

THEODORE ABŪ QURRAH



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LIBRARY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST | VOLUME 1

Theodore Abū Qurrah

TRANSLATED BY
JOHN C. LAMOREAUX

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Foreword

Earliest Christianity spread not only north and west into Europe and the lands of the Slavs, but also south and east into Africa and Asia. By the late-fourth century well-established Christian communities were flourishing throughout the Middle East, Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran, and Arabia, as well as in North Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South India. By the mid-seventh century, when much of northern Europe was still pagan, Christian missionaries from Iran had worked their way along the silk roads of Central Asia and consecrated their first monastery in the imperial capital of China. These ancient Asian and African churches—many of which have survived until the present day—were often, in practice, self-governing, and they produced their own leaders and distinctive writers and theologians. Their records and writings are numerous, as are their archaeological remains and modern descendants, and yet outside of the small coterie of specialists in Asian and African languages, few are yet aware of these churches or of their rich literary legacy.

It is the intention of this new series, *The Library of the Christian East*, to make selections of this literature available in English not only to students of theology and history, but to all those who are curious to comprehend the true diversity of the early Church, or who would like to see how current Christian concerns and theology are anticipated or challenged by earlier writers. Is it relevant that some early churches in the Middle East perceived the Holy Spirit to be feminine? Or that for hundreds of years Asian theologians argued that the only appropriate tool for discussing God was poetry rather than philosophy? Is the ancient Ethiopian preservation of circumcision and Jewish food laws, or the Armenian practice of animal sacrifice, due to Christian deviation or biblical conservatism? How did Arab Christians engage in debate with

early Islam? Why did Christians in China articulate their faith in terminology borrowed from Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism? How did these groups understand the person of Christ, interpret the Bible, or structure Christian life?

These, and many other topics, will be raised by the works included in this series. Each volume will begin with a detailed introduction to the author (or group of related authors) and to the theological concerns of their community and age, and this will be followed by annotated English translations of selected passages and texts. These may be representative samples from the more prolific authors or occasionally, as with this first volume, most of the author's extant literary corpus.

Other well-known series which have published translations of early and medieval Christian texts have usually limited themselves to authors who wrote in Latin or Greek, and so have occasionally included the works of those Middle Eastern and African authors who chose to write in these languages rather than in their mother-tongues. Only rarely have selections been included from a small handful of better-known Asian theologians such as Ephrem the Syrian. It is the intention of *The Library of the Christian East* to complement these series by concentrating on those authors who chose to write in Asian and African languages such as Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Syriac, amongst others. Authors from Asia or Africa who also happened to write in Greek will not, of course, be ignored. (A case in point is provided by the subject of this first volume, the ninth-century Arab Christian theologian Theodore Abū Qurrah who wrote in both Arabic and Greek and, on at least one occasion, in Syriac.) Too much harm has already been done by those who have sought to marginalize theology produced in "oriental" languages (a term so often used pejoratively to designate "marginal," "peripheral," or "unsophisticated" tongues), despite the patent absurdity of attempting to erect such artificial linguistic boundaries in the ancient world (as in much of the contemporary world), and so that course will not be pursued here.

The Library of the Christian East is published with the sincere hope that it will not only provide a window onto parts of early Christianity which have long been obscured from general view, but that it will also shed light on contemporary Christianity and theology, and so challenge all readers to reconsider the origins, current beliefs, and future of Christianity.

David G. K. Taylor
Carl W. Griffin
Kristian S. Heal

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interpretation—failings all mine. In the end, I can only cite the words of Theodore himself: “This is what we have to say. . . . If it is right, this is because the Holy Spirit is wont to be present with those who with good intention seek a true understanding of the faith. . . . If there is in our words a flaw, again, praise be to the Holy Spirit, who sometimes also withholds his gifts from sinners . . . that they might turn from the darkness of sin and seek the light of his wisdom through repentance and righteousness.”

John C. Lamoreaux

Introduction

In the south of modern-day Turkey, not far from the Syrian border, near the ancient city of Edessa, lies the village of Haran. It was there, we read in Genesis, that Abraham stopped while on his way from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. There, too, Isaac and Jacob are said to have taken their wives. While this dusty village is not much to look at today, it was of immense cultural significance in the early Middle Ages.¹ A home to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, to pagans and to heretics, it was a village alive with religious controversy. It was a place where theologians met and fought, both with each other and with the theologians of antiquity. It was a place where ancient philosophical traditions were transformed—translated from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, the tongue of the region's new overlords. There, too, those same traditions were still practiced. While paganism had died out elsewhere in the early medieval Near East, it remained a vital tradition in Haran. There an illustrious series of scholarly families devised an amalgam of ancient Babylonian paganism and Neoplatonism and sought to make it intelligible to a world transformed by monotheism. Living in Haran, in and among the adherents of these many religions, was a small community of Melkites, and caring for the souls of this community in the late-eighth and early-ninth centuries was its bishop, Theodore Abū Qurrah.

The Life of Theodore Abū Qurrah

Theodore is a figure well-known to specialists in the study of Christian Arabic literature, and for good reason. He was both one of the first

1. For Haran and its cultural milieu, see Chwolsohn, *Sabier und Ssabismus*; Green, *Moon God*; Hjärpe, *Sabéens*; Segal, *Edessa*; and Tubach, *Sonnenkult*.

Christians to write in Arabic² and one of the first to undertake a sustained theological defense of Christianity against the rival claims of Islam. When Muslims conquered the Near East in the seventh century, a process was set in motion whereby Melkite Christians living under Islam began gradually to be isolated from their fellow religionists in Byzantium. As a result of this isolation and the new environment ushered in by the Muslim conquests, these Christians slowly commenced to craft their own distinctive theological tradition—a tradition no longer expressed in Greek, but in Arabic. While the Arabization of the Melkites had begun already during the last decades of the Umayyad period, it only began to reach fruition in the first Abbasid century, as Christians in the monasteries and churches of Syria and Palestine began to translate into and compose in Arabic the works required for the life of the church. Some devoted their attention to the translation of such books as were required for the daily life of the church: scripture, liturgical works, homilies, lives of the saints, treatises on canon law, and classics of the patristic heritage. Others turned their attention to the challenge of responding to the changes occasioned by the coming of Islam. While there was a pressing need to respond to the religious claims of Islam itself, there was also an equally important need to negotiate between the rival claims of the various divisions of Christianity and of the other non-Muslim faith traditions—all now religious minorities in a land subject to the rule of Islam. Among the earliest to respond to these new challenges was Theodore Abū Qurrah, one of the first Christians we know by name to have written original works in Arabic and, arguably, one of the most creative and imaginative Christian theologians of the early Middle Ages.

Notwithstanding Theodore's importance in the rise of Christian Arabic literature, we know remarkably little about his life. He is one of those too numerous figures about whose theology we know a great deal, while their lives remain shrouded in darkness. Documentary evidence is absent. There is no ancient narrative of his life, certainly nothing like a traditional *vita*. Furthermore, his own works are almost wholly devoid of autobiographical information. Any attempt to reconstruct the contours of Theodore's life must rely, instead, on a handful of short notices preserved in a variety of sources, almost all of which are late and hostile to their subject. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that one can sketch only in the broadest of strokes the course of Theodore's life. Notwithstanding the dearth of available sources, or perhaps because of it, a fair amount of attention

2. For an overview of the rise of Christian Arabic literature, see Griffith, "Monks of Palestine," 1–28; idem, "Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam," 231–65.

has been given by researchers to the question of Theodore's life. One may note, in particular, the excellent contributions of Leila Datiašvili,³ Ignace Dick,⁴ Georg Graf,⁵ Sidney H. Griffith,⁶ K. Kekelidze,⁷ Joseph Nasrallah,⁸ and Khalil Samir.⁹ Interested readers may consult these studies for further details. Here I content myself with a brief presentation of what seem to me the more secure points of Theodore's biography.

