated and unmade, and temporal beings with the One who has no beginning and no end. As the wise men do not mix promiscuously with one another in one count sun, stone and horse, nor pearl, gold and brass, but say, for instance, in a separate way: three pearls, or three stars, as these are similar in nature and resemble one another in everything, so also would the case be with Jesus Christ, who would have never allowed himself to count with God His Word and His Spirit, if He did not know that they were equal to God in nature. How could He have made equal in honour and royal power the one who was not God in nature with the one who was, or the one who was temporal with the one who was eternal? It is not the servants who participate in royal honour but the children."

Then our King said to me: "What is the difference between the Son and the Spirit, and how is it that the Son is not the Spirit nor the Spirit the Son? Since you said that God is not composite there should not be any difference with God in the fact that He begets and makes proceed from Himself."—And I replied to our King as follows: "There is no difference, O King, between the persons in their relation to one another, except that the first is not begotten, and the second is begotten, and the third proceeds; and God consists in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and He begat the former and made the latter proceed from Him from eternity without any bodily cleavage and separation in the organs and places that are fit for generation and procession. God is not composite and has no body, and since the terms 'cleavage' and 'organs' imply a body—because all bodies are composite—it follows that 'cleavage' and 'organs' do not apply to God; indeed God being without body and not being composite, is thought of without any notion of 'cleavage' and 'separation.' |26 Reason comes out of the soul—because mind comes out of the soul— but it comes out of it without any suffering, without any cleavage, and without the instrumentality of organs. The very

same sun begets light and makes heat come out of it, without any cleavage or bodily separation, and in a way that all the light is from all the sun and all the heat from all its spheric globe.

"All the reason and all the mind are from all the soul, the former by process of birth and the second by that of procession, as all the heat and all the mind are with the sun and with the soul respectively, and all the heat and all the reason are with the soul, with the sun, and with ourselves, while light does not become heat nor heat light. This very method applies to the Word and the Spirit: the former is begotten, and the latter proceeds from God and the Father, not through any material cleavage, and any suffering, nor from a special organ, but as from an uncircumscribed being: an uncircumscribed one in an uncircumscribed fashion, and one who is all in all without space and time, in a way that the Son is not the Spirit, nor the Spirit the Son, in qualifications and attributes.

"From the whole of an apple the whole of the scent and the whole of the taste are begotten and proceed in a way that the apple does not make the scent proceed from one part of it and beget the taste from another, but scent and taste come out of all the apple. While scent and taste are mixed with each other and with the apple, they are nevertheless separate in a way that taste is not scent and scent is not taste, and are not confused with each other, nor separated from each other, but are so to speak mixed together in a separate way, and separated from each other in a mixed way, by a process that is as amazing as it is incomprehensible. In this very way from the uncircumscribed Father the Son is begotten and the Spirit proceeds, in an uncircumscribed way: the eternal from the eternal, the uncreated from the uncreated, the spiritual from the spiritual. Since they are uncircumscribed they are not separated from one another, and since they are not bodies they are not mixed and confused with one another, but are separated in their persons in a united way, so to speak, and are united in their nature in a separate way. God is, therefore, one in nature with three personal attributes."

And our King said to me: "If they are not separated by remoteness and nearness as they are uncircumscribed, the Father therefore, |27 and the Spirit clothed also themselves with the human body, together with the Son; if the Father and the Spirit did not put on human body with the Son, how is it that they are not separated by distance and space?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "As the word of the King clothes itself with the papyrus on which it is written, while his soul and his mind cannot be said to do the same, and as his soul and his mind while not separated from his word, cannot nevertheless be said that they clothe themselves with the papyrus, so also is the case with the Word of God; because although He put on our human body without having been separated from the Father and the Spirit, yet the Father and the Spirit cannot be said to have put on our human body.

"Further, the word that is begotten of the soul clothes itself with the voice that is caused by the vibration of the air, and yet it is not separated from the soul and the mind, and the soul and the mind are not said that they clothe themselves with the voice, and no man ever says that he heard the mind and the soul of so-and-so, but he does say that he heard the

word of so-and-so, and this in spite of the fact that the word is not remote from the mind, nor the mind from the soul, and are not separated from one another. In this very way the Word-God clothed Himself with a body from ourselves, without having been separated in the least from the Father and the Spirit, and in this way also the Father and the Spirit are not said to have put on human body with the Word.

"Finally, the body is believed to be and actually is the temple and the clothing of the soul, but it is not believed and actually is not the temple and the clothing of the word and of the mind, in spite of the fact that neither the word nor the mind are remote from the soul, nor is the soul itself remote from the word and the mind. In this way the Word alone is spoken of as having put on our human body, while the Father and the Spirit are not said to have put it on, in spite of the fact that they are not remote from the Word in distance and locality." The objections and the difficulties raised by our Sovereign have been rebutted and explained in the above way. After these the King said to me: "Who is your head and your leader?"—And I replied: "Our Lord Jesus Christ."—And our King asked me: "Was Jesus Christ circumcised or not?"—And I answered: "He was."—And our King asked me: "Why do you |28 not then circumcise yourself? If your head and leader is Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was circumcised, you should also by necessity circumcise yourself."—And I spoke thus: "O King, Jesus Christ was both circumcised and baptised. He was circumcised eight days after His birth according to the injunction of the Law, and He was baptised while He was about thirty years of age, and by His baptism He annulled circumcision. I do not follow the Law as the Christ followed all the Law; I follow the Gospel, and that is why I do not circumcise myself in spite of the fact that Christ circumcised Himself, but I baptise myself with water and spirit like Him. I believe in Jesus Christ, and since Jesus Christ was baptised I consider baptism as an urgent necessity for me. I leave the image and cleave to the reality."

And our King asked me: "How did Jesus Christ abolish circumcision and what is the meaning of the 'image' you have spoken of?"—And I replied: "All the Torah, was, O King, the image of the Gospel. The sacrifices that are in the Law are the image of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the priesthood and high-priesthood of the Law are the image of the high-priesthood of Christ, and the carnal circumcision is the image of His spiritual circumcision. As He abolished the Law by the Gospel, and the sacrifices by His sacrifice, and the priesthood of the Law by His priesthood, so also He abolished and annulled the carnal circumcision which is performed by the work of the hands of men by means of His circumcision which is not performed by the work of the hands of men but by the power of the Spirit, and it is the sacrament of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the resurrection from death."

And our King said: "If Christ abolished the Law and all its requirements, He is, therefore, its enemy and its adversary. We call enemies those who destroy and contradict one another."—And I replied to him: "The light of the stars is abolished by the light of the sun, and the light of the latter is not for that the enemy of that of |29 the former; the functions of childhood are also abolished by those of manhood, and man is not for that the enemy of himself; an

earthly kingdom is also abolished by the heavenly Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God is not for that the enemy of men. In this very way Jesus Christ abolished and destroyed the Law by the Gospel, while He is not for that the enemy and the adversary of the Law."

And our King said to me: "Where did Jesus Christ worship and pray in the years that elapsed between His birth and His ascension to Heaven? Was it not in the house of holiness and in Jerusalem?"—And I replied: "Yes."—And our King asked: "Why then do you worship God and pray in the direction of the East?"—And I replied: "The true worship of the Omnipotent God, O King, will be performed by mankind in the Kingdom of Heaven, and the image of the Kingdom of Heaven in the earth is the paradise of Eden; now as the paradise of Eden is in the east, we therefore worship God and pray rightly in the direction of the east in which is the Paradise which is the image of the Kingdom of Heaven. There is also another reason for our conduct: Jesus Christ walked in the flesh thirty-three years on the earth, O King. In the thirtieth year he repaid to God all the debt that the human kind and angels owed to Him. It was a debt that no man and no angel was able to pay, because there has never been a created being that was free from sin, except the Man with whom God clothed Himself and became one with Him in a wonderful unity.

"After having then paid to God the debt of all the creatures and abrogated, annulled, and torn the contract containing it, He went to the Jordan, to John the Baptist, and was baptised by him, and thus the One who was the image of the Kingdom of Heaven placed this baptism of His in the forefront of the Christian life. From the day of His baptism to that of His ascension to heaven there are three years, and it is in these three years that He has taught us all the economy of the Christian religion: baptism, laws, ordinances, prayers, worship in the direction of the east, and the sacrifice that we offer. All these things He practised in His person and taught us to practise ourselves. Because He wished to proclaim to the world through His disciples: the Gospel, the baptism, the sacrifice and the worship |30 and prayer to God, He performed and fulfilled them all in His own person, in order that His disciples might fulfil themselves what they had seen Him practising Himself, and that they might teach others to do the same.

"Further, the worship of God started at the beginning in the East; it is indeed in that direction that Adam and his children worshipped God, because the Paradise is in the direction of the east.Moreover, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses used to worship God and to pray while turning towards the east and Paradise, that is towards the direction and the place in which God had been worshipped from the beginning by Adam and his children, as we have just now said. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ taught His disciples to worship God and pray towards the east. Because Adam transgressed the commandment of God, he was driven out of Paradise, and when he went out of Paradise he was thrown on this accursed earth. Having been thrown on this accursed earth, he turned his face away from God, and his children worshipped demons, stars, sun, moon and graven and molten images. The Word of God came then to the children of men in a human body, and in His person paid to God the debt that they were owing Him. To remind them, however, of the place from

which their father was driven because of his transgression of the commandment, He made them turn their faces towards Paradise in their worship and prayer, because it is in it that God was first worshipped.

"Because Jesus Christ saved men from the deportation of Satan, and the Word of God freed them from the worship of idols, He rightly turned also the direction of their sight and their mind towards God and towards Paradise where He was first worshipped. He simply brought back the one who was going astray to the house of his father. This is also the reason why the angel Gabriel, when announcing to Mary the conception of Jesus Christ, appeared to her from the direction of the east as it is written in your book. Finally, we worship God in the direction of the east, because being light He is more congruously worshipped in the direction of the light." |31 Our King then said to me: "Did Christ then worship and pray?"—And I answered his Majesty: "He did worship and pray."—And our King retorted saying: "By the fact that you say that He worshipped and prayed, you deny His divinity, because if He worshipped and prayed He is not God; if He was God, he would not have worshipped and prayed."—And I replied: "He did not worship and pray as God, because as such He is the receiver of the worship and prayer of both the celestial and the terrestrial beings, in conjunction with the Father and the Spirit, but He worshipped and prayed as a man, son of our human kind. It has been made manifest by our previous words that the very same Jesus Christ is Word-God and man, as God He is born of the Father, and as man of Mary. He further worshipped and prayed for our sake, because He Himself was in no need of worship and prayer."

And our King said to me: "There is no creature that has no need of worship and prayer."—And I replied: "Has Jesus Christ, the Word of God, sinned or not?"—And our King said: "May God preserve me from saying such a thing!" —And I then asked: "Has God created the worlds with His Word or not?" And our King replied in the affirmative and said " Yes."—And I then asked: "Is the one who is neither a sinner nor in need of anything, in need of worship and prayer?"—And our King answered "No." —And I then said to him: "If the Christ is a Word from God, and a man from Mary, and if as a Word of God He is the Lord of everything, and as a man He did not commit any sin as the Book and our King testify, and if he who is the Lord of everything and a creator is not in need, and he who is not a sinner is pure, it follows that Jesus Christ worshipped and prayed to God neither as one in need nor as a sinner, but He worshipped and prayed in order to teach worship and prayer to His disciples, and through them to every human being.

"The disciples would not have yielded to His teaching, if He had not put it into practice in His own person. There is no creature that has not sinned except Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and He is the only created being who in His own humanity appeared above the dirt of sin. As He was baptised without having any need of baptism, and as He died on the Cross but not because of His own sin, so also |32 He gave Himself to worship and prayer not for His own sake but in order to impart their knowledge to His disciples." Our God-loving King ended the above subject here, and embarked on another theme and said to me: "How is it

that you accept Christ and the Gospel from the testimony of the Torah and of the prophets, and you do not accept Muhammad from the testimony of Christ and the Gospel?" And I replied to his Majesty: "O our King, we have received concerning Christ numerous and distinct testimonies from the Torah and the prophets. All of the latter prophesied in one accord and harmony in one place about His mother: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," and taught us that He shall be conceived and born without marital intercourse like the Word of God. It is inded fit that the One who was born of the Father without a mother should have been born in the flesh from a virgin mother without a father, in order that His second birth may be a witness to His first birth. In another place they reveal to us His name: "And His name shall be called Emmanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, and Mighty God of the worlds."

"In another place the prophets reveal to us the miracles that He will work at His coming in saying, 'Behold your God will come. . . . He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be loosened.' Yet in another place they disclose to us His passion and His death, 'He shall be killed for our transgressions, and humbled for our iniquities.' Sometimes they speak to us about His resurrection, 'For Thou hast not left my soul in Sheol, nor hast Thou suffered Thy Holy One to see corruption,' and 'The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee.' Some other times they teach us concerning His Ascension to Heaven, 'Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and Thou hast made gifts to men,' and 'God went up in glory, and the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.' |33

"Some other times they reveal to us His coining down from heaven in saying, 'I am one like the son of men coming on the clouds of heaven, and they brought Him near before the Ancient of days, and there was given Him dominion, and glory and a kingdom that all peoples of the earth should serve Him and worship Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom shall not pass away nor be destroyed.' These and scores of other passages of the prophets show us Jesus Christ in a clear mirror and point to Him. So far as Muhammad is concerned I have not received a single testimony either from Jesus Christ or from the Gospel which would refer to his name or to his works " And our benevolent and gracious King made a sign to mean that he was not convinced, then he repeated twice to me the question: "Have you not received any?"—And I replied to him: "No,

O God-loving King, I have not received any."—And the King asked me: "Who is then the Paraclete?"—And I answered: The Spirit of God."—And the King asked: "What is the Spirit of God?"—And I replied: "God, by nature; and one who proceeds, by attribute; as Jesus Christ taught about Him."—And our glorious King said: "And what did Jesus Christ teach about Him?"—And I answered: "He spoke to His disciples as follows: 'When I go away to Heaven, I will send unto you the Spirit-Paraclete who proceeded from the Father, whom the world cannot receive, who dwelleth with you and is among you, who searcheth all things,

even the deep things of God, who will bring to your remembrance all the truth that I have said unto you, and who will take of mine and show unto you.'"

And our King said to me: "All these refer to Muhammad." —And I replied to him: "If Muhammad were the Paraclete, since the Paraclete is the Spirit of God, Muhammad, would, therefore, be the Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God being uncircumscribed like God, Muhammad would also be uncircumscribed like God; and he |34 who is uncircumscribed being invisible, Muhammad would also be invisible and without a human body; and he who is without a body being uncomposed, Muhammad would also be uncomposed. Indeed he who is a spirit has no body, and he who has no body is also invisible, and he who is invisible is also uncircumscribed; but he who is circumscribed is not the Spirit of God, and he who is not the Spirit of God is not the Paraclete. It follows from all this that Muhammad is not the Paraclete. The Paraclete is from heaven and of the nature of the Father, and Muhammad is from the earth and of the nature of Adam. Since heaven is not the same thing as earth, nor is God the Father identical with Adam, the Paraclete is not, therefore, Muhammad.