Though the evidence is slight, it seems likely that Theodore was a native of Edessa. Indeed, in one of his own works he makes reference to "our city, the blessed Edessa."¹⁰ Likewise, a twelfth-century Monophysite chronicler would seem to confirm Theodore's connections to Edessa when he offhandedly refers to him as "a Chalcedonian of Edessa."¹¹ When Theodore was born is another matter. Sometime around the middle of the eighth century seems likely, however, at least judging from the fact that he was a mature theologian by the early decades of the ninth century. It is usually suggested that Theodore spent his early years, and perhaps his later years as well, as a monk at the famous Judean monastery of Mar Sabas.¹² As I have endeavored to establish elsewhere,¹³ this is quite unlikely. Evidence supporting such monastic connections is far from strong. It amounts, primarily, to a series of references in a naively legendary hagiographic text, references that may in fact be confusing our Theodore with another Theodore, also from Edessa; and, secondarily, to two even less reliable pieces of testimony—a textual error in one of Theodore's Greek works and a corrupt passage in one of his Arabic works. While not a single dependable source presents Theodore as a monk at the monastery of Mar Sabas, a vast number, both Christian and Muslim, remember him to have been the bishop of Haran.

If it is certain that Theodore was the bishop of Haran, when he ascended its throne is unclear; so too, how long he remained its bishop. It is usually suggested either that he held the throne for a short time, only to be deposed, or that he held the throne, was deposed, and took up the reins of authority again at a later date.¹⁴ The proposition that Theodore was deposed is based on a single source, a passage in the twelfth-century

3. Datiašvili, "Cxivreba," 144–74; eadem, "Urtiertobis," 65–101; eadem, "Sak'itxisatvis," 169–94. 4. Dick, "Continueur," 12:209–23, 317–32; 13:114–29. 5. Graf, *Geschichte*, 2:7–26; idem, *Arabischen Schriften*, 1–20. 6. Griffith, *Theodore*, 15–35; idem, "Reflections," 143–70. 7. Kekelidze, "Abuk'ura," 18–40. 8. Nasrallah, *Histoire*, 2.2:104–34; idem, "Regard critique," 36:46–62; 37:63–70. 9. Samir, "Jadid," 417–49; idem, "Littérature," 476–81; idem, "Thayūdūrus," 138–60. 10. Dick, *Icons*, 208. 11. Chabot, *Michel*, 3:32. 12. Dick, "Continueur," 13:122–23; Graf, *Geschichte*, 2:8; Griffith, *Theodore*, 18–20; Nasrallah, *Histoire*, 2.2:111; Samir, "Jadid," 418–19. 13. Lamoreaux, "Biography," 25–40. 14. Dick, "Continueur," 13:123–25; Graf, *Geschichte*, 2:8; Griffith, *Theodore*, 30–33; Nasrallah, *Histoire*, 2.2:112; Samir, "Jadid," 19.

Monophysite chronicle of Michael the Syrian,¹⁵ which also happens to be, unfortunately, the only even moderately substantial account we have for any of the events of Theodore's life. According to Michael, in or around the year 813, Theodore was deposed by Theodoret, the Melkite patriarch of Antioch.¹⁶ Michael is slightly vague as to the reasons for Theodore's deposition. He notes, first, that it was "a result of certain accusations brought against him."¹⁷ What immediately follows in Michael's narrative, however, strongly links Theodore's deposition to issues of Christology. Indeed, as Michael would have us believe, after being deposed, Theodore set himself further to pervert the consciences of both Melkite and Monophysite believers. Not only, we are told, did he propagate the doctrine of Maximus the Confessor (the belief that Christ has two natural energies, wills, and properties, a doctrine approbated by the Sixth Council), but he even went beyond the errors of Maximus. As Michael records:

In that [Theodore] considered the definition of Chalcedon inconsistent, namely, that Christ is said to be two natures and one hypostasis after the Union, he set himself to teach that nature differs from person, that the Deity differs from the Father, Son, and Spirit, and that the generic natures of divinity and humanity were joined together in the hypostasis of the Word.¹⁸

Michael continues by noting that when Theodore saw that his coreligionists would not accept his doctrine, he went to Alexandria, where he led many simple-minded Melkites astray, and then to Armenia, where he sought to seduce the Bagratid prince Ashot Msakeri (d. 826). While Michael does not explicitly link Theodore's deposition to heresy, he strongly suggests it. At the very least, he would have us believe that Theodore was a critic of Chalcedon and that he was considered a heretic by the Melkites. What are we to make of Michael's account?

First, the erroneous christological views that Michael ascribes to Theodore are problematic, if not entirely incoherent. Michael suggests that Theodore considered Chalcedon's creed to be inconsistent. As a fairly substantial portion of Theodore's theological labors were devoted to the defense of Chalcedon and its proclamation of Christ as a single hypostasis of the Trinity with two natures, it is hard to place much confidence in Michael's claim. Secondly, what of Michael's representation of Theodore's alternatives to Chalcedon? Again, Michael's account is confused, as all three propositions ascribed to Theodore are well

15. Chabot, *Michel*, 3:32. 16. Theodoret remained patriarch at least into the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809). See Lamoreaux and Cairala, *Timothy of Kākhushṭā*, 75–81, 149–57. 17. Chabot, *Michel*, 3:32. 18. *Ibid.*

within the pale of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. The first two amount to the drawing of a distinction between nature and hypostasis. While such was problematic for Monophysites, it was essential for Chalcedonians. As for the third proposition, it is simply a restatement of Chalcedon's proclamation of two natures in Christ. In short, there is little to recommend either Michael's description of Theodore's Christology, or his statement that Theodore rejected Chalcedon, or his claim that the Melkites considered him a heretic. Indeed, had Theodore been a heretic, it is hard to understand why Melkite authorities considered him a pillar of orthodoxy. One may note, in particular, that at roughly the same time that Michael has Theodore being deposed, Thomas the Melkite patriarch of Jerusalem was having one of Theodore's christological treatises, a defense of Chalcedon no less, translated from Arabic into Greek and sent to the Monophysites of Armenia.¹⁹

If Michael's account of Theodore's Christology is dubious, what of his claim that Theodore had been deposed? Michael's suggestion of a link between Theodore's deposition and his Christology raises an important problem. As just noted, in Michael's narrative of the events following Theodore's deposition, he has him going first to Egypt and then to Armenia. In what follows, Michael tells us that this visit to Armenia occasioned a debate between Theodore and the Monophysite Nonnus of Nisibis.²⁰ While Michael would have us believe that in this debate Theodore argued for his own peculiar heresy, other sources, discussed below, make it abundantly clear that Theodore was actually engaged in the defense of Chalcedon. How then are we to reconcile Michael's suggestion that Theodore had been deposed for his aberrant Christology with the testimony of these other witnesses, who all suggest that Theodore defended the doctrine of Chalcedon in this debate and elsewhere? What, too, of the silence of all other sources for Theodore's life, which all presuppose that Theodore had been the respected Melkite bishop of Haran? It may be wondered whether researchers have not given too much credence to Michael's claim. Might it not rather be that Michael or his source, very likely a Monophysite description of the debate with Nonnus, was simply trying to present Theodore as darkly as possible, fashioning him into an arch-heretic, one so wicked that even his own patriarch had been forced to send him away?

If Theodore's deposition is in doubt, it is clear that Theodore went to Armenia and there debated with Nonnus—an event that took place between 813 and 817, most likely toward the end of that period.²¹

19. *Epistle to the Armenians*, p. 83. 20. For the debate and its significance, see van Roey, *Nonnus*, 18–21; Griffith, "Apologetic Treatise," 115–38; Marr, "Arkaun," 9–15; Stroumsa, *Muqammiṣ*, 16–17. 21. van Roey, *Nonnus*, 20.

Whether Michael was correct to suggest that Theodore lost the debate is another matter—Melkite sources say the opposite.²² That Theodore made the journey is clear, however, and is confirmed by other authorities. It is mentioned in the correspondence of the Monophysite Abū Rāʿīṭah,²³ a contemporary of Theodore, who himself undertook to refute Theodore²⁴ and sent Nonnus to Armenia.²⁵ The debate is also noted by two thirteenth-century Armenian chroniclers.²⁶ So too, one of Nonnus's own works, his commentary on the Gospel of John, recalls the debate, without mentioning Theodore by name.²⁷

One may also recall in the present context that Theodore's own writings testify to his interest in the Armenian question. His *Letter to the Armenians* has been mentioned already, though there is nothing to suggest that Theodore wrote the letter specifically for the Armenians. The letter, a generic defense of Chalcedon, may well have been already in circulation when the patriarch of Jerusalem had it translated and sent to Armenia. Also extant from the pen of Theodore is a short Arabic treatise that refutes Armenian liturgical practice (seemingly a fragment of a larger work).²⁸ Extant in Georgian and ascribed to Theodore is another short work against the Armenians, as yet unedited.²⁹ Finally, there is an unedited Greek work containing an excerpt, the eleventh chapter, of Theodore's refutation of "the Jacobites, who are followed by the whole race of the Armenians, who do not confess our Lord and God Jesus Christ to be in two natures, one divine and the other human." (I intend to include an edition of this fragment in a study of the textual tradition of Theodore's Arabic, Greek, and Georgian works, a book on which I am currently working.)