"Further, the Paraclete searches the deep things of God, but Muhammad owns that he does not know what might befall him and those who accept him. He who searches all things even the deep things of God is not identical with the one who does not know what might happen to him and to those who acknowledge him. Muhammad is therefore not the Paraclete. Again, the Paraclete, as Jesus told His disciples, was with them and among them while He was speaking to them, and since Muhammad was not with them and among them, he cannot, therefore, have been the Paraclete. Finally, the Paraclete descended on the disciples ten days after the ascension of Jesus to heaven, while Muhammad was born more than six hundred years later, and this impedes Muhammad from being the Paraclete. And Jesus taught the disciples that the Paraclete is one God in three persons, and since Muhammad does not believe in the doctrine of three persons in one Godhead, he cannot be the Paraclete. And the Paraclete wrought all sorts of prodigies and miracles through the disciples, and since Muhammad did not work a single miracle through his followers and his disciples, he is not the Paraclete.

"That the Spirit-Paraclete is consubstantial with the Father and the Son is borne out by the fact that He is the maker of the heavenly powers and of everything, and since he who is the maker and creator of everything is God, the Spirit-Paraclete is therefore God; but the world is not able to receive God, as Jesus Christ said, because God is uncircumscribed. Now if Muhammad were the Paraclete, since |35 this same Paraclete is the Spirit of God, Muhammad would therefore be the Spirit of God. Further, since David said, 'By the Spirit of God all the powers have been created,' celestial and terrestrial, Muhammad would be the creator of the celestial and terrestrial beings. Now since Muhammad is not the creator of heaven and earth, and since he who is not creator is not the Spirit of God, Muhammad is, therefore, not the Spirit of God; and since the one who is not the Spirit of God is by inference not the Paraclete, Muhammad is not the Paraclete.

”If he were mentioned in the Gospel, this mention would have been marked by a distinct portraiture characterising his coming, his name, his mother, and his people as the true portraiture of the coming of Jesus Christ is found in the Torah and in the prophets. Since nothing resembling this is found in the Gospel concerning Muhammad, it is evident that there is no mention of him in it at all, and that is the reason why I have not received a single testimony from the Gospel about him.” And the God-loving King said to me: ”As the Jews behaved towards Jesus whom they did not accept, so the Christians behaved towards Muhammad whom they did not accept.”—And I replied to his Majesty: ”The Jews did not accept Jesus in spite of the fact that the Torah and the prophets were full of testimonies about Him, and this renders them worthy of condemnation. As to us we have not accepted Muhammad because we have not a single testimony about him in our Books.”—And our King said: ”There were many testimonies but the Books have been corrupted, and you have removed them.”—And I replied to him thus: ”Where is it known, O King, that the Books have been corrupted by us, and where is that uncorrupted Book from which you have learned that the Books which we use have been corrupted? If there is such a book let it be placed in the middle in order that we may learn from it which is the corrupted |36 Gospel and hold to that which is not corrupted. If there is no such a Gospel, how do you know that the Gospel of which we make use is corrupted?

”What possible gain could we have gathered from corrupting the Gospel? Even if there was mention of Muhammad made in the Gospel, we would not have deleted his name from it; we would have simply said that Muhammad has not come yet, and that he was not the one whom you follow, and that he was going to come in the future. Take the example of the Jews: they cannot delete the name of Jesus from the Torah and the Prophets, they only contend against Him in saying openly that He was going to come in the future, and that He has not come yet into the world. They resemble a blind man without eyes who stands in plain daylight and contends that the sun has not yet risen. We also would have done likewise; we would not have dared to remove the name of Muhammad from our Book if it were found anywhere in it; we would have simply quibbled concerning his right name and person like the Jews do in the case of Jesus. To tell the truth, if I had found in the Gospel a prophecy concerning the coming of Muhammad, I would have left the Gospel for the Kur’an, as I have left the Torah and the Prophets for the Gospel.”

And our King said to me: ”Do you not believe that our Book was given by God?”—And I replied to him: ”It is not my business to decide whether it is from God or not. But I will say something of which your Majesty is well aware, and that is all the words of God found in the Torah and in the Prophets, and those of them found in the Gospel and in the writings of the Apostles, have been confirmed by signs and miracles; as to the words of your Book they have not been corroborated by a single sign or miracle. It is imperative that signs and miracles should be annulled by other signs and miracles. When God wished to abrogate the Mosaic law, He confirmed by the signs and miracles wrought by the Christ and the Apostles that the words of the Gospel were from God, and by this He abrogated the words of the Torah and the first miracles. Similarly, as He abrogated |37 the first signs and miracles by

second ones, He ought to have abrogated the second signs and miracles by third ones. If God had wished to abrogate the Gospel and introduce another Book in its place He would have done this, because signs and miracles are witnesses of His will; but your Book has not been confirmed by a single sign and miracle. Since signs and miracles are proofs of the will of God, the conclusion drawn from their absence in your Book is well known to your Majesty."

And our King asked: "Who is then the rider on an ass, and the rider on a camel?"—And I replied: "The rider on an ass is Darius the Mede, son of Assuerus, and the rider on a camel is Cyrus the Persian, who was from Elam. The King of Elam destroyed the kingdom of the Medes, and passed it to the Persians, as Darius the Mede had destroyed the kingdom of the Babylonians and passed it to the Medes." And our King said to me: "From where is this known?"— And I replied: "From the context. In the preceding passage the prophet said, 'Go up, O Elam, and mountains of Media.' By the words 'Mountains of Media' Darius the Mede is meant, and by the word 'Elam' the kingdom of the Persians is designated. The Book says also in the words that follow, 'And one of the horsemen came and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,' and shows clearly that the passage refers to Darius and Cyrus, because it is they who destroyed the kingdom of the Babylonians."

And our King said: "Why did he say that the first was riding on an ass, and the second on a camel?"—And I replied: "The reason is that asses are generally more in use in the country of the Medes, while in the country of the Persians and Elamites camels are more in evidence. Through animals the prophet referred to countries, and through countries to the powers and kingdoms which were to rise in them. Further, because the kingdom of the Medes was to be weak and indolent while that of the Persians or Elamites was to be |38 strong and valiant, God alluded to the kingdom of the Medes through the weak ass, and to that of Elamite and Persians through the valiant camel. In the Book of Daniel also God alluded to the kingdom of the Medes through the indolent bear, and to that of the Elamites and Persians through the valiant leopard. Again, in the vision of the King Nebuchadnezzar God symbolised the kingdom of the Medes in the malleable silver, while that of the Persians and Elamites in the strong brass. In this same way the prophet alluded to the kingdom of Media through the ass, and to that of Elam through the camel."

And our King said to me: "The rider on the ass is Jesus and the rider on the camel is Muhammad."—And I answered his Majesty: "O our God-loving King, neither the order of times nor the succession of events will allow us to refer in this passage the riding on the ass to Christ and the riding on the camel to Muhammad. It is known with accuracy from, the order and succession of the revelations to the prophets that the ass refers to the Medes and the camel to the Elamites, and this order of the revelations and this succession of events impede us from ascribing the words of the scripture to other persons. Even if one, through similarity between adjectives and names, does violence to the context and refers the passage dealing with the ass to Jesus on account of a different passage: 'Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,' yet it is not possible to refer the passage dealing with the camel to Muhammad."

And our King said: ”For what reason?”—And I replied: ”Because the prophet Jacob said, 'The sceptre of the kingdom shall not depart from Judah, nor an utterer of prophecy from his seed, until Jesus Christ come, because kingdom is His, and He is the expectation of the peoples.' In this he shows that after the coming of the Christ |39 there will be neither prophet nor prophecy. And Daniel also concurs in saying that for putting an end to all vision and prophecy, and for the coming of Christ, the King, seven weeks and threescore and two weeks will elapse, and then the Christ will be killed, and there will not be any more kingdom and prophecy in Jerusalem. In this he showed that visions and prophecies will come to an end with the Christ. And the Christ Himself said: 'The prophets and the Torah prophesied until John.' Every prophecy, therefore, ended with the time of Christ, and after Christ there was no prophecy nor did any prophet rise. All the prophets prophesied about Jesus Christ, and the Christ directed us to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is superfluous that after the knowledge that we have of God and the Kingdom of Heaven we should be brought down to the knowledge of the human and earthly things.

”As to the prophets they prophesied sometimes concerning the earthly affairs and kingdoms, and some other times concerning the adorable Epiphany and Incarnation of the Word-God. As to Jesus Christ He did not reveal to us things dealing with the law and earthly affairs, but He solely taught us things dealing with the knowledge of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. We have already said that all prophecy extended as far as Christ only, as Christ Himself and the prophets asserted, and since from the time of Christ downwards only the Kingdom of God is being preached, as Jesus Christ taught, it is superfluous that after the adorable Incarnation of Christ we should accept and acknowledge another prophecy and another prophet A good and praiseworthy order of things is that which takes us up from the bottom to the top, from the human to the divine things, and from the earthly to the heavenly things; but an order which would lower us from top to bottom, from divine to worldly, and from heavenly to earthly, things, is bad and blameworthy.”

And our victorious King said to me: ”Why do you worship the Cross?”—And I replied: ”First because it is the cause of life.”— |40 And our glorious King said to me: ”A cross is not the cause of life but rather of death.”—And I replied to him: ”The cross, is as you say, O King, the cause of death; but death is also the cause of resurrection, and resurrection is the cause of life and immortality. In this sense the cross is the cause of life and immortality, and this is the reason why through it, as a symbol of life and immortality, we worship one and indivisible God. It is through it that God opened to us the source of life and immortality, and God who at the beginning ordered light to come out of darkness, who sweetened bitter water in bitter wood, who through the sight of a deadly serpent granted life to the children of Israel—handed to us the fruit of life from the wood of the Cross, and caused rays of immortality to shine upon us from the branches of the Cross.

”As we honour the roots because of the fruits that come out of them, so also we honour the Cross as the root of which the fruit of life was born to us, and from which the ray of immortality shone upon us. As a decisive proof of the love of God for all, luminous rays of

His love shine from all His creatures visible and invisible, but the most luminous rays of the love of God are those that shine from the rational beings. This love of God can then be demonstrated from all creatures, and from the ordinary Divine Providence that is manifest in them, but the great wealth of His love for all humanity is more strikingly in evidence in the fact that He delivered to death in the flesh His beloved Son for the life, salvation, and resurrection of all. It is only just, therefore, O our victorious King, that the medium through which God showed His love to all, should also be the medium through which all should show their love to God."

And our King said to me: "Can God then Himself die?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "The Son of God died in our nature, but not in His Divinity. When the royal purple and the insignia of the kingdom are torn, the dishonour redounds to the King: so also is die case with the death of the body of the Son-God."—And our King said to me: "May God preserve me from saying such a thing. They did not kill Him and they did not crucify Him, but He made a |41 similitude for them in this way." —And I said to him: "It is written in the Surat 'Isa, 'Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be sent again alive.' " This passage shows that He died and rose up. Further, God said to 'Isa (Jesus) "I will make Thee die and take Thee up again to me."

And our King said: "He did not die then, but He will die afterwards."—And I replied to him: "Therefore He did not go up to heaven either, nor was He sent again alive, but He will go up to heaven afterwards and will be sent again alive in the future. No, our King, Jesus did go up to heaven a long time ago, and has been sent again alive, as your Book also testifies. If He went up it is obvious that He had died previously, and if He had died, it is known that He had died by crucifixion, as the Prophets had stated before His coming." And our King said to me: "Which prophet said that He died by crucifixion?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "First the prophet David, who said, 'They pierced my hands and my feet, and my bones cried; and they looked and stared upon me; they parted my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.' The Gospel testifies that all these were fulfilled. And Isaiah said, 'He shall be killed for our sins and humbled for our iniquity.' And the prophet Jeremiah said, 'Wood will eat into His flesh and will destroy Him from the land of the living. I gave my body to wounds and my cheeks to blows, and I did not turn my face from shame and spittle.' And the prophet Daniel said, ' And the Messiah shall be killed but not for Himself.' And the prophet Zechariah said, 'And smite the shepherd of Israel on his cheeks,' and 'O sword, awake against my shepherd.' Indeed numerous are the passages in which the prophets spoke of His death, murder, and crucifixion."

And our King said: "He made a similitude only for them in this way."—And I replied to him: "And who made a similitude for them in this way, O our King? How did God deceive them and |42 show them something which was not true? It is incongruous to God that He should deceive and show something for another thing. If God deceived them and made a similitude for them, the Apostles who simply wrote what God had shown to them, would be innocent of the deception, and the real cause of it would be God. If on the other hand, we

say that it is Satan who made such a similitude for the Apostles, what has Satan to do in the Economy of God? And who dares to say about the hawariyun that Satan was able to deceive them? The Apostles drove and cast away the demons, who shouted and run away from them on account of the Divine power that was accompanying them. If crucifixion was only an unreal similitude, and if from it death took place, even death would be an unreal similitude; we further assert that from this death there has been resurrection, which in this case would also be an unreal similitude; then out of this resurrection there has been ascension to heaven, which would also be unreal and untrue. Now since the resurrection precedes the ascension, this resurrection is also a reality and not a similitude; and since death was a reality and not a similitude, and since death is preceded by crucifixion, this crucifixion is consequently a reality also, and not an illusion or a similitude."

And our King said: "It was not honourable to Jesus Christ that God should have allowed Him to be delivered to Jews in order that they might kill Him."—And I answered his Majesty: "The prophets have been killed by the Jews, but that not all those who have been killed by the Jews are despicable and devoid of honour is borne out by the fact that none of the true prophets is despicable and devoid of honour in the sight of God. Since it is true that the prophets have generally been killed by the Jews, it follows that not all those who have been killed by the Jews are despicable and devoid of honour. This we assert for the prophets. So far as Jesus Christ is concerned we say that the Jews crucified only the Christ in the flesh, which He delivered to them voluntarily, and His murder was not imposed forcibly upon Him by them. Because He, Jesus Christ, said, 'I have power upon my soul to lay it down, and I have power to take |43 it again; and no man taketh it from me.' In this He showed that He would suffer out of His own free will, and not out of His own weakness or from the omnipotence of the Jews.

He who when hanging on the wood of the Cross moved the heavens, shook the earth, changed the dazzling sun into darkness and the shining moon into blood-redness, and He who rent the stones and the graves, raised and resuscitated the dead, could not be so weak as not to be able to save Himself from the hands of the Jews. It is, therefore, out of His own free will that He approached the suffering on the cross and death, and He did not bear the death of crucifixion at the hands of the Jews out of abjection and weakness on His part, but He bore both crucifixion and death at the hands of the Jews out of His own free will."

And our King said: "No blame attaches, therefore, to the Jews from His death, if they simply fulfilled and satisfied His wish."—And I answered his Majesty: "If the Jews had solely crucified Him in order that He might raise the dead and ascend to heaven, they would naturally have been not only free from blame, but worthy of thousands of crowns and of encomia of all kinds, but if these same Jews crucified Him in order not that He might rise up again from the dead and ascend to heaven, but in order that they might intensify His death and obliterate Him from the surface of the earth, they would with great justice be worthy of blame and death. Indeed they crucified Him not in order that He might go up to heaven but go down to Sheol; God, however, raised Him up from the dead and took Him up to heaven."

And our God-loving King said to me; "Which of the two things would you be willing to admit? Was the Christ willing to be crucified or not? If He was willing to be crucified, the Jews who simply accomplished His will should not be cursed and despised. If, however, He was not willing to be crucified and He was crucified, He was weak and the Jews were strong. In this case, how can He be God, He who found Himself unable to deliver Himself from the hands of His crucifiers whose will appeared to be stronger than His? " And I answered these objections by other questions as follows: "What would our King, endowed with high acumen and great wisdom, say to this: When God created Satan as one of the angels, did He wish this Satan to be an angel or not? If God wished Him |44 to be Satan instead of an angel, the wicked Satan would, therefore, simply be accomplishing the will of God; but if God did not wish Satan to be Satan but an angel, and in spite of that he became Satan, the will of Satan became stronger than the will of God. How can we then call God one whose will was overcome by the will of Satan, and one against whom Satan prevailed?

"Another question: Did God wish Adam to go out of Paradise or not? If He wished to drive him out of Paradise, why should Satan be blamed, who simply helped to do the will of God in his driving Adam from Paradise. On the other hand, if God did not wish Adam to go out of Paradise, how is it that the will of God became weak and was overcome, while the will of Satan became strong and prevailed? How can He be God, if His will has been completely overcome? The fact that Satan and Adam sinned against the will of God does not affect the divinity of God and does not show Him to be weak and deficient, and the fact that God had willed Satan to fall from heaven and Adam to go out of Paradise does not absolve Satan and Adam from blame and censure, and the fact that they did not sin to accomplish the will of God but to accomplish their own will are a good analogy to the case of Jesus Christ. He should not indeed be precluded from being God, nor should He be rendered weak and deficient in strength by the fact that the Jews sinned but not by His will, and that in their insolence they crucified Him; and the fact that the Christ wished to be crucified and die for the life, resurrection and salvation of all should not exempt the Jews from hell and curse.

"The Jews did not crucify the Christ because He willed it, but they crucified Him because of their hatred and malice both to Himself and to the One who sent Him. They crucified Him in order that they might destroy Him completely, and He willed to be crucified so that He might live again and rise from the dead, and be to all men the sign and proof of the resurrection of the dead. "Another question: What would our victorious and powerful King say about those who fight for the sake of God. Do they wish to be killed or not? If they do not wish to be killed and are killed, their death has no merit, and they will not go to heaven; and if they |45 wish to be killed, are their murderers blameworthy or not? If they are not blameworthy, how is it that unbelievers who killed Muslims and believers are not blameworthy, and if they are blameworthy, why should they be so when what they did was simply to fulfil the wish of the victims? The fact is that the murderers of the men who fight for the sake of God are not exempted from fire and hell; indeed, the murderers do not slay them so that they may go to heaven, but they do it out of their wickedness and in order to destroy them. In this way also the Jews will not be exempted from the eternal fire by

the fact that Jesus Christ wished to be crucified and die for all. They did not crucify Him because He wished to be crucified, but because they wished to crucify Him. They did not crucify Him in order that He might live again and rise up from the dead, but they crucified Him in order that He might be destroyed once for all. Let this suffice for this subject.

"Jesus was also able to save Himself from the Jews, if He had wished to do so. This is known first from the fact that on several occasions they ventured to seize Him, but because He did not wish to be seized by them, no one laid hands on Him. It is also known by the fact that while He was hanging on the cross, He moved the heavens, shook the earth, darkened the sun, blood-reddened the moon, rent the stones, opened the graves, and gave life to the dead that were in them. He who was able to do all these things in such a divine way, was surely able to save Himself from the Jews. And He who rescued from the mouth of Sheol in such a wonderful way the temple of His humanity after it had lain therein for three days and three nights, was surely able to save and rescue the very same temple from the unjust Jews, but if He had saved it He would not have been crucified, and if He had not been crucified He would not have died, and if He had not died He would not have risen up to immortal life, and if He had not risen up to immortal life, the children of men would have remained without a sign and a decisive proof of the immortal life.

"To-day because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the eyes of all the children of men look towards an immortal life, and consequently in order that this expectation of the immortal life and of the world to come might be indelibly impressed upon mankind, it was right that Jesus Christ should rise from the dead; but in order that He might rise from the dead, it was right that He should first die, and in |46 order that He might truly die it was imperative that His death should have been first witnessed by all, as His resurrection was witnessed by all. This is why He died by crucifixion. If He were to suffer, to be crucified and die before all, when He had to rise from the dead His resurrection would also be believed by all. Immortal life is thus the fruit of the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—a resurrection which all believers expect—is the outcome of the death on the cross.

"If He had delivered Himself from the hands of His crucifiers, He would have brought profit to Himself alone, and would have been of no use to the rest of mankind, like Enoch and Elijah who are kept in Paradise beyond the reach of death for their exclusive benefit, but now that He delivered Himself into the hands of crucifiers, and they dared to kill Him on their own account, He conquered death after three days and three nights, rose up to immortal life and brought profit first to His own self and then to all creatures, and He became the sign and proof of resuscitation and resurrection to all rational beings. He put His wish into practice in an Economy full of wisdom, and His crucifiers cannot be absolved from blame any more than the brothers of Joseph can be absolved from blame. "When Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave to some men, and he afterwards rose up from slavery to the government of Egypt, it was not the aim of those who sold him that he should govern Egypt. If they had dreamed of this they would never have sold him into slavery. Indeed, those who were

unable to bear the recital of Joseph's dreams on account of their intense jealousy and violent envy, how could they have borne seeing him at the head of a Government. They sold him into slavery but God, because of the injustice done to him by his brothers, raised him from slavery to power. This analogy applies to the Jews and to Satan their teacher: if they had known that Christ would rise again to life from the dead and ascend from earth to heaven after His crucifixion, they would never have induced themselves to crucify Him, but they crucified Him out of their own wicked will."

"What would you say to this, O King of Kings: If your Majesty had a house and wanted to pull it down in order to rebuild it again, if an enemy came and pulled it down and burned it with fire, would you give thanks to that enemy for his action in pulling down the house, or |47 would you not rather inflict punishment on him, as on one who had demolished and burned a house belonging to your Majesty?"—And our King replied: "The one who would do such a thing would deserve a painful death."—And I then answered: "So also the Jews deserve all kinds of woes, because they wished to demolish and destroy the temple of the Word of God, which was anointed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, which was divinely fashioned without the intervention of man from a holy virgin, and which God raised afterwards to heaven. God showed in all this its thorough distinction from, and its high superiority over, all else. As the heaven is high above the earth, the temple of the Word of God is greater and more distinguished than all angels and children of men. If Jesus Christ is in heaven and heaven is the throne of God, it follows that Jesus Christ sat on the throne of God."

And our King said to me: "Who gave you the Gospel?"— And I replied to his Majesty: "Our Lord Jesus Christ"—And our victorious King asked: "Was it before or after His ascension to heaven?"—And I replied to him: "Before His ascension to heaven. As the Gospel is the narrative of the Economy of the works and words of Jesus Christ, and as the works of Jesus Christ were done and His concrete words were uttered before His ascension to heaven, it follows that the Gospel was delivered to us before His ascension to heaven. Further, if the Gospel is the proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven, and this proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven has been delivered to us by the mouth of our Lord, it follows that the Gospel was also delivered to us by the mouth of our Lord." And our King, invested with power, said to me: "Was not a part of the Gospel written by Matthew, another part by Mark, a third part by Luke, and a fourth part by John?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "It is true, O our King, that these four men wrote the Gospel. They did not write it, however, out of their own head nor from the fancies of their mind. Indeed they had no literary attainments of any kind, and by profession they were generally fishermen, shoemakers or tentmakers. They wrote and transmitted to us what they had heard and learned from Jesus Christ, who had taught them in actions and words during all the time He was walking with them in the flesh on the earth, and what the Spirit-Paraclete had reminded them of." |48

And our King said to me: "Why are they different from one another and contradict one another?"—And I answered his Majesty: "It is true that there is difference between their words, as to contradiction there is not any between them, not even in a single case. Different

people write differently even on the creation of God, the Lord of all: some of them speak of the great height of heaven, some others of the brilliant rays of the sun, some others of the wonderful phases of the moon, some others of the fine beauty of the stars, some others of the atmosphere, some others of the land and sea, and some others of some other topics. Further, among the people who write on heaven alone some speak of its immense height and some others of the swiftness of its movement, and among those who speak of the sun alone, some write on the high and dazzling resplendence of its light, some others on its heat, some others on the roundness of its sphere, some others on its purity and clearness, and some others on its multitudinous powers and effects.

"Let your Majesty order some men to write on the topic of the resplendent glory of your Majesty, and some others on the great quantity of your gold and silver, and some others on the lustre of your pearls and precious stones, and some others on the beauty and fine features of the face of your Majesty, and some others on the power, might and strength of your Kingdom, and some others on the wisdom and intelligence of your Majesty, and yet some others on your gentleness, virtue, and piety. In what they will write there might be differences of words in their statements of facts, but there will not be any contradiction between them, not even in a single item. They will all be right in all that they will write, although some of them might omit some items, because there is no one who is able to speak with accuracy of everything dealing with the works of God nor with the greatness of the glory of your Majesty. The above applies to what the evangelists wrote concerning the words, deeds, and natures of Jesus Christ. There are here and there differences in their statements, but as to contradictions there are none whatever. The four of them write in the same way and without discrepancies and differences on the main topics of His conception, birth, baptism, teaching, passion on the cross, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven."

And our powerful King said to me: "You should know, O Catholicos, that as God gave the law through the prophet Moses and |49 the Gospel through the Christ, so He gave the furkan through Muhammad"—And I replied: "O my victorious King, the changes that were to take place in the law given through Moses, God had clearly predicted previously through the prophets whom we have mentioned. God said thus through the prophet Jeremiah and showed the dissolution of the law of Moses and the setting up of the Gospel, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant they nullified, and I also despised them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their minds and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour nor his brother, saying. "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them.' In the above words God demonstrated both the dissolution of the law of Moses and the setting up of the Gospel.

"Through another prophet, called Joel, God disclosed the signs which would occur at the time of the dissolution of the Torah and the setting up of the Gospel, and the signs concerning the Spirit-Paraclete which the Apostles, the commanders of the army of the Gospel, were to receive, because He said through him, 'And afterwards I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour my spirit in those days.' This is said of the Spirit-Paraclete who descended on the Apostles after the ascension of Jesus to heaven, according to the promise that He had previously given. And the prophet adds, 'And I will show wonders in the |50 heavens and the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.' All this took place at the Passion of Jesus Christ on the Cross. And he further adds, 'Before the great and the terrible day of the Lord;' he calls the 'great and terrible day of the Lord, the day on which the Word-God will appear in our flesh with great power and glory of angels, and the day on which the stars will fall from heaven, as Jesus Himself said in the Gospel.' And the prophet further adds, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,' that is to say whosoever shall receive the Gospel of God shall live an everlasting life.

"God, therefore, pointed clearly to the transition from the Law to the Gospel when He showed us a new covenant, and signs, witnessed by men, that appeared in heaven and earth, in sun, moon, and stars, and when He showed us the gifts of the Holy Spirit which He imparted to the Apostles: wonders, signs, and miracles. God nowhere showed such irrefragable signs for the transition from the Gospel to something else. The Law that was given by Moses was the symbol of the Gospel, and the Gospel is the symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven, and there is nothing higher than the Kingdom of Heaven."

And our powerful King said to me: Did not God say clearly to the children of Israel, 'I will raise you up a prophet from among your brethren like unto me.' Who are the brethren of the children of Israel besides the Arabs, and who is the prophet like unto Moses besides Muhammad?"—And I answered his Majesty: The Israelites have many other brethren besides the Arabs, O our Sovereign. First of all the six sons of Abraham by Keturah are nearer to the Arabs than the Israelites, then the Edomites composed of three hundred clans are also nearer to the Israelites than the Arabs. Jacob from whom descended the Israelites, and Esau from whom sprang the Edomites are indeed brothers and sons of Isaac, and Isaac from whom the Jews descend and Ishmael from whom the Arabs spring, together with Zimran and Jokshan and their brothers, the sons of Keturah, are children of Abraham. If the sentence of the |51 prophet Moses refers to the brethren of the children of Israel and not to their own twelve tribes, it would be more appropriate to apply it to the Edomites, because it has been shown that they are nearer to the Israelites than the Arabs. It is not only the Arabs who are the brethren of the Israelites but also the Ammonites and the Moabites.

"Further, Moses said to the children of Israel that God will raise up from among their brethren a prophet to themselves and not to the Arabs, because he says that the prophet

whom the Lord your God will raise up will be from among yourselves and not from outside yourselves, from your brethren and not from strangers, and then that prophet will be similar and not dissimilar to him in doctrine. This Biblical passage resembles that other passage in which God said to them concerning a king, 'I will raise up for thee a king from thy brethren.' As in the subject of a king God does not refer to the children of Ishmael by the word 'their brethren,' so also in the subject of a prophet He does not refer to them through the same word.

"Further, you assert that Muhammad has been sent as a prophet to his own people. We must examine in this respect the construction of the words. It is said: a prophet from yourselves, from among your brethren, and like unto me. If Muhammad be a prophet like Moses, Moses wrought miracles and prodigies; and Muhammad, who would in this case be a prophet like Moses, should have wrought many miracles and prodigies. And then, if Muhammad be a prophet like Moses, since Moses practised and taught the Law that was given to him on Mount Sinai, Muhammad should similarly have taught the Torah and practised the circumcision, and observed the Jewish Sabbath and festivals. Muhammad did not teach the Torah, and Moses taught the Torah, the prophet Muhammad is not, therefore, like unto Moses, because the one who was to be a prophet like unto Moses, would not have changed anything from Moses, and the one who is different in one thing from Moses is not a prophet like unto Moses. The prophet Moses spoke the above words concerning the prophets who from time to time rose after him from this or that Jewish tribe, such as Joshua son of Nun, David, Samuel, and others |52 after them, who from generation to generation were sent to the Israelites."

And our victorious King said to me: "What is the punishment of the man who kills his mother?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "And what is the punishment of the man who does not respect the honour of his mother?"—And our King said to me: "Strokes, fetters, and death."—And I said to his Majesty: "The decision of your Majesty is just. And the man who kills his mother is also liable to the same punishment."—And our King said to me: "Jesus Christ is, therefore, liable to the same punishment, because He let His mother die and so killed her."—And I asked the King: "Which is the highest, this world or the world to come?" And our King answered: "The world to come."—And I then replied to his Majesty: "If Jesus Christ let His mother die, and through death He transferred her to the next world, which as your Majesty asserts is better than this one, He therefore invested His mother with a higher dignity and more sublime honour; and since the one who honours his mother is worthy of all blessings, Jesus Christ who transferred His mother from the mortal life to the immortal one and from the land of troubles to the Kingdom of Heaven, is, therefore, Worthy of all blessings.

"What should Jesus Christ have done? While He takes up everybody from earth to heaven, and while, as God said, He causes them to be immortal after having been mortal, should He only have |53 left His own mother in this mortal life? This would have been a great disgrace; but her death which took place like that of every other human being, was only natural and

did not bring the smallest disgrace to her. As it was not a dishonour to her to have been born from a womb, so also it was not a dishonour to her to have been born again to eternal life from death and earth. If Mary had not died, she would not have risen; and if she had not risen, she would have been far from the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is fair that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ through whom the Kingdom of Heaven was revealed, should have been raised up first to heaven. It was, therefore, imperative that she should have died. He who demolishes a house in order to renew it and ornament it, is not blameworthy but praiseworthy."

And our King said to me: "Is Jesus Christ good or not?"— And I replied to his Majesty: "If Jesus Christ is the Word of God, and God is good, Jesus Christ is, therefore, good. He is one nature with God, like light is one with the sun."—And our King said: "How then did Jesus say, 'There is none good but one, that is one God?" —And I replied to him: "Was the Prophet David just or not?"—And our King said: "He was just and head of the just."— And I said then: "How then did the prophet David say, 'There is no one that is just, no, not one,'" —And our King said: "This saying does not include David. It has been said of the wicked ones."— And I said: "So also the sentence, 'There is none good but one' cannot possibly include the Christ. As the sentence, 'There is no one that is just' embraces many others to the exclusion of David, so also the sentence, 'There is none good' embraces many others to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, and as David did not include himself when he said, 'There is no just man, no, not even one,' so also the Christ did not include Himself when he said, ' There is none good but one, and that is one God.'