A few further references to Theodore are found in the historical record. The title of one of the Arabic versions of pseudo-Aristotle's *De virtutibus animae* states that the work was "translated by Abū Qurrah the bishop of Haran for Dhū al-Yamīnayn Ṭāhīr b. al-Ḥusayn."³⁰ As has been established by others, this Ṭāhīr governed Mesopotamia between 813 and 820. In the year 816, moreover, he is known to have devoted himself to the study of philosophy not far from Haran.³¹ It is likely that it was at

22. Marr, "Arkaun," 9; van Roey, *Nonnus*, 16. 23. Graf, *Abū Rāʿīṭa*, text 130:65, trans. 131:82. Cf. Griffith, "Ḥabīb," 161–201. 24. Graf, *Abū Rāʿīṭa*, text 130:65–87, trans. 131:82–109. 25. Abū Rāʿīṭah shows that Michael incorrectly attributes the sending of Nonnus to the Monophysite patriarch Cyriacus. 26. Muyltermans, *Vardan*, 115, and Thomson, "Vardan," 183; Brosset, *Mkhithar*, 83, perhaps dependent on Vardan (see van Roey, *Nonnus*, 11). 27. For the relevant passage, see van Roey, *Nonnus*, 6–8. Cf. Bundy, "Nonnus," 123–33; Mariès, "Commentaire," 273–96; and Marr, "Arkaun," 11–15. 28. Lamoreaux, "Unedited Tract," 327–41; translated below at pp. 97ff. 29. Kekelidze, "Utso avt'orebi," 56 (no. 16). 30. For an edition of this text, see Kellermann, "Traktat." 31. Kellermann, "Traktat," 24–25; Griffith, *Theodore*, 25–27.

this time that Theodore translated the work for him. John Kyparissiotēs (d. ca. 1378) records that Theodore participated in a council against the Manicheans and cites a few brief statements made by him at that council.³² Theodore is also recorded to have visited Palestine, both Jerusalem and Azotus.³³ Theodore's historical legacy seems largely to have escaped the notice of later Melkites, apart from one chronicler who remembered him for his defense of icons.³⁴ He was, however, remembered by later Monophysites, both for his defense of the Sixth Council and for his polemics against Islam.³⁵ Unsurprisingly, Theodore did not escape the notice of Muslims.³⁶ The bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm (d. ca. 995) knew that he had been the bishop of Haran and had written against the Nestorians.³⁷ He also recorded that Theodore was refuted by the Mu^ctazilite al-Murdār (d. 840).³⁸ Another Mu^ctazilite, ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (d. 1025), cited Abū Qurrah as a source for the doctrines of the Melkites.³⁹ And finally, it has been suggested that the Zaydi theologian al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 860) may have been familiar with Theodore's works.⁴⁰

It is not known when Theodore died. It has been argued, however, that it must have been after 829.⁴¹ This date is derived from a notice in a late Syriac chronicle, which presents Theodore as meeting in Haran with the caliph al-Maʾmūn in that year and there participating in a theological debate.⁴² While it is possible that the chronicler, or his source, is recording an historical event, it is also possible that he derived this information from a version of a widely circulated dialogue that presents Theodore debating with a group of Muslims in the presence of al-Maʾmūn. The latter possibility is made all the more probable by the way in which the chronicler ends his brief description of al-Maʾmūn's meeting with Theodore: "The debate is written down in the special book for any who wish to read it." There is still controversy as to whether this dialogue contains any kernel of historicity.⁴³ The matter is especially

32. PG 152:784, 809. Cf. Hemmerdinger, "Synode," 270. 33. Lamoreaux, "Biography," 33–34. 34. Cheikho, *Euty chius*, 51:64. Cf. Samir, "Traité," 461–74. 35. Assemani, *Bibliotheca*, 2:292 n. 3, citing Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286); Ibn Kabar (d. 1324), *Miṣbāḥ*, 301; Cheikho, *Vingt traités*, 75, citing Daniel b. Khaṭṭāb (b. 1327; date of death unknown), who was perhaps dependent on Bar Hebraeus for his knowledge of Theodore (cf. Sepmeijer, "Book of Brilliance," 379–87). 36. Kračkovskij, "Abū-Ḳurra," 301–9. 37. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 26.15, reading *Qurrah* for *ʿIzzah*. Cf. Samir, "Théodore de Mopsueste," 355–63. 38. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 207.6. 39. Monnot, "Doctrines," 15. 40. Madelung, "Christian Theology," 35–44. 41. Griffith, *Theodore*, 27; Samir, "Jadid," 421. 42. Chabot, *Chron. 1234*, text 82:22–23. For a translation, see Abouna, *Chron. 1234*, 16, who mistakenly renders Theodore's name as Theodosius. 43. Griffith, *Theodore*, 23–24; idem, "Qurʾān," 203–33; Nasrallah, *Histoire*, 2.2:214–25; Graf, *Geschichte*, 2:21–22. Dick, "Discussion," 107–13, is more optimistic.

problematic in that the text appears to be quite late and versions of it are also available in which Theodore is replaced as the main protagonist by Simeon, the eighth-century Monophysite bishop of Haran and Nisibis, a figure who was also known by the name Abū Qurrah.⁴⁴ At present, we still do not understand the textual tradition of the dialogue well, nor do we yet have proper editions of its various versions, nor even an analysis of their contents.⁴⁵ Until such work has been undertaken, it is not possible to know whether this dialogue contains any historical substratum. So too, until such work has been done, it is not possible properly to evaluate the claim of this chronicler and determine whether 829 does in fact represent the last appearance of Theodore in the historical record.

Discerning the True Religion and the True Church

In his attempt to articulate and defend his faith in a milieu transformed by Islam, Theodore was forced to rethink the foundations of Christian theology. Whereas in earlier centuries Chalcedonians had often been overly eager to point to the political success of their faith as guarantor of its truth, things were not so easy once Islam had subjugated much of the territory that had once belonged to the Christian empire of Byzantium. Many Chalcedonians, perhaps the majority, found themselves, nearly overnight, subject to the rule of an aggressive and expansionist foreign religion. Once dispossessed of their empire, they suddenly found themselves no longer adherents of an imperial faith, but merely one Christian sect living alongside a number of other Christian sects. In such a context, how was one to articulate and defend Christian doctrine against the claims of other religions, most especially Islam? So too, how was one to show that Chalcedonian Christianity alone possessed the fullness of Christian truth? It was to questions such as these that the bishop of Haran sought answers.

The True Religion

Emblematic of Theodore's main theological concerns is the first of his treatises translated below. In this work, our author imagines himself to have grown up all alone on a mountain. When one day he descends to civilization, he is confronted by adherents of the various religions of the early medieval Near East: the pagans of Haran, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, Muslims, and so on. Each claims

44. Nau, "Qartamin," 30, 32–33. 45. An edition of one version has been privately published in Aleppo by Ignace Dick (*Mujādalah*). Cf. J. Grand'Henry's review in *Le Muséon* 113 (2000): 229–30.

to possess the true revelation of God. At the same time, each declares all others to have gone astray. One of them must be the true religion, Theodore reasons, for God would not have left humanity to wander in error: "Because God is kind and generous, when he saw his creation deviating from the true worship, he would have sent them messengers and a book [of scripture]."46 Confronted by these rival claimants, how is the earnest seeker to discern the true religion? Theodore compares such a seeker to the son of a king appointed by his father to rule a distant land. When this son falls gravely ill, his father sends medicaments by messenger. The king has enemies, however, and they seek to do injury to the king by sending messengers of their own, each with a poison to kill the son. Approached by this crowd of messengers, each claiming to have been sent by his father, what is the unfortunate son to do? How is he to determine which of these messengers had truly been sent by his father? The son's dilemma, and hence the dilemma of humanity as a whole, is that there is seemingly no sure way to distinguish the true from the false messengers: "As for the true messenger, he was right there among them, declaring [the others] liars and being declared by them to be a liar. He had become as one of them, with nothing to set him apart."47 A large portion of Theodore's labors was devoted to discovering how to discern which of that crowd of claimants was God's true messenger.48 And in this regard, his efforts took two parallel courses, one anthropological, the other historical.