"The very same Jesus Christ who said about Himself, 'I am the good shepherd,' could not have said the above sentence, 'There is none good' about Himself. Indeed, He said this sentence about the one whom He was addressing. The latter was thinking this in his |54 heart: how difficult are the laws that Jesus Christ is establishing! There is none good but one God who gave us all the good things found in the land of promise. As to Jesus Christ, He disclosed to him his hidden thoughts and showed to him that his words were in flagrant contradiction with his thoughts, in calling Him in his words 'good master' while in his thoughts he was saying ' This one was no good,' and wishing to rebuke him He disclosed to him his thoughts and said to him, 'Why callest thou me good with thy tongue while in thy thoughts thou sayest about me, "This one is no good, because He orders me to squander my fortune; there is none good but one that is God " '? Jesus Christ makes mention both of a good man and a good tree. How is it possible that there is a good man and a good tree, and Jesus Christ alone is not good? How can this be possible?"

And our King said to me: "If you accepted Muhammad as a prophet your words would be beautiful and your meanings fine"— And I replied to his Majesty: "We find that there is only one prophet who would come to the world after the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven and His descent from heaven. This we know from the prophet Malachi and from the angel Gabriel when he announced the birth of John to Zechariah."

And our King said: "And who is that prophet?"—And I replied: "The prophet Elijah. The prophet Malachi who is the last of the prophets of the Law, said, 'Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.' And the angel Gabriel when announcing to Zechariah the |55 birth of John reminded him of these very words, because he said to him, 'Fear not, Zechariah, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

"Think, O our victorious Sovereign, how the angel called Jesus 'the Lord their God.' It is this prophet Elijah who, as we have learned, will come into the world after the ascension of Jesus to heaven. He will come to rebuke the Antichrist, and to teach and preach to everybody concerning the second apparition of Jesus from heaven. As John, son of Zechariah, came before His apparition in the flesh, and announced Him to everybody in saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' 'He is that shall baptise with Holy Ghost and fire,' 'He is the one the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloosen'—so also the prophet Elijah is going to come before the divine apparition of Jesus Christ from heaven in order to announce beforehand to all His glorious apparition, and to make them ready for His presence.

Both messsengers, John and Elijah, are from one power of the Spirit, with the difference that one already came before Christ and the other is going to come before Him, and their coming is similar and to the same effect. In the second coming He will appear from heaven in a great glory of angels, to effect the resurrection of all the children of Adam from the graves. As the Word of God, He created everything from the beginning and He is going to renew everything at the end. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and there is no end and no limit to His Kingdom." And our highly intelligent Sovereign said: If you had not corrupted the Torah and the Gospel, you would have found in them Muhammad also with the other prophets."—And to set his mind at |56 rest on this subject I replied to him: "To the mind of your Majesty, O my illustrious Sovereign—you to whom God has granted that intelligence and broad-mindedness which are so useful for the administration of public and private affairs of the people, and you who speak and act is a way that is congruous with the dignity of your Majesty—it is due to inquire why and for what purpose we might have corrupted the Books. Both the Torah and the prophets proclaim as with the voice of thunder and teach us collectively the divinity and humanity of Christ; His wonderful birth from His Father before the times, a birth which no man will ever be able to describe and

to comprehend. It is written, 'Who shall declare his generation,' and, 'His coming out is in the beginning, from the days of the worlds' and, 'From the womb before the morning-star I have begotten Thee' and, 'His name is before the sun.'

So far as His temporal birth is concerned it is written, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.' David and Isaiah and all the other prophets reveal to us clearly and distinctly the signs and miracles that He was going to perform in His appearance in the flesh, and the accurate knowledge of God with which the earth was going to be filled through this appearance. They tell us about His passion, His crucifixion, and His death in the flesh, as we have demonstrated above. They tell us about His resurrection from the dwelling of the dead and His ascension to heaven. Finally they enlighten us concerning His second appearance from heaven and concerning the resurrection of the dead which He is going to effect, and the judgment which He is going to hold for all, as one who is God and the Word of God. O our Sovereign, while all the corpus of the Christian doctrine is embodied in the Torah and the Gospel like a clear symbol and mirror, for what reason could we have dared to corrupt these living witnesses of our faith? They are indeed the witnesses of our truth, O our Sovereign, and from them shines on us the resplendent light of the duality of the natures of the divinity and humanity of Christ, and that of His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. It could |57 never have been possible for us to stir ourselves against ourselves, and tamper with the testimony of the Torah and the gospel to our Saviour.

"Even if we were able to corrupt the Books of the Torah and the Gospel that we have with us, how could we have tampered with those that are with the Jews? If one says here that we have corrupted those that are in our hands while the Jews themselves corrupted those that are in theirs, how is it that the Jews have not corrupted those passages through which the Christian religion is established? The Christians never have had and will never have such deadly enemies as the Jews; if the Jews had, therefore, tampered with their Book, how could we Christians induce ourselves to accept a text which had been corrupted and changed, a text which would have shaken the very foundations of the truth of our religion? No; the truth is that neither we nor the Jews have ever tampered with the Books. Our mutual hostility is the best guarantee to our statement.

"If the Christians and the Jews are enemies, and if there is no possibility that enemies should have a common agreement on the line that divides them, it was therefore impossible for the Christians and the Jews to agree on the corruption of the Books. Indeed the Jews disagree with us on the meaning of some verbs and nouns, tenses and persons, but concerning the words themselves they have never had any disagreement with us. The very same words are found with us and with them without any changes. Since the Torah and the Prophets teach the truth of Christianity, we would have never allowed ourselves to corrupt them, and that is the reason why, O our victorious Sovereign, we could have never tampered with the Torah and the Prophets. "The very same reason holds good with regard to the Gospel, which we could not and would not have corrupted under any circumstances. What the ancient prophets prophesied about the Christ is written in the Gospel about the

Christ. The ray of light that shines on the eyes of our souls is the same from the Torah, from the prophets, and from the Gospel. The only difference is that in the first two Books the light is in words uttered in advance of the facts, while in the last Book it is in the facts themselves. What the prophets had taught us about the divinity and humanity of Christ, and about all the Economy |58 of the Word-God in the flesh, the Gospel proclaimed to us without corruption in a glorious manner. Further, God, the giver of both the Torah and the Gospel is one, and if we had changed them in any way, we would have changed those things which according to some people are somewhat undignified in our faith."

And our victorious King asked me: "And what are those things which you call undignified in our faith?"—And I replied to his benevolence: "Things such as the growth of Christ in stature and wisdom; His food, drink, and fatigue; His ire and lack of omniscience; His prayer, passion, crucifixion, and burial, and all such things which are believed by some people to be mean and debasing. We might have changed these and similar things held by some people to be mean and undignified; we might have also changed things that are believed by some other people to be contradictory, such as the questions dealing with the times, days, verbs, pronouns, and facts, questions which appear to some people to furnish a handle for objections that tend to some extent to weaken our statement I submit that we might have been tempted to alter these, but since we did not induce ourselves to alter them, how could we have dared to tamper with whole passages revealed by God? Not only could we not dream of tampering with them, but we are proud of them and consider them as higher and more sublime than others. From such higher and more sublime passages we learn that Jesus is an eternal God, and believe that He is consubstantial with the Father, and from the passages that are believed by some to be mean and undignified we learn that this same Jesus is a true man and having the same human nature as ourselves.

"No, O our victorious Sovereign, we have not changed, not even one iota, in the Divine Book, and if the name of Muhammad were in the Book, how we would have expected his coming and longed for it, as we expected with an eager desire to meet those about whom the prophets wrote, when they actually came or they were about to come. Further, what closer relationship have we with the Jews than with the Arabs that we should have accepted the Christ who appeared from the Jews while rejecting the Prophet that appeared from the Arabs? Our natural relationship with the Jews and with the Arabs is on the same footing. Truth to tell, the Jews, before the appearance of Christ, were honoured more than all other nations by God and by men, but after the sublime appearance of the Word-God from them, |59 since they shut their eyes in order not to rejoice in the light that came to enlighten the world, they have been despised and dejected, and they thought of God as other people did.

"A shell is kept in the royal treasuries as long as it contains a pearl, but when the pearl has been extracted from it, it is thrown outside and trodden under the feet of everyone. In this same way are the Jews: as long as the Christ had not appeared from them, but was hidden in them as a pearl is hidden in a shell, they were respected by all men, and God showed them to others, as a glorious and enlightened people, by means of the numerous

signs and wonders that He performed among them; but after the appearance from them of the Christ-God in the flesh, and their rejection of His revelation and their turning away from Him, they were delivered to slavery among all other peoples. ”The Jews are, therefore, despised to-day and rejected by all, but the contrary is the case with the Arabs, who are to-day held in great honour and esteem by God and men, because they forsook idolatry and polytheism, and worshipped and honoured one God; in this they deserve the love and the praise of all; if, therefore, there was an allusion to their Prophet in the Books, not only we would not have introduced any changes in it, but we would have accepted him with great joy and pleasure, in the same way as we are expecting the one of whom we spoke, and who is going to appear at the end of the world. We are not the correctors but the observers of the commandments of God.”

And our Sovereign said with a jocular smile: ”We shall hear you about these at some other time, when business affairs give us a better opportunity for such an intimate exchange of words.” And I praised God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who grants to earthly Kings such a wisdom and understanding in order that through them they may administer their Empire without hindrance. And I blessed also his Majesty and prayed that God may preserve him to the world for many years and establish his throne in piety and righteousness for ever and ever. And in this way I left him on the first day. Here End the Questions and Answers of the First Day. |60 The Questions and Answers of the Second Day. The next day I had an audience of his Majesty. Such audiences had contantly taken place previously, sometimes for the affairs of the State, and some other times for the love of wisdom and learning which was burning in the soul of his Majesty. He is a lovable man, and loves also learning when he finds it in other people, and on this account he directed against me the weight of his objections, whenever necessary.

After I had paid to him my usual respects as King of Kings, he began to address me and converse with me not in a harsh and haughty tone, since harshness and haughtiness are remote from his soul, but in a sweet and benevolent way. And our King of Kings said to me: ”O Catholicos, did you bring a Gospel with you, as I had asked you?”—And I replied to his exalted Majesty: ”I have brought one, O our victorious and God-loving King.”—And our victorious Sovereign said to me: ”Who gave you this Book?”—And I replied to him: ”It is the Word of God that gave us the Gospel, O our God-loving King.”— And our King said: ”Was it not written by four Apostles?” And I replied to him: ”It was written by four Apostles, as our King has said, but not out of their own heads, but out of what they heard and learned from the Word-God. If then the Gospel was written by the Apostles, and if the Apostles simply wrote what they heard and learned from the Word-God, the Gospel has, therefore, been given in reality by the Word-God. Similarly, the Torah was written by Moses, but since Moses heard and learned it from an angel, and the angel heard and learned it from God, we assert that the Torah was given by God and not by Moses.

”In the same way also the Muslims say that they have received the Kur’an from Muhammad, but since Muhammad received knowledge and writing from an angel, they, therefore, affirm

that the Book that was divulged through him was not Muhammad's or the angel's but God's. So also we Christians believe that although the Gospel was given to us by the Apostles, it was not given as from them but as from God, His Word and His Spirit. Further, the letters |61 and official documents of your Majesty are written by the hands of scribes and clerks, but they are not said to be those of scribes, but those of your Majesty, and of the Commander of the Faithful."

And our gracious and wise King said to me: "What do you say about Muhammad?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "Muhammad is worthy of all praise, by all reasonable people, O my Sovereign. He walked in the path of the prophets, and trod in the track of the lovers of God. All the prophets taught the doctrine of one God, and since Muhammad taught the doctrine of the unity of God, he walked, therefore, in the path of the prophets. Further, all the prophets drove men away from bad works, and brought them nearer to good works, and since Muhammad drove his people away from bad works and brought them nearer to the good ones, he walked, therefore, in the path of the prophets. Again, all the prophets separated men from idolatry and polytheism, and attached them to God and to His cult, and since Muhammad separated his people from idolatry and polytheism, and attached them to the cult and the knowledge of one God, beside whom there is no other God, it is obvious that he walked in the path of the prophets. Finally Muhammad taught about God, His Word and His Spirit, and since all the prophets had prophesied about God, His Word and His Spirit, Muhammad walked, therefore, in the path of all the prophets.

"Who will not praise, honour and exalt the one who not only fought for God in words, but showed also his zeal for Him in the sword? As Moses did with the Children of Israel when he saw that they had fashioned a golden calf which they worshipped, and killed all of those who were worshipping it, so also Muhammad evinced an ardent zeal towards God, and loved and honoured Him more than his own soul, his people and his relatives. He praised, honoured and exalted those who worshipped God with him, and promised them kingdom, praise and honour from God, both in this world and in the world to come in the Garden. But those who worshipped idols and not God he fought and opposed, and showed to them the torments of hell and of the fire which is never quenched and in which all evildoers burn eternally.

"And what Abraham, that friend and beloved of God, did in |62 turning his face from idols and from his kinsmen, and looking only towards one God and becoming the preacher of one God to other peoples, this also Muhammad did. He turned his face from idols and their worshippers, whether those idols were those of his own kinsmen or of strangers, and he honoured and worshipped only one God. Because of this God honoured him exceedingly and brought low before his feet two powerful kingdoms which roared in the world like a lion and made the voice of their authority heard in all the earth that is below heaven like thunder, viz: the Kingdom of the Persians and that of the Romans. The former kingdom, that is to say the Kingdom of the Persians, worshipped the creatures instead of the Creator, and the latter, that is to say the Kingdom of the Romans, attributed suffering and death in the flesh to the one who cannot suffer and die in any way and through any process. He

further extended the power of his authority through the Commander of the Faithful and his children from east to west, and from north to south. Who will not praise, O our victorious King, the one whom God has praised, and will not weave a crown of glory and majesty to the one whom God has glorified and exalted? These and similar things I and all God-lovers utter about Muhammad, O my sovereign."

And our King said to me: "You should, therefore, accept the words of the Prophet."—And I replied to his gracious Majesty: "Which words of his our victorious King believes that I must accept?" —And our King said to me: "That God is one and that there is no other one besides Him."—And I replied: "This belief in one God, O my Sovereign, I have learned from the Torah, from the Prophets and from the Gospel. I stand by it and shall die in it."—And our victorious King said to me: "You believe in one God, as you said, but one in three."—And I answered his sentence: "I do not deny that I believe in one God in three, and three in one, but not in three different Godheads, however, but in the persons of God's Word and His Spirit. I believe that these three constitute one God, not in their person but in their nature. I have shown how in my previous words."

And our Kong asked: "How is it that these three persons whom you mention do not constitute three Gods?" And I answered his |63 Majesty: "Because the three of them constitute one God, O our victorious King, and the fact that He is only one God precludes the hypothesis that there are three Gods."—And our King retorted: "The fact that there are three precludes the statement that there is only one God. If there are three, how can they be one?"—And I replied: "We believe that they are three, O our Sovereign, not in Godhead, but in persons, and that they are one not in persons but in Godhead." —And our King retorted: "The fact that they are three precludes the statement that they are one, and the fact that they are one precludes the statement that they are three. This everybody will admit"—And I said to him: "The three in Him are the cause of one, and the one that of three, O our King. Those three have always been the cause of one, and that one of three."—And our King said to me: "How can one be the cause of three and three of one? What is this?"—And I answered his question: "One is the cause of three, O our King, because this number one is the cause of the number two, and the number two that of the number three. This is, how, one is the cause of three, as I said, O King. On the other hand the number three is also the cause of the number one because since the number three is caused by the number two and this number two by the number one, the number three is therefore the cause of number one."

And our King said to me: "In this process the number four would also be the cause of number five and so on, and the question of one Godhead would resolve itself into many Godheads, which, as you say, is the doctrine not of the Christians but of the Magians."—And I replied to our King: "In every comparison there is a time at which one must stop, because it does not resemble reality in everything. We should remember that all numbers are included in number three. Indeed the number three is both complete and perfect and all numbers are included in a complete and perfect number. In this number three all other numbers are included, O our victorious King. Above three all other numbers are simply numbers added

to themselves, by means of that complete and perfect number, as it is said. It follows from all this that one is the cause of three and three of one, as we suggested." —And our King said to me: "Neither three nor two can possibly be said of God."—And I replied to his Majesty: " Neither, therefore, |64 one."—And our King asked: "How?"—And I answered: "If the cause of three is two, the cause of two would be one, and in this case the cause of three would also be one. If then God cannot he said to be three, and the cause of three is two and that of two one, God cannot, therefore be called one either.

Indeed this number one being the cause and the beginning of all numbers, and there being no number in God, we should not have applied it to Him. As, however, we do apply this number to God without any reference to the beginning of an arithmetical number, we apply to Him also the number three without any implication of multiplication or division of Gods, but with a particular reference to the Word and the Spirit of God, through which heaven and earth have been created, as we have demonstrated in our previous colloquy. If the number three cannot be applied to God, since it is caused by the number one, the latter could not by inference be applied to God either, but if the number one can be applied to God, since this number one is the cause of the number three, the last number can therefore be applied also to God."

And our victorious King said: "The number three denotes plurality, and since there cannot be plurality in Godhead, this number three has no room at all in Godhead."—And I replied to his Majesty: "The number one is also the cause and the beginning of all number, O our King, and number is the cause of plurality. Since there cannot be any kind of plurality in God, even the number one would have no room in Him."—And our King said: "the number one as applied to God is attested in the Book."—And I said: "So also is the case, O our King, with a number implying plurality. We find often such a number in the Torah, in the Prophets and in the Gospel, and as I hear, in your Book also, not, however, in connection with Godhead but in relation to humanity."

"So far as the Torah is concerned it is written in it, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;' and 'The man is become as |65 one of us;' and, 'Let us go down, and there confound their language.' As to the Prophets, it is witten in them, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts;' and 'The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me;' and 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all His hosts by the Spirit of His mouth.' As to the Gospel, it is written in it, 'Go ye and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' As to your Book, it is written in it, 'And we sent to her our Spirit,' and 'We breathed into her from our Spirit,' and 'We fashioned,' 'We said,' 'We did,' and all such expressions which are said of God in a plural form. If the Holy Books refer these words to God in a plural form, what the Books say concerning God we have to say and admit Since we had to preserve without change the number one as applied to God, we had also by inference to preserve without modification the number three, that is to say plurality, as applied to Him. The number one refers to nature and Godhead, and the number three

to God, His Word and His Spirit, because God has never been, is not, and will never be, without Word and Spirit."

And our wise Sovereign said: The plural form in connection with God, in the expressions 'We sent,' 'We breathed,' 'We said,' etc, has been used in the Books not as a sign of persons or of Trinity, but as a mark of Divine majesty and power. It is even the habit of the kings and governors of the earth to use such a mode of speech." —And I replied to the wealth of his intelligence: What your glorious Majesty has said is true. To you God gave knowledge and understanding along with power and greatness, more than to all other countries and kings. The community of all mankind, whether composed of freemen or of subjected races is personified in the kings, and the |66 community of mankind being composed of innumerable persons, the kings rightly make use of the plural form in expressions such as, 'We ordered,' 'We said,' 'We did,' etc. Indeed the kings represent collectively all the community of mankind individually. If all men are one with the king, and the king orders, says and does, all men order, say and do in the king, and he says and does in the name of all.

"Further, the kings are human beings, and human beings are composed of body and soul, and the body is in its turn composed of the power of the four elements. Because a human being is composed of many elements, the kings make use not unjustly of the plural form of speech, such as 'We did,' 'We ordered,' etc. As to God who is simple in His nature and one in His essence and remote from all division and bodily composition, what greatness and honour can possibly come to Him when He, who is one and undivided against Himself, says in the plural form, 'We ordered,' and, 'We did?' The greatest honour that can be offered to God is that He should be believed in by all as He is. In His essence He is one, but He is three because of His Word and His Spirit. This Word and this Spirit are living beings and are of His nature, as the word and the spirit of our victorious King are of his nature, and he is one King with his word and spirit, which are constantly with him without cessation, without division and without displacement.

When, therefore, expressions such as, 'We spoke,' 'We said,' 'We did,' and 'Our image and likeness,' are said to refer to God, His Word and His Spirit, they are referred in the way just described, O King of Kings. Who is more closely united to God than His Word through which He created all, governs all land directs all? Or who is nearer to Him than His Spirit through which He vivifies, sanctifies and renews all? David spoke thus: 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all His hosts by the Spirit of His mouth;' and, 'He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction;' and 'Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit and they are created, and Thou renewest the face of the earth.' If one asserts that the expressions, 'Our image' and 'Our |67 likeness' used by Moses and the expressions, 'We made,' and 'We breathed,' used by Muhammad, do not refer to God but to the angels, how disgraceful it would be to believe that the image and the likeness of God and those of the angels, that is of the creator and the created, are one! How dishonourable it would be to affirm that God says, orders and does with the angels and His creatures! God orders and does like the Lord and the creator, and orders and does in a way that transcends that

of all others; but the angels being creatures and servants, do not order with God, but are under the order of God; they do not create with God, but are very much created by God. The angels are what David said about them, 'Who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire.' In this he shows that they are made and created.

"As to the Word and Spirit of God the prophet David says that they are not created and made, but creators and makers: 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made,' and not His Word alone; and 'the heavenly hosts were created by His Spirit' and not His Spirit alone; and, 'Because He said and they were made, and He commanded and they were created.' It is obvious that one who 'says,' 'says' and 'commands' by word, and that the word precedes the action, and the thought precedes the deed. Since God is one without any other before Him, with Him and after Him, and since all the above expressions which denote plurality cannot be ascribed to angels, and since the nature of God is absolutely free from all compositions—to whom could we ascribe then all such expressions? I believe, O our victorious King, that they refer to the Word and the Spirit of God. If it is right that the expression 'One God' is true, it is also right that the expression ' We ordered,' 'We said,' and 'We breathed from our Spirit' are without doubt true and not false. It is also possible that the three letters placed before some Surahs in the Kur'an, as

I have learned, such as A.LR. and T.S.M. and Y.S.M. and others, |68 which are three in number, refer also in your Book to God, His Word and His Spirit. And our victorious King said: "And what did impede the Prophet from saying that this was so, that is that these letters clearly referred to God, His Word and His Spirit?"—And I replied to his Majesty: "The obstacle might have come from the weakness of those people who would be listening to such a thing. People whose ears were accustomed to the multiplicity of idols and false gods could not have listened to the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or to that of one God, His Word, and His Spirit. They would have believed that this also was polytheism. This is the reason why your Prophet proclaimed openly the doctrine of one God, but that of the Trinity he only showed it in a somewhat veiled and mysterious way, that is to say through his mention of God, and of His Spirit and through the expressions 'We sent our Spirit' and 'We fashioned a complete man.' He did not teach it openly in order that his hearers may not be scandalised by it and think of polytheism, and he did not hide it completely in order that he may not deviate from the path followed by Moses, Isaiah, and other prophets, but he showed it symbolically by means of the three letters that precede the Surahs.

"The ancient prophets had also spoken of the unity of the nature of God and used words referring to this unity in an open and clear way, but the words which referred to His three persons they used them in a somewhat veiled and symbolical way. They did so not for any other reason than that of the weakness of men whose mind was bound up in idolatry and polytheism. When, however, Christ appeared to us in the flesh, He proclaimed openly and clearly what the prophets had said in a veiled and symbolical way, 'Go ye,' said |69 He to His Disciples, 'and baptise all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' Moses also uttered the same thing in a way that means both one and three,

'Hear, O Israel,' said he, 'The Lord your God is one Lord.' In saying He 'is one,' he refers to the one nature of Godhead, and in saying the three words, 'Lord, God, and Lord' he refers to the three persons of that Godhead, as if one was saying that God, His Word and His Spirit were one eternal God. Job also said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord.' In blessing the single name of the Lord, Job used it three times, in reference to one in three."

And our King said to me: "If He is one, He is not three; and if He is three, He is not one; what is this contradiction?"—And I answered: "The sun is also one, O our victorious King, in its spheric globe, its light and its heat, and the very same sun is also three, one sun in three powers. In the same way the soul has the powers of reason and intelligence, and the very same soul is one in one thing and three in another thing. In the same way also a piece of three gold denarii, is called one and three, one in its gold that is to say in its nature, and three in its persons that is to say in the number of denarii The fact that the above objects are one does not contradict and annul the other fact—that they are also three, and the fact that they are three does not contradict and annul the fact that they are also one.

"In the very same way the fact that God is one does not annul the other fact that He is in three persons, and the fact that He is in three persons does not annul the other fact that He is one God. Man is a being which is living, rational and mortal, and he is one and three, one in being one man and three in being living, rational and mortal, and this idea gives rise to three notions not contradictory but rather confirmatory to one another. By the fact that man is one, he is by necessity living, rational and mortal, and by the fact that he is living, rational and mortal, he is by necessity one man. This applies also to God in whom the fact of His being three does not annul the other fact that He is one and vice versa, but these two facts confirm and corroborate each other. If He is one God, He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and if He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy |70 Spirit, He is one God, because the eternal nature of God consists in Fatherhood, Filiation, and Procession, and in the three of them He is one God, and in being one God He is the three of them."

And our King said to me: "Do you say that the nature of God is composed of the above three, as the human nature is composed of its being living, rational, and mortal, and as the sun is composed of light, heat, and sphericity, and as the soul is composed of reason and intelligence, and as gold is composed of height, depth, and width?"—And I denied this and said: "No, this is not so."—And our King said to me: "Why then do you wish to demonstrate with bodily demonstrations One who has no body and is not composed?"—And I answered his Majesty: "Because there is no other God like Him, from whom I might draw a demonstration as to what is a being that has no beginning and no end."—And our King said to me: "It is never allowed to draw a demonstration from the creatures concerning the Creator." —And I said to Him: "We will then be in complete ignorance of God, O King of Kings."

And our King said: "Why?"—And I answered: "Because all that we say about God is deducted from natural things that we have with us; as such are the adjectives: King of all Kings, Lord of all Lords, Mighty, Powerful, Omnipotent, Light, Wisdom, and Judge. We

call God by these and similar adjectives from things that are with us, and it is from them that we take our demonstration concerning God. If we remove Him from such demonstrations and do not speak of Him through them, with what and through what could we figure in our mind Him who is higher than all image and likeness? " And our victorious King said to me: "We call God by these names, not because we understand Him to resemble things that we have with us, but in order to show that He is far above them, without comparison. In this way, we do not attribute to God things that are with us, we rather ascribe to ourselves things that are His, with great mercy from Him and great imperfection from us. Words such as: kingdom, life, power, greatness, honour, wisdom, sight, knowledge, and justice, etc, belong truly, naturally and eternally to God, and they only belong to us in an unnatural, imperfect, and temporal way. With God they have not begun and they will not end, but with us children of men they began and they will end."

And I replied to his Majesty: "All that your Majesty said on | 71 this subject, O our victorious King, has been said with perfect wisdom and great knowledge; this is especially true of what you have just now said. It was not indeed with the intention of lowering God to a comparison with His creatures, that from the latter I drew a comparison concerning Him who, in reality, has no comparison with the created beings at all. I made use of such similes solely for the purpose of uplifting my mind from the created things to God. All the things that we have with us compare very imperfectly with the things of God. Even in saying of God that He is one, we introduce in our mind division concerning Him, because when we say for instance one man, one angel, one denarius, one pearl, we immediately think of a division that singles out and separates one denarius from many denarii, one pearl from many pearls, one angel from many angels, and one man from many men.

"A man would not be counting rightly but promiscuously if He were to say: one man and two angels, one horse and two asses, one denarius and two pence, one pearl and two emeralds. Every entity is counted with the entities of its own species, and we say: one, two, or three men; one, two, or three angels; one, two, or three denarii; one, two, or three pearls, as the case may be. With all these calculations in saying one we introduce, as I said, the element of division, but in speaking of God we cannot do the same thing, because there are no other entities of the same species as Himself which would introduce division in Him in the same sense as in our saying: one angel or one man. He is one, single and unique in His nature. Likewise when we say three we do not think of bodies or numbers, and when we say: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we do not say it in a way that implies division, separation, or promiscuity, but we think of it as something high above us in a divine, incomprehensible, and indescribable way.

"Our fathers and our children were bora from marital union and intercourse, and their fatherhood and filiation have a beginning and an end. Further, a father was a son before becoming a father, and all relationships are liable to natural dissolution and cessation. As to Fatherhood, Filiation, and Procession in God they are not in a way similar to those of our humanity, but in a divine way that mind cannot comprehend. They do not arise from

any intercourse between them, nor are they from time or in the time but eternally without beginning and without end. Since the above three attributes are of the nature |72 of God, and the nature of God has no beginning and no end, they also are without a beginning and without an end. And since He who is without a beginning and without an end is also unchangeable, that Fatherhood, therefore, that Filiation and that Procession are immutable and will remain without any modification. The things that are with us give but an imperfect comparison with the things that are above, because things that are God's are above comparison and likeness, as we have already demonstrated."

And our victorious King said: "The mind of rational beings will not agree to speak of God who is eternally one in Himself in terms of Trinity."—And I answered: "Since the mind of the rational beings is created, and no created being can comprehend God, you have rightly affirmed, O King of Kings, that the mind of the rational beings will not agree to speak of one God in terms of Trinity. The mind, however, of the rational beings can only extend to the acts of God, and even then in an imperfect and partial manner; as to the nature of God we learn things that belong to it not so much from our rational mind as from the Books of Revelation, i.e. from what God Himself has revealed and taught about Himself through His Word and Spirit: "The Word of God said, 'No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father,' and, 'The Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God.' No one knows what there is in man except man's own spirit that is in him, so also no one knows what is in God except the Spirit of God. The Word and the Spirit of God, being eternally from His own nature—as heat and light from the sun, and as reason and mind from the soul—alone see and know the Divine nature, and it is they who have revealed and taught us in the sacred Books that God is one and three, as I have already shown in my above words from the Torah, the Prophets, the Gospel, and the Kur'an according to what I have learned from those who are versed in the knowledge of your Book.

Were it not for the fact that His Word and His Spirit were eternally from His own nature God would not have spoken of Himself in the Torah, as, 'Our image and Our likeness;' and 'Behold |73 the man is become as one of us;' and 'Let us go down and there confound their language;' and the Kur'an would not have said, 'And we sent to her our Spirit;' and 'We breathed into her from our Spirit;' and 'We did,' 'We said,' and so on. By such expressions (The Kur'an) refers to God and His Word and His Spirit as we have said above. Has not the mind of the rational beings, O our victorious Sovereign, to follow the words of God rather than its own fanciful conceptions? The inspired Books are surely right, and since we find in them that one and the same prophet speaks of God as one and as three, we are compelled by the nature of the subject to believe it."