The first method that Theodore devises to discern the true religion starts not with the messengers of the rival religions or with the content of their messages. Theodore reasons, instead, that one must begin by examining human beings: "We must lay the [scriptural] books to one side," he argues, and turn our attention to "human nature"; when once we understand human nature, then "we shall compare those books that are in our possession."49 If one of those books teaches a religion that accords with our nature, it will be established that it is from God. Theodore, like some modern-day phenomenologist of religion, in effect proposes that humans are by nature religious, and that one can determine what type of religion most aptly conforms to their nature. In this regard, Theodore's quest is governed throughout by the fundamental conviction that human attributes mirror, if dimly, divine attributes. Those human attributes that are noble and excellent have counterparts in God, and they can thus be

46. *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 6. 47. *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 7. 48. For this theme in Theodore's works, see Becker, "Christliche Polemik," 175–95; Griffith, "Faith and Reason," 1–43; Guillaume, "Theodore," 42–51; Graf, "Christliche Polemik," 827–28; Klinge, "Bedeutung," 376–85; Maximov, "Abu Kurra," 114–23; Rissanen, "Theology"; idem, *Theological Encounter*. 49. *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 9.

predicated of him. So too, those human attributes that are ignoble and shameful must be denied of the divine nature. Theodore is convinced that it is possible to infer from human nature not only God's attributes but also some understanding of the character of divine love. Again relying on the resemblance of divine and human attributes, Theodore reasons that human beings, if forced to examine themselves, instinctively consider selfless love the ideal. Such love commands us to treat others as we would have them treat us, to put others above ourselves, and to forego retaliation. If human beings are such, must not the divine nature also be such, only more so? Human love, in fact, simply mirrors divine love, which seeks to make human love ever more like itself. In much the same way, Theodore continues, human nature can teach us some things about the reasons for which it was created. Human nature strives for permanence, stability, fullness of knowledge, for mercy and for kindness; it seeks to love all and be loved by all. The end of such desires is nothing less than God himself. Human nature thus betrays that it was designed to enjoy God and ultimately to become infused by the divine nature and ever more similar to it. This for human beings constitutes perfect felicity and is the object of all their longings. Having examined human nature and inferred from it some things about the nature of its creator, the character of divine love, and the ultimate object of its spiritual strivings, Theodore goes on to subject the rival religions to examination in order to discover which, if any, teaches a religion that accords with the inner workings of human nature. One religion alone, Theodore concludes, accords with human nature, and that is Christianity.

Theodore's second method for discerning the true religion is, broadly speaking, historical. How do prophets establish that they have been sent by God? Theodore, like many before him, believed that prophets establish their divine mission primarily through the performance of signs and wonders. Paradigmatic in this regard is the scriptural account of Moses' call to be a prophet.

The wise infer from the account of Moses that those examining a religion need not accept it from its propagator unless it is accompanied by wonders. After all, Moses, being a philosopher, knew that if he were to go and claim that God had sent him to establish a religion but were not to prove the truth of what he said through wonders . . . everyone with any sense would have just cause to chide him and throw his words back in his face, to despise and reject him.⁵⁰

While there is little novel here, Theodore sees a problem with this traditional argument. And that problem, quite simply, is that false prophets,

50. *Against the Jews*, p. 28.

too, are said to have performed miracles. How then does one identify which of the many people claiming to be prophets were actually attested by wonders? In this regard, one might have expected Theodore to argue that the signs of false prophets were done with the aid of demons, or that they were merely tricks, or that they were perhaps simply the mistaken beliefs of ignorant followers. This is not the case, however. Theodore desires to show, instead, that Christ and his earliest followers, and they alone, can be historically proven to have performed miracles. How he does this is quite remarkable. Theodore reasons that it is the very absurdity of Christianity's theological claims and the loathsomeness of its ethic that sets it apart from all other religions, establishing that its founder and his followers had long ago worked wonders. Who in their right mind would believe in the doctrine of the Trinity or that God had become incarnate? So too, what right thinking people would subject their flesh and their passions to the demands of the gospel? The only thing that could have convinced the earliest Christians to have followed this absurd and loathsome religion would have been miracles performed by Christ and his disciples. In a word, Christianity is so hideous, miracles alone would have been able to induce people to accept it. In the case of the other religions, Theodore continues, with one eye on Islam, it is easy to understand why people originally accepted them. It was not miracles that drew adherents to them. It was other, more material factors: the laxity of their ethic, tribal chauvinism, the material gains offered to followers, and so on.⁵¹ There is, thus, no reason to believe that the founders of those religions had had their mission attested by divine signs.

For Theodore, it was not just religions like Zoroastrianism, Manicheanism, and Islam that were defective when viewed from the perspective of reason. Judaism, too, fell short. Indeed, as Theodore saw it, Judaism was little different from those other faiths that he had rejected for their laxity, tribalism, and appeal to material passions. Theodore must then answer the charge that he rejects Moses and the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Theodore does not flinch. He follows his train of thought to its logical conclusion:

With regard to reason, we do not think that it should be accepted that Moses was from God. The same holds for what the other [Hebrew] prophets brought. This is because of the defects in what they brought and because it is contrary to what our nature teaches.⁵²

This is not to say that Theodore was some latter-day Marcionite. He did accept the Hebrew Bible, and he did believe that Moses and the

51. For this theme in other early Christian Arabic works, see Stroumsa, *Freethinkers*, 30–33; Samir, “Liberté,” 93–160. 52. *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 23.

other prophets of the first covenant had been sent by God. How then to reconcile this rational rejection of Judaism with this approbation of the Hebrew Bible and its prophets? Theodore escapes the impasse by turning on its head the traditional Christian argument from prophecy. Whereas others had suggested that Christ was to be believed because he had been predicted by the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Theodore suggests that Moses and those prophets were to be believed for no other reason than that Christ had acknowledged their authority. How then to explain the defects of Judaism? Theodore's answer was to view Judaism from an evolutionary perspective. It was revealed at a time when humanity was not yet ready for the fullness of God's truth. Because of the dangers of idolatry, for instance, God could not risk disclosing that his nature was triune; because people were addicted to sin, he could enjoin them to turn away from evil, but could not yet begin to urge them to the performance of good; because their hearts were immersed in desire for the world and sought only immediate gratification, God could not yet hold out the hope of eternal life, but had to be content with enticing the Israelites with promises of a physical kingdom in Palestine. In the end, there remains an uncomfortable dissonance in Theodore's treatment of Judaism, and all he can do is take refuge in his assertion: "If not for the gospel . . . we would not believe that Moses is from God. Indeed, on the basis of reason, we would reject him most earnestly."⁵³

The True Church

Theodore's attempt to discern the true religion undergirds the whole of his thought. It stands behind all of the other concerns of his theological architectonic, and its satisfactory resolution is a necessary precondition for all further theological inquiry. Only once one has discovered the true religion can one turn one's attention to other issues, and as one might well imagine, for Theodore, chief among those other issues was finding a way to discern which of the various parties that laid claim to Christianity was the true representative of Christ.

Each of these [Christian] sects imagines that our efforts to confirm Christianity work to their benefit alone, they being the only true Christians. We have already confirmed Christianity over against every other religion and shown that it alone is true; we must now differentiate orthodoxy from these heresies, showing that it alone is Christianity and that all these heresies are false.⁵⁴

Unsurprisingly, for Theodore the primary claimants to orthodoxy were Melkites, Monophysites, and Nestorians. While other varieties of Christian-

53. *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 24. 54. *On the Councils*, p. 61.

ity were to be found in the early medieval Near East, and Theodore knew of their existence, it was not to these that he devoted his attention. Rather, he needed to find a way to evaluate the claims of these three great, and by now ancient, divisions of the church, each of which arrogated to itself the right to be considered orthodox while at the same time declaring others unfaithful to the gospel. Even as Theodore had sought to discover rational methods for discerning the true religion, so too, in order to discern the true church, he sought to subject the claims of Melkites, Monophysites, and Nestorians to the inquiry of reason. In this regard, his arguments proceeded along two broad paths, one soteriological and the other historical.