And our powerful Sovereign said to me: "How does the nature of the subject compel us to believe it?"—And I answered: "Because my Sovereign and my King granted full freedom to his obedient servant to speak before him, may I further implore your Majesty to be willing that I ask more questions?" And our King said: "Ask anything you want."—And I then said: "Is not God a simple and uncircumscribed Spirit?"—And our King said "Yes."—And I asked

his Majesty: ”Does He perceive in an uncircumscribed way with all His being, or does He perceive like us with one part only and not with another?”—And our King answered: ”He perceives with all its nature without any circumscription.”—And I asked: ”Was there any other thing with Him from eternity, or not?”— And our King answered: ”Surely not.”—And I asked: ”Does not a perceiver perceive a perceived object?” And our King answered: ”Yes.”

And I then asked: ”If God is a perceiver and knower from the beginning and from eternity, a perceiver and a knower perceives and knows a perceived and known object, and because there was no created thing that was eternally with God—since He created afterwards when He wished—in case there was no other being with Him, whom He might perceive and know eternally, how could He be called a perceiver and a knower in a Divine and eternal sense, and before the creation of the world?” And our victorious King answered: ”What you have said is true. |74 It is indeed necessary that a perceiver should perceive a perceived object, and the knower a known one, but it is possible to say that He perceived and knew His own self.”—And I asked: ”If He is all a perceiver without any circumscription, so that He does not perceive and know with one part and is perceived and known with another part, how can a perceiver of this kind perceive Himself? The eye of man is the perceiver and it perceives the other objects, but it can never perceive its own self except with another eye like itself, because the sight of the eye is unable to perceive itself. If the sight of the composed eye cannot be divided into parts so that a part of it perceives itself, and the other part is perceived by itself, how can we think of God who is a Spirit without body, without division, and without parts that He perceives Himself and is perceived by Himself? ”

And our intelligent Sovereign asked: ”Which of the two do you admit: does God perceive Himself or not?”—And I answered: ”Yes; He perceives and knows Himself with a sight that has no limits and a knowledge that has no bounds.”—And our King asked: ”How is it that your argumentation and reasoning concerning divisions, separations, and partitions do not rebound against you?”— And I replied to him: ”God perceives and knows Himself through His Word and the Spirit that proceeds from Him. The Word and the Spirit are a clear mirror of the Father, a mirror that is not foreign to Him but of the same essence and nature as Himself, without any limits and bounds. He was perceiving His Word, His Spirit, and His creatures, divinely, eternally, and before the worlds, with this difference, however, that He was perceiving and knowing His Word and His Spirit as His nature, His very nature, and He was eternally perceiving and knowing His creatures not as His nature but as His creatures. He was perceiving and knowing His Word and His Spirit as existing divinely and eternally, and His creatures not as existing then but as going to exist in the future. Through His Word and His Spirit He perceives and knows the beauty, the splendour, and the infiniteness of His own nature, and through His creatures the beauty of His wisdom, of His power, and of His goodness, now, before now, and before all times, movements, and beginnings.”

And our King asked philosophically: ”Are they parts of one another, and placed at a distance from one another, so that one part |75 perceives and the other is perceived?”—And I replied

to his Majesty: ”No, not so, O King of Kings. They are not parts of one another, because a simple being has no parts and no composition; nor are they placed at a distance one from the other, because the infiniteness of God, of His Word, and of His Spirit is one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Spirit, without any break, distance, and confusion of any kind, as the soul is in the reason and the reason in the mind, without break and confusion; and as the spheric globe of the sun is in its light, and this light in its heat; and as the colour, scent, and taste are in the apple, without any break, confusion, and promiscuity. All figures, comparisons, and images, are far below that adorable and ineffable nature of God, so there is fear that we may be falsely held to believe in the plurality of Godhead.”

And our powerful and wise King said: ”There is such a fear indeed.”—And I said: ”O King of Kings, this would arise in case we diminished something from Godhead, just as well as if we added something to it. As it is a blasphemy to add something to Godhead, it is also a blasphemy to diminish something from it in our belief, and as it is not allowed to add anything to the sun or to the pearl, so it is not allowed to diminish anything from them. He who divests God of His Word and His Spirit, resembles the one who would divest the sun of its light and its heat, and the soul of its reason and its mind, and the pearl of its beauty and its lustre. As it is impossible to conceive a pearl without lustre, or a sun without light, or a soul without reason and mind, so it is never possible that God should be without Word and Spirit If, therefore, Word and Spirit are God’s by nature, and God is eternal, it follows that the Word and the Spirit of God are also eternal. They are not added to Him from outside that one might think of the plurality of Godhead, but it is of the essence of God to possess both Word and Spirit.”

And our victorious King said: ”In your previous words you said that the perceiver perceives the one that is perceived, and the one that is perceived perceives also the one that perceives; and that if they be near a thing they are all there at the same time, because the Word and the Spirit of God are the object that is perceived by God and are eternal like the perceiver; and if there is no perceiver there is no perceived object either, and if there is no perceived object there is no perceiver. Did you say these things, or not?”—And I answered: |76 ”I did say them, O our victorious King.”—And the King of Kings said: ”But it is possible that God was perceiving His creatures before He created them.”—And I said: ”O our victorious King, we cannot think or say otherwise. God perceived and knew eternally His creatures, before He brought them into being.”

And our King said: ”The nature of the subject will not compel us, therefore, to believe that if the perceiver is eternal, the perceived should also be eternal, because the fact that God is an eternal perceiver of the creature does not carry with it the necessity that the creature which is perceived by Him is also eternal, and the fact that die creature is perceived does not carry with it the necessity that He also is the perceived object like it. As such a necessity as that you were mentioning in the case of the creature has been vitiated, so also is the case with regard to the Word and the Spirit.” And I said: ”O our King, it is not the same kind of perception that affects the creature on the one hand, and the Word and the Spirit on the

other. This may be known and demonstrated as follows: it is true that God was perceiving the creature eternally, but the creature is not infinite, and God is infinite, the creature has a limited perceptibility, and the perception of God has no limits. Further, the nature of God having no limits, His knowledge also has no limits, as the divine David says, 'His understanding is infinite.' If God, therefore, has any perception, and if He is infinite and unlimited, that perception must by necessity be infinite and unlimited, and if His perception is infinite, it perceives a perceived object that is likewise infinite; but the perceived object that is infinite being only the nature of God, it follows that His Word and His Spirit are from His nature, in the same way as the word and the spirit of a man are from human nature. It is, therefore, obvious that if God is an infinite perceiver, the Word and the Spirit that are from Him are also infinite.

"God knows His Word and His Spirit in an infinite way as His Knowledge and His perception are infinite, but He perceives and knows His creature not in the same infinite way as are His perception and His Knowledge, but in a finite way according to the limits of the creature and of the human nature. He perceived His creature only |77 through His prescience, and not as a substance that is of the same nature as Himself, and, on the contrary, He perceived the Word and the Spirit not through His prescience but as a substance that is of the same nature as Himself. This is the reason why the prophet David said, 'For ever, art thou O Lord, and Thy Word is settled in heaven;' and likewise the prophet Isaiah, 'The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the Word of our Lord shall stand forever,' In this passage Isaiah counts all the world as grass and flower, and the Word and the Spirit of God as something imperishable, immortal, and eternal.

"If, therefore, God is an infinite perceiver, the object that is perceived by Him has also to be infinite, in order that His perception of the perceived should not be incomplete in places. And who is this infinite-perceived except the Word and the Spirit of God? God indeed was not without perception and a perceived object of the same nature as Himself till He brought His creature into being, but He possessed along with His eternal perception and eternal knowledge a perceived object that was eternal and a known object that was also eternal. It is not permissible to say of God that He was not a perceiver and a knower, till the time in which He created. And if God is eternally a perceiver and a knower, and if a perceiver of the perceived and a knower of the known is truly a perceiver and a knower, and if His Word and His Spirit were perceived by Him divinely and eternally, it follows that these same Word and Spirit were eternally with Him. As to His creatures, He created them afterwards, when He wished, by means of His Word and His Spirit."

And our King said to me: "O Catholicos, if this is your religion and that of the Christians, I will say this, that the Word and the Spirit are also creatures of God, and there is no one who is uncreated except one God."—And I replied: "If the Word and the Spirit are also creatures of God like the rest, by means of whom did God create the heaven and the earth and all that they contain? The Books teach us that He created the world by means of His Word and His Spirit—by means of whom did He then create this Word and this Spirit? If He created them

by means of another word and another spirit, the same conclusion would also be applied to them: will they |78 be created or uncreated? If uncreated, the religion of the Catholicos and of the Christians is vindicated; and if created, by means of whom did God create them? And this process of gibberish argumentation will go on indefinitely until we stop at that Word and that Spirit hidden eternally in God, by means of whom we assert that the worlds were created."

And the King said: "You appear to believe in three heads, O Catholicos."—And I said: "This is certainly not so, O our victorious King. I believe in one head, the eternal God the Father, from whom the Word shone and the Spirit radiated eternally, together, and before all times, the former by way of filiation and the latter by way of procession, not in a bodily but in a divine way that befits God. This is the reason why they are not three separate Gods. The Word and the Spirit are eternally from the single nature of God, who is not one person divested of word and spirit as the weakness of the Jewish belief has it. He shines and emits rays eternally with the light of His Word and the radiation of His Spirit, and He is one head with His Word and His Spirit. I do not believe in God as stripped of His Word and Spirit, in the case of the former without mind and reason, and in the case of the latter without spirit and life. It is only the idolaters who believe in false gods or idols who have neither reason nor life."

And our victorious King said: "It seems to me that you believe in a vacuous God, since you believe that He has a child."—And I answered: "O King, I do not believe that God is either vacuous or solid, because both these adjectives denote bodies. If vacuity and solidity belong to bodies, and God is a Spirit without a body, neither of the two qualifications can be ascribed to Him."—And the King said: "What then do you believe that God is if He is neither vacuous nor solid?"—And I replied to His Majesty: "God is a Spirit and an incorporeal light, from whom shine and radiate eternally and divinely His Word and His Spirit. The soul begets the mind and causes reason to proceed from it, and the fire begets the light and |79 causes heat to proceed from its nature, and we do not say that either the soul or fire are hollow or solid. So also is the case with regard to God, about Whom we never say that He is vacuous or solid when He makes His Word shine and His Spirit radiate from His essence eternally."

And our victorious King said: "What is the difference in God between shining and radiating?"—And I replied: "There is the same difference between shining and radiating in God as that found in the illustration furnished by the fire and the apple: the fire begets the light and causes heat to proceed from it, and the apple begets the scent and causes the taste and savour to proceed from it. Although both the fire and the apple give rise, the former to light and heat, and the latter to scent and savour, yet they do not do it in the same manner and with an identical effect on the one and the same sense of our body. We receive the heat of the fire with the sense of feeling, the light with the eyes, the scent of the apple with the sense of smell, and the sweetness of its savour with the palate. From this it

becomes clear that the mode of filiation is different from that of procession. This is as far as one can go from bodily comparisons and similes to the realities and to God."

And the King said: "You will not go very far with God in your bodily comparisons and similes."—And I said: "O King, because I am a bodily man I made use of bodily metaphors, and not of those that are without any body and any composition. Because I am a bodily man, and not a spiritual being, I make use of bodily comparisons in speaking of God. How could I or any other human being speak of God as He is with a tongue of flesh, with lips fashioned of mud, and with a soul and mind closely united to a body? This is far beyond the power of men and angels to do. God Himself speaks with the prophets about Himself not as He is, because they cannot know and hear about Him as He is, but simply in the way that fits in with their own nature, a way they are able to understand. In His revelations to the ancient prophets sometimes He revealed Himself as man, sometimes as fire, sometimes as wind, and some other times in some other ways and similitudes.

"The divine David said, 'He then spoke in visions to His holy ones;' and the Prophet Hosea said on behalf of God, ' I have |80 multiplied my visions and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets;' and one of the Apostles of Christ said, 'God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto our fathers by the prophets.' If God appeared and spake to the ancient in bodily similitudes and symbols, we with stronger reason find ourselves completely unable to speak of God and to understand anything concerning Him except through bodily similitudes and metaphors. I shall here make bold and assert that I hope I shall not deserve any. blame from your Majesty if I say that you are in the earth the representative of God for the earthly people; now God maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and the unjust Your Majesty also in the similitude of God will make us worthy of forgiveness if in the fact of being earthly beings we speak of God in an earthly way and not in a spiritual way like spiritual beings."

And our victorious King said: "You are right in what you said before and say now on the subject that God is above all the thoughts and minds of created beings, and that all the thoughts and minds of created beings are lower not only than God Himself but also His work The fact, however, that you put the servant and the Lord on the same footing you make the creator equal with the created, and in this you fall into error and falsehood." And I replied: "O my Sovereign, that the Word and the Spirit of God should be called servants and created I considered and consider not far from unbelief. If the Word and the Spirit are believed to be from God, and God is conceived to be a Lord and not a servant, His Word and Spirit are also, by inference, lords and not servants. It is one and the same freedom that belongs to God and to His Word and Spirit and they are called Word and Spirit of God not in an unreal, but in a true, sense. The kingdom which my victorious Sovereign possesses is the same as that held by his word and his spirit, so that no one separates his word and his spirit from his kingdom, and he shines in the diadem of kingdom together with his word and his spirit in a way that they are not three Kings, and in a way that he does not shine in the diadem of kingdom apart from his word and his spirit. |81

”If it please your Majesty, O my powerful Sovereign, I will also say this: the splendour and the glory of the kingdom shine in one and the same way in the Commander of the Faithful and in his sons Musa and Harun, and in spite of the fact that kingdom and lordship in them are one, their personalities are different For this reason no one would venture to consider, without the splendour of kingdom, not only the Commander of the Faithful but also the beautiful flowers and majestic blossoms that budded and blossomed out of him; indeed the three of them blossom in an identical kingdom, and this one and the same kingdom shines and radiates in each one of them, so that no one dares to ascribe servitude to any of them. In a small and partial way the same light of kingdom, lordship, and divinity shines and radiates eternally in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or if one prefers to put it, in God, His Word, and His Spirit, and no one is allowed to give to any of them the name of servant If the Word and the Spirit are servants of God, while they are from God Himself, the logical conclusion to be drawn I leave to a tongue other than mine to utter.”

And the King said: ”It is very easy for your tongue, O Catholicos, to prove the existence of that Lord and God, and the existence also of that consubstantial servant, and to draw conclusions sometimes or to abstain from them some other times, but the minds and the will of rational beings are induced to follow not your mind which is visible in your conclusions, but the law of nature and the inspired Books.” And I replied: ”O our victorious King, I have proved my words that I have uttered in the first day and to-day both from nature and from Book. So far as arguments from nature are concerned, I argued, confirmed, and corroborated my words sometimes from the soul with its mind and its reason; sometimes from the fire with its light and its heat; sometimes from the apple with its scent and its savour; and some other tunes from your Majesty and from the rational and royal flowers that grew from it: Musa and Harun, the sons of your Majesty. As to the inspired Books, I proved the object under |82 discussion sometimes from Moses, sometimes from David, and some other times I appealed to the Kur’an, as a witness to prove my statement.