Theodore's first cluster of arguments is designed not for the simple but for the theologically sophisticated. They are arguments about the nature of the incarnation and how through the incarnate Son's death, God was able to save humanity. While Theodore believed that Nestorians had started out by trying to lift the divine nature above suffering, he was convinced that by so doing they had nullified the soteriological significance of his death, making the one who died for us a mere human being. In a similar manner, while he thought Monophysites had begun with a desire to glory in God's death for humanity, he believed that they too had ended up nullifying the Son's death, making the one who died for us wholly God. For Theodore, the truth was to be found in the *via media*. This he endeavored to establish primarily through an examination of the technical terminology used to describe the incarnation, especially the terms "hypostasis" and "nature." Death and suffering, he argued, are to be predicated not of Christ's human nature nor of his divine nature, but of the incarnate hypostasis of the eternal Son. This hypostasis, the subject of the incarnation, was not just human, nor merely divine, but possessed of the fullness of both natures. Further, because it was the hypostasis of the Son that was the subject of the incarnation, the attributes of both his divine and his human natures are to be predicated of it.

To speak by way of analogy, the hypostasis of the eternal Son is like a river that receives two streams: the river is said to receive two streams, but neither of the streams receives the other. In the same way, the eternal Son receives both the name and the definition of "God" and the name and the definition of "man," but God in no way receives the name or definition of "man," nor does man receive the name or definition of "God."⁵⁵

In his endeavor to defend Chalcedon, Theodore spends much time clarifying the terms "hypostasis" and "nature." This debate was not just about

55. *On the Union and the Incarnation*, pp. 103–4.

terminology, however. As Theodore saw the matter, at stake was nothing less than the very possibility of our salvation. The death of the hypostasis of the incarnate eternal Son, and it alone, could save humanity. Because they have sinned, human beings owe recompense to God. This recompense they are unable to provide, however. At any moment, they are required by God to be wholly obedient. To provide recompense would entail going one step beyond perfect obedience. In short, even if you were to be wholly obedient, which Theodore considered impossible, “you would [still] have no way to get rid of even a speck of your earlier sins.”⁵⁶ At the same time, however, God cannot simply annul the penalty required of human beings. He must receive in full the demands of the law, for otherwise his giving of the law would have been in vain. This is the situation in which God and human beings find themselves after the fall.⁵⁷ A means of recompense has been provided by God himself. Through the incarnation and death of the eternal Son, who was both fully divine and fully human, recompense for sin can be made. The Son must be fully human in that it is for *us* that he is making recompense; he must be fully divine in that it is for *all* of us that he is dying. It is only thus that human beings can be delivered from the penalty owed for sin. And as Theodore saw the matter, Chalcedon alone fully understood this to be the case.

Theodore’s second series of arguments was specifically designed to appeal not to scholars, but to the common folk, to those whose minds were *sūqī*, an adjective that literally means “of the marketplace,” but for Theodore suggests those untrained in the ways of theological discourse. As one might expect, Theodore, like all good theologians of the time, considers that doctrinal controversies are to be decided through an appeal to conciliar authority, and he goes to great lengths to show that this has always been the case, both in the time of Moses and during the days of the apostles. Which councils were to be considered authentic, however? Monophysites and Nestorians had councils of their own, and they did not accept all the councils of the Melkites. Theodore needed to find a way to identify which councils were to be considered authoritative and which not. His answer is to appeal to another factor in order to delimit the set of authoritative councils: nothing less than St. Peter and the see of Rome. Christ, he argues, had appointed Peter as both the head of the church and the guarantor of its orthodoxy, and he desired that Peter’s role be continued by his successors. In a word, only those councils are to be accepted that had been summoned by the bishops of Rome.⁵⁸ Accordingly,

56. *On Our Salvation*, p. 130. 57. For this theme in Theodore’s works, see Swanson, “Cross of Christ,” 115–45; Rivière, “Précurseur,” 337–60. 58. Cf. Griffith, “Muslims,” 270–99; Sieben, “Konzilsidee,” 489–509; Kneller, “Papsttum und Konzilien,” 419–27.

while ultimate authority may lie with the councils themselves, one is able to determine which councils are authoritative only through an historical examination of the circumstances of their calling. If Theodore's appeal to conciliar authority was fully within the pale of the Melkite theological tradition, his use of papal authority to delimit the authoritative councils was perhaps less so, at least judging from the marginal comments of the later scribes of his Greek and Arabic works. Consider, for instance, the end of Theodore's discourse *On the Death of Christ*, where he suggests that the bishop of Rome was authorized by Christ both to guide the church and to summon ecumenical councils.⁵⁹ The scribe of one manuscript of this work, disturbed by such sentiments, thought to correct his exemplar, adding between the lines that the bishop of Rome is to be followed by Christians but if and only "if he is orthodox."⁶⁰

The discernment of the true religion and of the true church does not represent the sum of Theodore's interests. There were other topics to which he devoted his attention: the defense of icons, theological epistemology, whether and to what extent people have free will, and so on. In most cases, however, Theodore was concerned with these topics because they served his larger thematic. The heart of Theodore's theology lay in the attempt to discern the true religion and the true church, and it is to these issues that he returns again and again, even in his other, ancillary works. Indeed, it was with regard to these two issues that Theodore himself believed that he had accomplished something new, that he had, at last, discovered a series of arguments that would allow the earnest seeker to identify both the true religion and the true church. Whether such a belief in novelty was entirely justified and whether Theodore's arguments were cogent are matters perhaps best left for others to decide. It is clear, however, that Theodore was convinced that he had accomplished something new, that he had, at last, found a way to navigate the turbulent seas blown up by the coming of Islam.

On the Present Translation

The corpus of Theodore's published writings is large. It includes an extensive collection of Arabic works, almost all fairly substantial. Also published are more than forty Greek treatises: a few substantial, free-standing treatises, in one case a translation from Arabic into Greek,⁶¹ the remainder being fairly short, seemingly fragments of larger treatises now lost. Yet others of the published Greek works, as will be explained in a moment, were not in fact written by Theodore. They are, rather,

59. See below at p. 128. 60. Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale, ar. 549, fol. 122r. 61. *Opuscula* 2, 4 (translated from Arabic), and 43.

records of debates in which he participated. Besides these Arabic and Greek works, Theodore is also known to have written at least one work in Syriac, a massive defense of Chalcedon, which, to the best of our knowledge, has not been preserved.⁶² And finally, there exist Georgian versions of almost all of Theodore's Greek works, of which a few have been published.⁶³ In addition to these published works, a fair number of unedited works by Theodore are preserved in Greek, Arabic, and Georgian. As for Theodore's unedited Greek works, my own researches have uncovered about a dozen fairly short texts, as well as an extensive refutation of Islam. As for his unedited Arabic works, some, all quite short, have long been known to researchers.⁶⁴ In addition, there are extant at least six other treatises, three quite substantial. There are also a few Georgian translations with no corresponding Greek versions.⁶⁵ Some of these unedited works touch issues of controversy with Islam; others are sermons; others are refutations of heretics; others are philosophical in nature, concerned with the technical terminology of Christology. Much work remains to be done on these texts before their authenticity can be established and editions prepared, and here is not the place to undertake such work. (All these works will be treated, and most edited, in my study of the textual tradition of Theodore's Arabic, Greek, and Georgian works.) The present volume is restricted to Theodore's published works.

Included here are translations of nearly all of Theodore's Arabic works, with a few exceptions. I have passed over in silence the work known as the *Summa theologiae arabica*, which is now considered not to be Theodore's.⁶⁶ I have omitted a translation of Theodore's defense of icons.⁶⁷ This well-known work is available in numerous versions already.⁶⁸ It has also recently been translated into English in an exemplary fashion by Sidney H. Griffith.⁶⁹ I have also foregone a translation of Theodore's *Letter to David the Monophysite*.⁷⁰ There are two reasons for this. First, the work treats a rather detailed point of Christology: how the union of natures in Christ is like the union of soul and body. Theodore wrote this letter to David, a Monophysite whom he had

62. *On the Death of Christ*, p. 119. Cf. Samir, "Eutychius," 469–72. 63. Datiašvili, *T'rakt'at'ebi*. The first of the works edited (pp. 24–79) (cf. Datiašvili, "Arsen Iq'altoelis," 22–40) is not by Theodore, but is the *De sectis* attributed to Leontius of Byzantium. See van Esbroeck, "De sectis," 35–52. It is said (Martin-Hisard, "Euthyme," 86) that some of Theodore's Greek works are actually translations from the Georgian. This seems unlikely, but cf. Lang, "Euthymius," 315–16. 64. Samir, "Jadid," 433–36. 65. See Kekelidze, "Ucxo avt'orebi," 55–57. 66. Griffith, "Ninth Century *Summa*," 123–41; idem, "Islam," 225–64; Samir, "Date," 352–87; idem, "Somme," 93–121; Swanson, "Some Considerations," 115–41. 67. Dick, *Icones*. 68. Arendzen, *De cultu imaginum*; Graf, *Theodor*, 278–333; Pizzo, *Icone*. 69. Griffith, *Treatise*. Cf. idem, "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract," 53–73; idem, "Theodore Abu Qurrah's *On the Veneration*," 3–19. 70. Bāshā, *Mayāmir*, 104–39.

met in Jerusalem while both were there on pilgrimage. David had asked Theodore a number of christological questions, including: How had the Fathers understood the analogy between the union of Christ's divinity and humanity and the union of soul and body, and How does Chalcedon's decree that Christ has two natures not annul this analogy? In Theodore's response, he spends most of his time clarifying whether and to what extent the union of Christ's divinity and humanity is analogous to the union of soul and body, concluding ultimately that one must be careful not to infer from the analogy that the union of Christ's natures is like the union of the composite, human nature. Theodore's response is quite detailed: it is, indeed, the most extensive discussion of any topic in his corpus. Theodore's arguments are also highly technical and thoroughly enmeshed in centuries of equally technical christological arguments. While a translation of this treatise might be of interest to specialists, it is unlikely to appeal to the sensibilities of others. The second reason for foregoing a translation of this text is of even greater moment. In a word, the printed edition is not infrequently unintelligible. It appears to suffer from an inordinate number of textual corruptions and lacunae, some of which are substantial; nor did I have access to any manuscripts to control the printed edition.

As for Theodore's Greek works, a few shorter texts are not translated here,⁷¹ in most cases because they are unlikely to have been written by Theodore. One longer text, too, I passed over. This is the lengthy discussion of philosophical names, *Opusculum 2* in Migne's *Patrology*.⁷² As Theodore explains in his introduction:

Those who love and protect true doctrine must distinguish and clarify the terms most frequently used by philosophers, for many of the seemingly wise, not fully understanding these terms, have fallen short of the truth . . . and a proper understanding of the divine nature.⁷³

Theodore continues by distinguishing two types of nouns: those that are "philosophical" and those that are "logical." These, he explains, function in predication in different ways. Theodore then goes on to show how a proper understanding of these different types of nouns and their respective manners of predication can clarify some of the issues separating Melkites and Monophysites, most especially how to conceptualize and count Christ's natures. Even a cursory examination of this work's philosophical and christological terminology shows that it was written by Theodore. In its present form it is extremely difficult to understand, however—not least because substantial portions of the text were not included in the printed edition, while what is in that edition has suffered

71. *Opuscula* 26–30, 34–41, as well as the *De differentia propriissima* (PG 94:594–95).
72. PG 97:1469–92. 73. PG 97:1469.

much in transmission. Until something like a proper edition is at hand, there seemed little point in assaying a translation.

Theodore is a difficult author to translate. One cannot appeal to the opacity of either his language or his arguments: both such failings he studiously avoided. Rather, the primary difficulty is the lack of proper editions. Notwithstanding the labors of modern researchers and their interest in Theodore's literary legacy, we lack critical editions for very nearly every single one of Theodore's works. As explained below, for Theodore's Greek works, we must rely on early modern editions—in effect, printed manuscripts—or on more recent work based on a small portion of the manuscript evidence. Nor have Theodore's Arabic works fared better: excepting his treatise in defense of icons, we have not one edition that makes full use of the manuscript evidence, while for most we must rely on an edition—or again, a printed manuscript—from the early years of the twentieth century. In the present translation, some of the failings of the available editions could be ameliorated, in part, through the testimony of manuscripts. Even so, I was still required to work from what are basically tentative, ad hoc editions.

Theodore's Greek Works

As for Theodore's Greek works, most are accessible today only through the early modern editions of Jacob Gretser (1606), Johann Baptist Cotelier (1677), Andrew Arnold (1685), and Michael Lequien (1712), reprints of which are found in Migne's *Patrology*.⁷⁴ As will be explained, in order to produce a more adequate text, it was necessary to collate all of these works with manuscript witnesses. In addition, a portion of Theodore's Greek works, those against Islam, have recently been re-edited and translated into German by Reinhold Glei and Adel Theodor Khoury.⁷⁵ While their edition improves much on the earlier versions of these works, it used only a portion of the extant witnesses while completely ignoring a number of key manuscripts, some dating from within a century of Theodore's death.⁷⁶ Even so, the edition is serviceable and I followed it for the works included here. As will be explained, however, it was necessary to control it through collation with some of the witnesses not utilized by its editors.

The first of Theodore's works translated here is his *Letter to the Armenians*. As the text in Migne was beyond repair,⁷⁷ I translated from an ad hoc

74. PG 97:1461–1610. Cf. Griffith, *Theodore*, 6, and Glei and Khoury, *Schriften*, 69–70. 75. Glei and Khoury, *Schriften*. An earlier Russian translation of these same works was prepared by Sablukov, "Sočinehija," 148–51, 157–59, 172–75, 181–85, 190–93. 76. Lamoreaux, "John the Deacon," 365–67. 77. Opusculum 4 (PG 97:1503–22).

text based on two manuscripts: Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 231, 932 CE (M)⁷⁸ and Ochrid, Narodni Muzej, gr. 86 (Inv. 86), thirteenth century (O).⁷⁹ Although I did not base my translation on the printed edition, I do note my deviations from it. Similarly served by the text in Migne is the second of Theodore's Greek works translated here, his *On the Union and the Incarnation*.⁸⁰ Again, I translated from an ad hoc text based on three manuscripts: the above-mentioned Moscow gr. 231, and the Vatican manuscripts, Bibliotheca Apostolica, Ottobon. gr. 382, seventeenth century (X),⁸¹ and Bibliotheca Apostolica, gr. 402, 1383 CE (W).⁸² Notes to the translation present my deviations from the printed edition.

As established by Glei and Khoury, many of what were thought to be Theodore's Greek works against Islam were not written by him. They are, instead, part of a collection of dialogues that purports to be a record of debates in which he participated. Glei and Khoury also discovered the lost preface of the collection and established that its author was a certain John the Deacon. The whole of the work bears the title *Refutations of the Saracens by Theodore Abū Qurrah, the Bishop of Haran, As Reported by John the Deacon*. In their edition, Glei and Khoury suggested that this work consisted originally of John's preface and seventeen dialogues. As I have argued elsewhere, this is unlikely.⁸³ A number of early manuscripts show that John's work originally consisted of a preface and nine dialogues.⁸⁴ As for the other dialogues, four belong to a different compilation of Theodore's works,⁸⁵ which will be discussed in a moment, and four are of unknown provenance.⁸⁶ In translating John's work, I thus included only John's preface and these nine dialogues. I also departed from the edition of Glei and Khoury in other ways. I put the dialogues in the order supported by the earliest manuscripts. I gave them titles such as are found in those manuscripts. Further, I emended the lemmata to follow those manuscripts, which, as one would expect from John's preface, introduce the speakers as "Theodore" and a "Saracen."