”God said to the prophet David and caused him further to prophesy in the following manner concerning His Word and His Spirit, ’I have set up my King on my holy hill of Zion.’ Before this He had called Him His Christ, ’Against the Lord and against His Christ.’ If the Christ of God is a King, it follows that the Christ is not a servant but a King. Afterwards David called Him twice Son, ’Thou art my Son and this day I have begotten Thee,’ and, ’Kiss the Son lest the Lord be angry and ye perish from His way.’ If the Christ, therefore, is a Son, as God called Him through the prophet David, and if no son is a servant, it follows, O King, that the Christ is not a servant. In another passage the same prophet David called the Christ ’Lord,’ ’Son,’ and ’A priest for ever,’ because he said, ’The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand.’ And in order to show that Christ is of the same nature and power as God, he said on behalf of the Father as follows, ’In the beauties of holiness from the womb I have begotten Thee from the beginning.’ God, therefore, called Christ ’a Lord’ through the prophet David, and since no true Lord is a servant, it follows that Christ is not a servant.

Further, Christ has been called through David one 'begotten of God' both 'from eternity' and 'In the beauties of holiness from the womb.' Since no one begotten of God is a servant, the Christ, therefore, O King of Kings, is not a servant and created, but He is uncreated and a Lord. God said also through the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz, King of Israel, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called—not a servant—but Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.' The same Isaiah said, 'For unto |83 us a Child—and not a servant—is born, and unto us a Son—not a servant and a created being—is given, and His name has been called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God of the Worlds.' If the Christ, therefore, is the Son of God, this Son of God, as God Himself spoke through the prophet Isaiah, is the 'mighty God of the worlds,' and not a servant in subjection, but a Lord and a Prince. It follows, O our victorious King, that the Christ is surely a Lord and a Prince, and not a servant in subjection.

"As your Majesty would wax angry if your children were called servants, so also God will be wrathful if anybody called His Word and His Spirit servants. As the honour and dishonour of the children of your Majesty redound on you, so also and in a higher degree the honour and dishonour of God's Word and Spirit redound on Him. It is for this reason that Christ said in the Gospel, 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent Him,' and, 'He who honoureth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God shall abide on him.' "The above is written in the Gospel. I heard also that it is written in the Kur'an that Christ is the Word and the Spirit of God,and not a servant. If Christ is the Word and the Spirit of God, as the Kur'an testifies, He is not a servant but a Lord, because the Word and the Spirit of God are Lords. It is by this method, O our God-loving King, based on the law of nature and on divinely inspired words, and not on purely human argumentation, word, and thought, that I both in the present and in the first conversation have demonstrated the lordship and the sonship of Christ, and the Divine Trinity."

Our victorious King said: "Has not the Christ been called also several times a servant by the prophets?"—And I said: "I am aware, O my Sovereign, of the fact that the Christ has also been called a servant, but that this appellation does not imply a real servitude is borne out by the illustration that may be taken from the status of Harun, the blossom and the flower of your Majesty. He is now |84 called by everybody 'Heir Presumptive,' but after your long reign, he will be proclaimed King and Sovereign by all He served his military service through the mission entrusted to him by your Majesty to repair to Constantinople against the rebellious and tyrannical Byzantines. Through this service and mission he will not lose his royal sonship and his freedom, nor his princely honour and glory, and acquire the simple name of servitude and subjection, like any other individual. So also is the case with the Christ, the Son of the heavenly King. He fulfilled the will of His Father in His coming on His military mission to mankind, and in His victory over sin, death, and Satan. He did not by this act lose His royal Sonship, and did not become a stranger to Divinity, Lordship, and Kingdom, nor did He put on the dishonour of servitude and subjection like any other individual.

"Further, the prophets called Him not by what He was, but by what He was believed by the Jews to be. In one place the prophets called Him, according to the belief of the Jews, 'A Servant, a Rejected one, one without form or comeliness, a Stricken one, a Smitten one, a man of many sorrows.' In another place, however, it has been said of Him that, 'He is the fairest of the children of men,' the Mighty God of the worlds, the Father of the future world, the Messenger of the Great Counsel of God, Prince of Peace, a Son, and a Child, as we demonstrated in our former replies. The last adjectives refer to His nature, and He has been spoken of through the first adjectives on account of the mission that He performed to His father for the salvation of all, and in compliance with the belief of the Jews who only looked at Him in His humanity, and were totally incapable of considering Him in the nature of His divinity that clothed itself completely with humanity. |85

"Some ignorant Byzantines who know nothing of the kingship and sonship of your son Harun, may consider him and call him a simple soldier and not a Prince and a King, but those who know him with certainty will not call him a simple soldier, but will consider him and call him King and Prince. In this way the prophets considered the Christ our Lord as God, King, and Son, but the unbelieving Jews believed Him to be a servant and a mere man under subjection. He has indeed been called not only a servant, on account of His service, but also a stone, a door, the way, and a lamb. He was called a stone, not because He was a stone by nature, but because of the truth of His teaching; and a door, because it is through Him that we entered into the knowledge of God: and the way, because it is He who in His person opened to us the way of immortality; and a lamb, because He was immolated for the life of the world. In this same way He was called also a servant, not because He was a servant by nature, but on account of the service which He performed for our salvation, and on account of the belief of the Jews.

"I heard also that it is written in your Book that the Christ was sent not as a servant, but as a son, 'I swear by this mountain and by the begetter and His Child.' A child is like his father, whether the latter be a servant or a freeman, and if it is written, 'The Christ doth surely not disdain to be a servant of God,' it is also written that God doth not disdain to be a Father to Christ because He said through the prophet about the Christ,' He will be to Me a Son —and not a servant' —and, also 'I will make Him a first-born—not a servant—and will raise Him up above the Kings of the earth.' If Christ has been raised by God above the Kings of the earth, He who is above the Kings cannot be a servant, Christ is, therefore, O King, not a servant and one under |86 subjection, but a King of Kings and a Lord. It is not possible that a servant should be above angels and kings.

"God said also about the Christ through the same prophet David, 'His name shall endure for ever, and His name is before the sun. All men shall be blessed by Him, and all shall glorify Him.' How can the name of a servant endure for ever, and how can the name of a servant be before the sun and other creatures, and how can all nations be blessed by a servant, and how can all nations glorify a servant? God said to His Word and His Spirit, 'Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for

Thy possession. Thou shalt shepherd them with a rod of iron. Be wise now, O ye Kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and hold to Him with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye stray from His way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' If all the nations and the uttermost parts of the earth are the inheritance and the possession of the Christ, and if he who has under his authority all the nations and the uttermost parts of the earth is not a servant, the Christ, therefore, O our victorious Sovereign, is not a servant, but a Lord and Master; and if the Kings and the judges of the earth have been ordered by God to serve the Christ with fear and hold to Him with trembling, it is impossible that this same Christ who is served, held to, and kissed by the Kings and judges of the earth should be a servant.

It follows, O our victorious Sovereign, that the Christ is a King of Kings, since Kings worshipped and worship Him; and a Lord and judge of judges, since judges served and serve Him with fear. If He were a servant, what kind of a wrath and destruction could He bring on the unbelievers, and what kind of a blessing could He bestow on those who put their trust in Him? That He is a Lord over all and a Master over all, He testifies about Himself, and His testimony is true. Indeed He said to His disciples when He was about to ascend to heaven, and mount on the Cherubim and fly on the spiritual wings of the Seraphim, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' If Christ has been given all the power of heaven and earth, He who |87 is constituted in this way in heaven and in earth is God over all, and Christ, therefore, is God over all. If He is not a true God, how can He have power in heaven and in earth; and if He has power in heaven and in earth, how can He not be true God? Indeed He has power in heaven and in earth because He is God, since any one who has power in heaven and in earth is God.

The Archangel Gabriel testified to this when he announced His conception to the always virgin Mary, 'And He shall reign over the house of Jacob, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.' If the Christ reigns for ever, and if the one who reigns for ever there is no end to his kingdom, it follows, O our Sovereign, that Christ is a Lord and God over all. The prophet Daniel testified also to this in saying, 'I saw one like the son of men coming on the clouds of heaven, and they brought Him near before the Ancient of days, who gave Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all nations should serve Him and worship Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom shall not pass away and be destroyed.' If the kingdom of Christ shall not pass away and be destroyed, He is God over all, and Christ is, therefore, God over all, O our King: over the prophets and the angels.

If Christ has been called by the prophets God and Lord, and if it has been said by some people that God suffered and died in the flesh, it is evident that it is the human nature which the Word-God took from us that suffered and died, because in no Book, neither in the prophets nor in the Gospel, do we find that God Himself died in the flesh, but we do find in all of them that the Son and Jesus Christ died in the flesh. The expression that God suffered and died in the flesh is not right."

And our victorious King asked: And who are those who say that God suffered and died in the flesh."—And I answered: The Jacobites and Melchites say that God suffered and died in the flesh, as to us we not only do not assert that God suffered and died in our nature, but that He even removed the passibility of our human nature that He put on from Mary by His impassibility, and its mortality by His immortality, and He made it to resemble divinity, to the extent that a created being is capable of resembling his Creator. A created |88 being cannot make himself resemble his Creator, but the Creator is able to bring His creature to His own resemblance. It is not the picture that makes the painter paint a picture in its own resemblance, but it is the painter that paints the picture to his own resemblance; it is not the wood that works and fashions a carpenter in its resemblance, but it is the carpenter that fashions the wood in his resemblance. In this same way it is not the mortal and passible nature that renders God passible and mortal like itself, but it is by necessity God that renders the passible and mortal human nature impassible and immortal like Himself. On the one hand, this is what the Jacobites and Melchites say, and, on the other, this is what we say. It behoves your Majesty to decide who are those who believe rightly and those who believe wrongly."

And our victorious King said: "In this matter you believe more rightly than the others. Who dares to assert that God dies? I think that even demons do not say such a thing. In what, however, you say concerning one Word and Son of God, all of you are wrong."— And I replied to his Majesty: "O our victorious King, in this world we are all of us as in a dark house in the middle of the night. If at night and in a dark house a precious pearl happens to fall in the midst of people, and all become aware of its existence, every one would strive to pick up the pearl, which will not fall to the lot of all but to the lot of one only, while one will get hold of the pearl itself, another one of a piece of glass, a third one of a stone or of a bit of earth, but every one will be happy and proud that he is the real possessor of the pearl. When, however, night and darkness disappear, and light and day arise, then every one of those men who had believed that they had the pearl, would extend and stretch his hand towards the light, which alone can show what every one has in hand. He who possesses the pearl will rejoice and be happy and pleased with it, while those who had in hand pieces of glass and bits of stone only will weep and be sad, and will sigh and shed tears.

"In this same way we children of men are in this perishable world as in darkness. The pearl of the true faith fell in the midst of all of us, and it is undoubtedly in the hand of one of us, while all of us believe that we possess the precious object. In the world to come, however, the darkness of mortality passes, and the fog of ignorance dissolves, since it is the true and the real light to which the fog of ignorance is |89 absolutely foreign. In it the possessors of the pearl will rejoice, be happy and pleased, and the possessors of mere pieces of stone will weep, sigh, and shed tears, as we said above."

And our victorious King said: "The possessors of the pearl are not known in this world, O Catholicos."—And I answered: "They are partially known, O our victorious King."—And our victorious and very wise King said: "What do you mean by partially known, and by what are

they known as such?"—And I answered: "By good works, O our victorious King, and pious deeds, and by the wonders and miracles that God performs through those who possess the true faith. As the lustre of a pearl is somewhat visible even in the darkness of the night, so also the rays of the true faith shine to some extent even in the darkness and the fog of the present world. God indeed has not left the pure pearl of the faith completely without testimony and evidence, first in the prophets and then in the Gospel. He first confirmed the true faith in Him through Moses, once by means of the prodigies and miracles that He wrought in Egypt, and another time when He divided the waters of the Red Sea into two and allowed the Israelites to cross it safely, but drowned the Egyptians in its depths. He also split and divided the Jordan into two through Joshua, son of Nun, and allowed the Israelites to cross it without any harm to themselves, and tied the sun and the moon to their own places until the Jewish people were well avenged upon their enemies. He acted in the same way through the prophets who rose in different generations, viz.: through David, Elijah, and Elisha.

"Afterwards He confirmed the faith through Christ our Lord by the miracles and prodigies which He wrought for the help of the children of men. In this way the Disciples performed miracles greater even than those wrought by Christ. These signs, miracles, and prodigies wrought in the name of Jesus Christ are the bright rays and the shining lustre of the precious pearl of the faith, and it is by the brightness of such rays that the possessors of this pearl which is so full of lustre and so precious that it outweighs all the world in the balance, are known." And our victorious King said: "We have hope in God that we are the possessors of this pearl, and that we hold it in our hands."— And I replied: "Amen, O King. But may God grant us that we too may share it with you, and rejoice in the shining and beaming |90 lustre of the pearl! God has placed the pearl of His faith before all of us like the shining rays of the sun, and every one who wishes can enjoy the light of the sun.

"We pray God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, to preserve the crown of the kingdom and the throne of the Commander of the Faithful for multitudinous days and numerous years! May He also raise after him Musa and Harun and 'Ali to the throne of his kingdom for ever and ever! May He subjugate before them and before their descendants after them all the barbarous nations, and may all the kings and governors of the world serve our Sovereign and his sons after him till the day in which the Kingdom of Heaven is revealed from heaven to earth!" And our victorious King said: "Miracles have been and are sometimes performed even by unbelievers."—And I replied to his Majesty: "These, O our victorious King, are not miracles but deceptive similitudes of the demons, and are performed not by the prophets of God and by holy men, but by idolaters and wicked men. This is the reason why I said that good works and miracles are the lustre of the pearl of the faith. Indeed, Moses performed miracles in Egypt, and the sorcerers Jannes and Jambres performed them also there, but Moses performed them by the power of God, and the sorcerers through the deceptions of the demons. The power of God, however, prevailed, and that of the demons was defeated.

"In Rome also Simon Cephas and Simon Magus performed miracles, but the former performed them by the power of God, and the latter by the power of the demons, and for this reason Simon Cephas was honoured and Simon Magus was laughed at and despised by every one, and his deception was exposed before the eyes of all celestial and terrestrial beings." At this our victorious King rose up and entered his audience chamber, and I left him and returned in peace to my patriarchal residence. Here ends the controversy of the Patriarch Mar Timothy I. with Mahdi, the Caliph of the Muslims. May eternal praise be to God! [Footnotes moved to the end and renumbered] 1. The correspondent of the Patriarch. He was possibly either Sergius priest, monk and teacher of the monastery of Mar Abraham, or Sergius, Metropolitan of Elam. 2. These sentences amplify a little the original.

3. The Christian apologist Kindi refutes an objection of his adversary, 'Abdallah b. Isma'il al-Hashimi, which was in almost identical terms: "We never say about the Most High God that He married a woman from whom He begat a son," Risalah, p. 37. 4. Cf. Is. ix. 6. 5. Kur'an, iii. 41; xxi. 91. 6. Luke i. 37. Kur'an iii. 41, etc. 7. Note the semi-Nestorian expression of "putting on, clothing oneself with" as applied to the union of God with man in the Incarnation. In the following pages we shall not attempt to render this expression into English at every time. 8. Parsopa = πρόσωπον. 9. John xx. 17. 10. The Arabic muhal. 11. There is no doubt therefore that the official letters and documents of the early Abbasids were written on papyrus and not on parchment. The Arabic word Kirtas seems by inference to indicate papyrus in the majority of cases, if not always.