Because Glei and Khoury used only a small number of the manuscripts of John's work, their edition could be improved through the testimony of other witnesses. The work's preface, which Glei and Khoury edited from Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, gr. 1111 (Y), also exists in Vatopedi gr. 236, twelfth or thirteenth century (V).⁸⁷ From this copy of the preface, I adopted a number of readings. The rest of John's work was collated against Moscow 231. Additional readings were adopted from

78. Westerink, "Marginalia," 197–99. 79. Mošin, "Manuscripts," 234–35.

80. Opusculum 43 (PG 97:1601–10). 81. Feron and Battaglini, *Codices*, 195–97.

82. Devreesse, *Codices*, 103–6. 83. Lamoreaux, "John the Deacon," 365–75.

84. Opuscula 18–25 and 32. 85. Opuscula 3, 8, 16, and 9. 86. Opuscula 35–38.

87. Eustratiades and Arcadios, *Catalogue*, 52–53; Lamberz, "Kodikologisches," 327–29; Otero, "Codex," 315–26.

Vatopedi 236, as well as from this work's Georgian version. Special note should be made of the dialogue entitled *Christian Doctrine Is Confirmed by the Most Disadvantageous Features of Its Preaching*. In their edition, Gleï and Khoury used only a single, late manuscript (Munich, Staatsbibliothek, gr. 66, sixteenth century). This manuscript preserves an abbreviated version of the dialogue. For this dialogue, I thus translated the version of Moscow 231, noting its major deviations from the printed edition.⁸⁸

Theodore's other Greek works are translated below under the title *Greek Fragments*. Under this title, I included those of Theodore's works present in the earliest attested and most widely encountered collection of his Greek works in manuscript form.⁸⁹ This collection contains dialogues and fragments of discursive treatises and seems to represent an integral composition, at least judging from its relative thematic unity.⁹⁰ It is not known who compiled it. It is early, however, and was certainly in circulation within a century of Theodore's death. While most of this collection's works are accessible only in Migne, four,⁹¹ as noted above, were edited by Gleï and Khoury. In translating this work, I collated it in its entirety against Moscow 231. Other readings were adopted from Ochrid 86 and from Athos, Lavra A 135, fifteenth century (E).⁹² As elsewhere, deviations from the printed editions are noted. It may also be observed that the collection's dialogues are given titles such as are found in Moscow 231.

Theodore's Arabic Works

For the majority of Theodore's Arabic works, we must depend on Qusṭanṭīn al-Bāshā. Using a single manuscript from Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ, one copied in 1735, Bāshā published in 1904 an edition of ten of Theodore's works.⁹³ The scribe of this manuscript was the metropolitan Basil Finān, who records that his copy of these treatises was made from an exemplar produced in 1051 by a certain Agapius from the Monastery of Mar Elias

88. For further copies, see Vatopedi 236 and Lavra A 135. 89. For this collection (Opuscula 3, 5–8, 16, 9–14, 33, 15, 42, 31, 1, and 17), see Lamoreaux, "John the Deacon," 368–75. 90. Note also the cross reference at p. 244. 91. Opuscula 3, 8, 16, and 9. 92. Spyridon and Eustratiades, *Catalogue*, 287–89. 93. Bāshā, *Mayāmir*. Cf. Goussen's review in *Theologische Revue*. The ninth of these treatises was also published by Bāshā on three other occasions, probably because of its importance in the discussion of papal authority in the early Melkite church. The first is in the periodical *al-Mashriq* ("Ṣiḥḥat al-dīn," 633–43, 693–702, 800–809); the second, with a French translation, as a separate volume (*Traité*); and the third, in Cheikho's collection of early Christian Arabic theological works (*Vingt traités*, 75–108). For an English translation of Bāshā's ninth treatise, see the unpublished dissertation of Nassif ("Confirmation"). German translations of all the works in Bāshā's edition were prepared by Graf (*Theodor*).

on Jabal al-Lukkām. This Agapius, in turn, had copied an exemplar from the Monastery of Mar Sabas. Basil's colophons read, in part:⁹⁴

A marginal note of its copyist, the metropolitan Basil: Know that this is a second copy⁹⁵ of the copy in the monastery of Mar Sabas, the lavra near Jerusalem, which [latter] copy is the original copy of the book from which this copy was transcribed.

It was copied in the month of June, in the year 1735, at Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ, in the district of Sidon, on Jebel Druze.

Copied by the sinful metropolitan Basil Finān from an older copy, which was copied⁹⁶ from the original copy in the monastery of Mar Sabas. . . . When in it we found words effaced by age, we left these blank, in hopes of finding a better, more complete copy, from which, with God's help, we might fill its gaps. The date of the copy from which we copied this book was AM 6559 [1051 CE]. It was the work of the monk Agapius from the monastery of Mar Elias on Jabal al-Lukkām. His copy is thus separated from our own by 684 [years].

Notwithstanding its value, Bāshā's edition was not without faults. It is punctuated by a fair number of typographical errors, as well as by a significant number of scribal errors: whether they were Bāshā's or were in his exemplar is unclear. The style and grammar of the treatises was also occasionally retouched by Bāshā, which was very much consistent with the custom of the time and was his practice elsewhere. As will be explained, I was able to collate a good portion of Bāshā's edition. Based on these collations, it is clear that while Bāshā at times corrected the style and grammar of his manuscript, he was almost always careful not to change its substance, except perhaps in a few passages where Theodore's arguments were unclear to him.

In some cases, it was necessary to make do with Bāshā's edition such as it could be corrected by conjecture. In other cases, some of the faults of Bāshā's edition could be ameliorated by collation. Unfortunately, some of the important manuscripts of Theodore's works proved inaccessible to me. Among these manuscripts, two are especially worthy of note: Sidon, Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ 392 [Ḥaddād], 1735 CE, the manuscript used by Bāshā for his edition;⁹⁷ and Sinai ar. 581 [Kamil 509], dating from the twelfth century, lacking at beginning and end, containing nine treatises by Theodore.⁹⁸ In the end, the following are the manuscripts to

94. Bāshā, *Mayāmir*, 5. 95. Meaning "a copy at second hand," or, less likely, that this manuscript represents the second time the Mar Sabas manuscript had been copied. 96. Reading *mansūkhah* for *mansūjah*. 97. For a brief discussion of the fate of this manuscript, see Pizzi and Samir, *Libertā*, 125. 98. Not microfilmed by the Library of Congress in the 1950s.

which I had access: Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale, ar. 549, 1654 CE (B);⁹⁹ Denver, Public Library, ar. 3, 1741 CE (D);¹⁰⁰ Lattakia 3, 1715 CE (L);¹⁰¹ Lattakia 34, eighteenth century (Q);¹⁰² and Sinai ar. 441 [Kamil 406], 1196 CE and 1240 CE (S).¹⁰³ Of Bāshā's treatises translated here, I was able to collate roughly half with these manuscripts.

Theodore's *On the Death of Christ* is preserved in B, D, L, and Q. B (fols. 115b–122a) and D (pp. 70–80) contain the last half of the text, from B61.3 to the end of the treatise. (D is a descendant of B and of value primarily for clarifying the latter's readings.) L (fols. 31a–44b) preserves almost the whole of the treatise (B49.8–59.15 and B61.14–80.14). These selections it transmits anonymously, under the title *A Discourse on the Death of Christ and a Refutation of the Heretics, from the Words of the Holy Fathers of the Sixth Holy Council*. Q (fols. 108a–112b) has most of the first half of the text (B49.8–50.2 and B52.9–58.19). These selections it transmits anonymously, under the title *A Discourse on the Death of the Eternal Son and a Refutation of the Heretics, from the Words of the Holy Fathers and Spiritual Teachers of the Sixth Council*. While L and Q stand very close to Bāshā's manuscript, B and D offer a more distant version. Where there is overlap between the selections preserved in these manuscripts, I have felt confident adopting readings supported by BDLQ or by BLQ. All deviations from the printed text are noted.

Four other treatises could be controlled through collation. Two are short but important works: *On the Method of the Knowledge of God* and *On the Confirmation of the Gospel*. Copies are preserved in B and D (respectively, fols. 98a–102a, 113a–115a, and pp. 45–52, 65–70). (Again, D is a descendant of B and of little independent value.) These provide many essential corrections, especially for the first treatise, whose arguments Bāshā seems not to have understood well. As for Theodore's *Against the Jews* and *On the Councils*, S (fols. 233a–255b) preserves an ancient copy of these treatises. Unfortunately, a leaf has dropped out of the manuscript between fols. 235 and 236 (B145.8–147.4). Further, S is characterized by a large number of scribal errors, in part because its copyist must have worked from a largely unpointed exemplar. Notwithstanding, S still provides a fair number of important corrections. With regard to these four treatises, all deviations from the printed text are noted.