12. In Syr. the same root milltha is used to express both "reason" and "word." The author plays on this identical root in a constant manner. 13. In Syr. "Spirit" which means also "soul." 14. Ps. xxxiii. 6 (Peshitta). 15. Ps. lvi. 10 (Peshitta). 16. Ps. civ. 30. 17. Ps. cxix. 89 (Peshitta). 18. Is. xl. 8. 19. John i. 1. 20. John i. 4. 21. John xvii. 5. 22. Matt. xxviii. 19. 23. Most of the above Biblical passages are quoted also by the Christian apologist Kindi in his Risalah, pp. 43, 147-148. 24. Cf. Matt v. 17. 25. This objection about the circumcision of Christ and the uncircumcision of Christians is also mentioned and refuted by the Christian apologist Kindi, Risalah, p. 109. It is likewise alluded to by the Muslim apologist 'Ali Tabari, Kitab ud-Din, pp. 159-160 of my translation. 26. The same Syriac word means both "mystery" and "sacrament"

27. I.e. Temple. Syr. baita d-makdsha from which the Arab, bait al-makdis. 28. This teaching is that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. 29. That the Paradise of Eden was situated in the direction of the East is the opinion of the majority of Eastern Fathers, many of whom believe also that it is found in the firmament. To it, according to them, the souls of the just go till the day of the Resurrection. 30. Kur'an, xix. 16. 31. The Arab, a'udhu billahi. 32. That the name of Muhammad is found in Jewish and Christian Books is the claim made by the Prophet himself in Kur'an, vii. 156: "The ummi prophet whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel." See also lxi. 6. 33. Is. vii. 14. 34. Is. vii. 14 and ix. 6. 35. Is. xxxv. 4-6. 36. Is. liii. 5. 37. Ps. xvi. 10.

38. Ps. ii. 7. 39. Ps. lxviii. 18. 40. Ps. xlvii. 5. 41. Dan.vii. 13-14. 42. John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 10. 43. The Muslims have always believed that the Paraclete spoken of in the Gospel referred to Muhammad. See Kitab ad-Din of Ibn Rabban (pp. 140-141 of my translation), who even corroborates his statement by an appeal to the numerical value of the letters of the word. Many other writers (such as Yahsubi in his shifa) counts the name Paraclete among the various names of the Prophet. 44. Kur'an, vi. 50; vii. 188; xi. 33, etc. 45. John xiv. 17. 46. Ps. xxxiii. 6; cir. 30. 47. The bulk of Muslim testimony, based on Kur'an, vii. 156, is to the effect that the name of Muhammad is found in the Gospel. Almost all the work of Ibn Rabban entitled Kitab ad-Din wad-Daulah has been written for the purpose of showing that this name is found in Jewish and Christian scriptures. (See especially pp. 77-146 of my translation.) Cf. Ibn Sa'd's Tabakat, i., ii., 89 and i. i., 123, and see the commentator Tabari on Kur'an, vii. 156, and the historians Ibn Hisham and Tabari.

48. Read samya in sing. 49. Read d-nishre. 50. Muslim tradition, somewhat against Kur'an, xxix. 49, etc., is full of miracles of all sorts attributed to the Prophet. All these miracles have apparently been invented in order to answer the objection of the Christians to the effect that since Muhammad performed no miracle he was not a prophet. Pp. 30-60 of my edition of Ibn Rabban's Apology, the Kitab ad-Din wad-Daulah, have been written for this purpose. The extent to which later tradition amplified this fabulous theme may be gauged by the references given in Wensinck's Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition, pp. 165-168. The theme of the lack of miracles on the part of the Prophet is emphasised by the Christian apologist Kindi, Risalah, pp. 62 sqq. and 67. 51. Read l-Parsaye. 52. Is. xxi. 2. 53. Dan. vii. 5-6. 54. Dan. ii. 31 sqq. 55. Ezech. ix. 9. 56. A great deal is made of this prophecy of Isaiah concerning the rider on an ass and the rider on a camel in Ibn Rabban's Apology the Kitab ad-Din (pp. 95-97 of my edition). The author concludes his references to it in the following words of my own translation: "Are not men of intelligence and science amongst the People of the Book ashamed to attribute such a clear and sublime prophecy to some rude and barbarous people? . . . Did not the adversaries feel abashed in saying that the rightly guided prophets of the family of Isaac prophesied about the Kings of Babylon, Media, Persia, and Khuzistan, and neglected to mention such an eminent Prophet and such a great and Abrahamic nation?"

57. Gen. xlix. 10 (Peshitta with slight changes). 58. Dan. ix. 24 sqq. 59. Matt. xi. 13. 60. The last of the prophets, according to Muslim apologists, is Muhammad: "If the prophet had not appeared the prophecies of the prophets about Ishmael and about the Prophet who is the last of the prophets would have necessarily become without object." Ibn Rabban's Apology, the Kitab ad-Din, p. 77 of my edition et passim. 61. Read we-azlegh with a waw. 62. This subject of the worship of the Cross is also alluded to at some length by the Christian apologist Kindi in his Risalah, p. 139. 63. Here as above on p. 31 the Arab, a'udhu billahi. 64. Kur'an, iv. 156. The Kurra apparently read the verb as shabbaha and not shubbiha in the time of the Patriarch Timothy. 65. Kur'an, xix. 34. 66. Kur'an, iii. 48. The Syriac marfa' from Arab, wa-rafi'uka.

67. Ps. xxii. 16-18 (Peshitta). 68. Is., liii. 5 (Peshitta). 69. Cf, Jer. Lam., iii. 4 and 30 etc. 70. Dan. ix. 26. Read laih. 71. Zech. xiii. 7. 72. The Arabic word often used in the Kur'an to express "Apostles." It is of Ethiopic origin. 73. The word "Jew " has been, and is often in our days, a term of derision in the East, where also it indicates weakness and powerlessness. 74. John x. 18. 75. The Arabic Kur'anic word iblis. 76. The Arabic: mutawwa'in bi-sabil il lahi. 77. Syr. ganntha from which the Kur'anic Arabic jannah. 78. I.e. the Kur'an. This Kur'anic word is the Syriac furkana, "salvation." 79. Jer. xxxi. 32-34. This prophecy is with much ingenuity ascribed to Muhammad and to Islam by the Muslim apologist, 'Ali b. Rabban Tabari, who concludes his statement as follows: "These meanings cannot be ascribed to any other besides the Muslims." Kitab ad Din, p. 125 of my translation.

80. Joel ii. 28-29. 81. Joel ii. 30. 82. The Cod. repeats inadvertently. 83. Cf. Matt. xxv. etc. 84. Deut. xviii. 18. 85. Lit. Ishmaelites. 86. Cod. Joktan ex errore see Gen. xxv. 2. 87. Cf. 1 Kings xiv. 14; Jer. xxx. 10. 88. Arab. Kaum. 89. Great ingenuity is shown by the Muslim apologist, 'Ali b. Rabban Tabari, to ascribe this prophecy to Muhammad. We will quote him here in full: "And God has not raised up a prophet from among the brethren of the children of Israel except Muhammad. The phrase, 'from the midst of them' acts as a corroboration and limitation, viz. that he will be from the children of their father, and not from an avuncular relationship of his. As to Christ and the rest of the prophets, they were from the Israelites themselves; and he who believes that the Most High God has not put a distinction between the man who is from the Jews themselves and the man who is from their brethren, believes wrongly. The one who might claim that this prophecy is about the Christ, would overlook two peculiarities and show ignorance in two aspects; the first is that the Christ is from the children of David, and David is from themselves and not from their brethren; the second is that he who says once that the Christ is Creator and not created, and then pretends that the Christ is like Moses, his speech is contradictory and his saying is inconsistent." Kitab ad-Din, pp. 85-86 of my translation.

90. The following pronoun and verb are probably to be used in feminine: lah for lan, tithiledh for nithiledh. 91. Matt. xix. 17. 92. Peshitta Version. 93. John x. 11. 94. Luke vi. 43, etc. 95. That the line of defence of the Christians against the Muslims of the eighth and ninth centuries was to the effect that no prophet will rise after Christ is borne out by the Muslim apologist, 'Ali b. Rabban Tabari, who in his Apology (Kitab ad-Din, pp. 15, 17-18 of my edition) quotes against the Christians, Acts xi. 24; xiii. 1; xxi. 9, in which St. Luke speaks of prophets. On the Christian side it is well emphasised by the apologist Kindi in his Risalah, p. 78. 96. Mal. iv. 4-6. 97. Read d-naphne with a Dalath. 98. Luke i. 13-17 99. John i. 29. 100. Matt iii. 11. 101. Luke iii. 16. 102. Is. liii. 8.

103. Cf. Is. li. 9; Prov. viii. 23-24. 104. Cf. Ps. ii. 7; Ixxii. 17; Is. xliv. 2, 24. This prophecy of David, "His name is before the sun" is referred by the Muslim apologist, 'Ali b. Rabban Tabari, to Muhammud himself. Kitab-ad-Din, pp. 90 and 115 of my translation. 105. Is. vii. 14. 106. That the Jews and Christians are enemies and that this enmity is a guarantee of the genuineness of the Biblical text is also emphasised by Kindi in his Risalah,

p. 150. 107. Or possibly: On another occasion. 108. Here also the Kur'anic Arabic word hawariyun. 109. Arab, tumar. 110. The Paradise of the Kur'an. 111. Put a waw before the verb. 112. Allusion to the Jacobites and Melchites. 113. Cf. the medieval Latin adage: Omne tritium perfectum. 114. The Christian apologist Kindi (Risalah, p. 35) develops this same idea of number one and number three to his adversary 'Abdallah b. Ismail al-Hashimi and concludes as follows: "In number (also God is one because) He embraces all sorts of numbers, and number in itself is not numbered. Number, however, is divided into an even number and an odd number, and both even and odd numbers are finally included in the number three." Risalah, p. 36.

115. Gen. i. 26. 116. Gen. iii. 22 117. Gen. xi. 7. The very same argument taken from the plural of majesty to prove the Trinity is used by Kindi in his Apology for Christianity (Risalah, pp. 40-44), where the same Biblical verses are quoted to the same effect. 118. Is. vi. 3. 119. Is. xlviii. 16. 120. Ps. xxx. 6 (Peshitta). 121. Matt, xxviii. 19. 122. Kur'an, xix. 17 (read luathah in fem.). 123. Kur'an, xxi. 91 (read bah in fem.). 124. The idea that there was no time in which God could have been devoid of mind and life or otherwise of word and spirit is developed also by Kindi in his Apology for Christianity, Risalah, p. 39. 125. Put a waw before d-akh. This idea is developed by Kindi in his Apology (Risalah p. 42) on the same lines. 126. Ps. xxxiii. 6 (Peshitta). 127. Ps. cm 20.

128. Ps. civ. 30. 129. This Kur'anic use of the plural we in connection with God is also taken as an argument in favour of the Trinity by the Christian apologist Kindi. Risalah, p. 42. 130. Ps.civ. 4. 131. It would perhaps be better to put the verbs and pronouns of this sentence in plural. 132. Ps. cxlviii. 5. 133. The Patriarch refers here to the mysterious letters placed at the beginning of some Surahs of the Kur'an. It is highly interesting to learn that the Christians at the very beginning of the 'Abbasid dynasty understood them to refer to the Holy Trinity. In the Kur'an of our day the letters A.L.R are found before Surahs 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15, and the letters T.S.M. before Surahs xxvi. and xxviii., but the three letters Y.S.M. are not found before any Surah at all, but Surah xxxvi has only the two letters Y.S. Why this last change in our modern Kur'an? There is no question of a copyist's error in the Syriac text, because the letters are named in words and not written in figures only.

134. Kur'anic expressions. 135. Matt. xxviii. 19. 136. Deut. vi. 4. 137. Job. i. 21. 138. John passim. 139. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 140. Here also the same Syriac word milltha means "word" and "reason." 141. Gen. i. 26. 142. Gen. iii. 22. 143. Gen. xi. 7. 144. Kur'an xix. 17. (Here also read lwathah in fem.) 145. Kur'an xxi. 91 (Here also read bah in fem.) 146. Ps. cxlvii. 5. 147. Ps. cxix. 89 (Peshitta). 148. Is. xl. 8. 149. The author is constantly playing on the Syriac word milltha which means both "word" and "reason." 150. Cod. is; the reading ith laih seems, however, to be better than ithauh. The Caliph's objection bears on the fact that since God begets, something goes out of Him and He is consequently vacuous. 151. Ps. lxxxix. 19 (Peshitta). 152. Hos. xii. 10. 153. Heb.i. 1. 154. Matt. v. 45. 155. The Caliph Mahdi himself.

156. Harun is of course the future and famous Harun ar-Rashid. About Musa, the other son of the Caliph Mahdi, see Tabari, Annales, iii. 1, pp. 452-458. 157. Ps. ii. 6. 158. Ps. ii. 2. 159. Ps. it 7. 160. Ps. ii. 12. 161. Ps. cx. 1 and 4. 162. Ps. cx. 3 (Peshitta). 163. The Muslim apologist, 'Ali b. Rabban Tabari, argues that the term "lord" in Syriac mara is applied sometimes in the Bible to men, and therefore in Deut. xxxiii. 23; Is. xl. 10-11 and lxiii. 14-16 the word designates Muhammad. See Kitab ad-Din, pp. 87, 100, and 116 of my edition. The idea that the word mara, "Lord," refers sometimes in the Bible to men is of course taken by Tabari from Syrian commentators whom he knew perfectly. 164. Is. vii. 14; Matt. i. 23. 165. Is. ix. 6. 166. John v. 23. 167. John iii. 36, where "believeth" for "honoureth."

168. Kur'an, iv. 169. Cf. iii. 40. 169. Some of the above Biblical verses are quoted also by the Christian apologist Kindi in his Risalah, pp. 146-148. 170. Arab, wali al-'ahd. 171. This expedition of Harun, son of the Caliph Mahdi, against the Byzantines led by Nicetas and governed by the Empress Irene and Leo is told at some length on the Muslim side by Tabari under the year A.H. 165 (A.D. 781), Annales, iii. i. pp. 503-505. Cf. also the historians, Ibn Khaldun, iii. p. 213, and Mukaddasi, p. 150, etc. 172. It appears that this second conversation between Timothy and the Caliph took place in A.D. 781, while Harun, the Caliph's son, had not returned yet from his expedition against the Byzantines. The sentences used in the text do not seem to yield to another interpretation. 173. Is. liii. 2-4. 174. Ps. xlv. 2. 175. Is. ix. 6.

176. All these adjectives are known to the Muslim apologist Ibn Rabban. Kitab-ad-Din, p. 83 of my edition. 177. Kur'an xc. 1-3, is interpreted by late Muslim commentators to mean: 'I do not swear by the Lord of the land . . . nor by the begetter and what He begets.' In the early Islam the first word was evidently read as la-uksimu, 'I shall swear' (with an affirmation), instead of la-uksimu, 'I shall not swear' (with a negation). I believe that the ancient reading and interpretation preserved in the present apology are more in harmony with the Kur'anic text. 178. Kur'an iv. 170. The author is using the Arabic word istankafa as in the Kur'an. 179. 2 Sam. vii. 14: Heb. i. 5. 180. Ps. lxxxix. 27. 181. Ps. lxxii. 17 (Peshitta). See above p. 56 how Ibn Rabban, the Muslim apologist, refers this verse to Muhammad. 182. Ps. ii. 8-12 (Peshitta).

183. Matt xxviii. 18. 184. Luke i. 33. 185. Dan. vii. 13-14. 186. About two words are here missing in the MS. 187. A third son of Mahdi, nicknamed ibn Ritah. See Tabari, Annales, iii. 3, pp. 137, 501, 522, 1035. The Cod. has erroneously 'Alah.

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