A few additional points should be noted concerning Bāshā's edition. The ninth of his treatises¹⁰⁴ appears to be two independent texts that

99. Cheikho, *Catalogue*, 238–40. 100. Matthews, "Lansing Collection," 373–76. 101. *Makḥṭūṭāt ʿarabīyah fī abrashīyāt*, 92–93. 102. *Makḥṭūṭāt ʿarabīyah fī abrashīyāt*, 105–6. 103. Atiya, *Hand-list*, 13; Gibson, *Catalogue*, 84; Kamil, *Catalogue*, 31–32. Theodore's work was copied in 1240 (Samir, "Littérature," 484). 104. Bāshā, *Mayāmir*, 140–79.

have been joined in transmission. I divided this work into its parts: the first is found in Part I of the present translation, under the title *Against the Jews*; the second in Part II, under the title *On the Councils*. Contrariwise, the sixth, seventh, and tenth treatises¹⁰⁵ seem once to have been parts of a single treatise, as is clear especially from cross-references in their introductions. These three works I joined together, as three sections of a single treatise, to which I affixed the title *On Our Salvation*. This work is remarkable, almost Anselmian in its understanding of the death of Christ. It is thus all the more lamentable that its middle section has suffered so greatly in transmission. As Bāshā himself noted,¹⁰⁶ in that its beginning was mutilated in his manuscript, he reproduced as much of the text as he could and added conjectural supplements between guillemets. Notwithstanding Bāshā's labors, the opening paragraphs of the treatise are still far from clear. In translating it, it was sometimes possible to agree with Bāshā's conjectures. At other times, it was required to reject them as doing damage to the sense. In such cases, I either provided conjectural readings of my own, or, more often, left the text lacunose.

To this day, Bāshā's remains the only edition of these Arabic works—with one exception. The first of Theodore's treatises, *On Free Will*, has recently been reedited by Khalil Samir and included in Paola Pizzi's outstanding study and translation of this text.¹⁰⁷ In preparing his edition, Samir was unable to gain access to any of its manuscripts and thus had to make do solely with Bāshā's edition. This he divided into paragraphs and sections, vocalized fully, and occasionally emended and corrected. My own translation adopted a number of Samir's emendations and corrections. It has also benefited from his analysis of the logical structure of the text. Notwithstanding, I was occasionally required to propose yet further changes to the text. In the annotations to my translation, when adopting readings from Samir I note my dependency. It may be assumed that all other emendations are my own.

Recent editions of some of Theodore's other Arabic works have been undertaken by Ignace Dick, among these, *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*.¹⁰⁸ Dick's edition of this text is excellent, an accomplishment all the more noteworthy in that he had access to just a single manuscript, Dayr al-Shir 373, copied in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Dick

105. Bāshā, *Mayāmīr*, 83–91, 91–104, 180–86. 106. Bāshā, *Mayāmīr*, 180. 107. Pizzi and Samir, *Libertà*, 130–231. 108. Dick, "Traité." An earlier edition of this treatise was published by Cheikho ("Maymar"). For a German translation, see Graf, *Theodor Abū Qurra Traktat*. For an unpublished English translation, see the dissertation of Khoury ("Existence of the Creator"). An Italian translation is being prepared by Paola Pizzo, to appear in the series *Patrimonio culturale arabo cristiano* (vol. 12). 109. There is another copy in Dayr al-Shuwayr 134, 1531 CE.

faithfully reproduced his manuscript. Moreover, when departing from it, whether to correct Theodore's Arabic or to clarify his arguments, he always recorded the testimony of the manuscript. A number of emendations to a section of Dick's text have been proposed by Monnot,¹¹⁰ almost all of which I adopted. I, too, occasionally have deviated from Dick's text, sometimes by not adopting its conjectural supplements and deletions, sometimes through emendation of the received text, and sometimes by departing from its punctuation and vocalization. Such deviations were especially frequent in the work's first section, which seems not to have fared well in transmission. Deviations from Dick's edition, except in the case of punctuation and vocalization, are noted. It may be observed that this work's three sections appear to be wholly independent of one another, each forming an independent treatise. It is thus that I have treated them in the present volume. The first section is found in Part II, under the title *On Natural Theology*. Sections two and three are found in Part I, under the titles *Theologus Autodidactus* and *That Christianity Is from God*.

Some forty years ago, Dick also published texts and translations of two shorter works by Theodore.¹¹¹ The first is a creedal statement. This I included in Part II, under the title *Theodore's Confession of Faith*. The second is a tractate that I entitled *On the Characteristics of the True Religion*. This work was well served by its editor, who seems faithfully to have reproduced the text of the single manuscript at his disposal (Sinai ar. 447, from the thirteenth century). A number of other witnesses to this treatise are extant, however. Of these, I had access to only one: Damascus, Library of the Antiochene Orthodox Patriarchate, ar. 181, eighteenth century (P).¹¹² This second witness is slightly different from that edited by Dick, with most variations touching matters of style. Nonetheless, it still provides a number of important corrections, though not, unfortunately, the work's lost conclusion.

Two final contributions should be noted. In 1979, Sidney H. Griffith edited and translated into English an Arabic fragment of Theodore on free will.¹¹³ This is preserved in Sinai ar. 72, from the end of the ninth century. This fragment is nearly identical to a work of Theodore preserved in Greek.¹¹⁴ A translation of this fragment is included in Part III of the present volume, under the title *Questions on Free Will*. Lastly, in 1992 I myself edited and translated a short treatise of Theodore against Armenian liturgical practice, seemingly selections from a larger work.¹¹⁵ This treatise I edited from D (pp. 52–58). A second copy of this work is preserved in B (fols.

110. Monnot, "Pluralité," in the notes to pp. 53–66. 111. Dick, "Deux écrits," 53–67. 112. *Makḥṭūāt al-ʿarabiyah fī maktabah*, 30–31. 113. Griffith, "Some Unpublished Arabic Sayings," 29–30; reedited by Samir, "Kitāb," 418–19. 114. See below at p. 240. 115. Lamoreaux, "Unedited Tract," 334–40.

102a–105b), which provides a number of important corrections to my earlier edition. The present volume, in Part II, includes a new, more accurate translation of this work, under the title *Against the Armenians*. Apart from issues of punctuation, deviations from my earlier edition are noted.

Matters of Structure and Style

I have divided my presentation of Theodore's works into four parts, according to their main theological concerns. Part I contains Arabic works in which Theodore seeks to show that Christianity alone of all religions is true. Part II encompasses Arabic and Greek works where Theodore defends the Christology of Chalcedon. Part III is entitled "Topics in Controversial Theology." I have included here five Arabic treatises on diverse topics: epistemology, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the defense of free will. Finally, Part IV contains two Greek works: John the Deacon's compilation and the aforementioned collection of Theodore's Greek fragments. Theodore has a vibrant and lively style, some of which I have tried to capture in the present translation. To this end, I have freely broken longer sentences into shorter ones. When Theodore uses multiple synonyms, which is admittedly not often, I have sometimes replaced them with a single word. I have frequently abandoned Theodore's "I say" or "We say," which are used to mark transitions in subject matter, the same semantic range being conveyed in English through paragraph divisions. As for his biblical citations, Theodore often paraphrases; at times, too, his version of the Bible reflects what we now know to be mistaken understandings.¹¹⁶ Even so, frequently these less-than-perfect renderings were essential to Theodore's arguments. I have, accordingly, tried to reproduce what Theodore took the biblical text to mean. When, however, his rendering of the text was close to the original, I have tried to incorporate the language of the Revised Standard Version. Finally, marginal notes to the translation identify the pagination of the editions from which I have translated.

116. For Theodore's use of the Bible, see Tritton, "Bible Text," 52–54; Samir, "Note," 184–91; Rissanen, "Richtige Sinn," 79–90.

Abbreviations

Manuscripts

- B = Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale, ar. 549
D = Denver, Public Library, ar. 3
E = Athos, Lavra A 135
L = Lattakia 3
M = Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 231
O = Ochrid, Narodni Muzej, gr. 86 (Inv. 86)
P = Damascus, Library of the Antiochene Orthodox Patriarchate, ar. 181
Q = Lattakia 34
S = Sinai ar. 441
V = Vatopedi gr. 236
W = Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, gr. 402
X = Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica, Ottobon. gr. 382
Y = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, gr. 1111

Editions

B = al-Bāshā, Qusṭanṭīn, ed. *Mayāmir Thāwūdūrus Abī Qurrah Usqf Ḥarrān*. Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-fawāʿid, 1904.

D = Dick, Ignace, ed. *Théodore Abuqurra: Traité de l'existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion*. Patrimoine arabe chrétien 3. Jounieh: Librairie Saint-Paul; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1982.

G = Griffith, Sidney H., ed. and trans. "Some Unpublished Arabic Sayings Attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah." *Le Muséon* 92 (1979): 27–35.

GKh = Glej, Reinhold, and Adel Theodor Khoury, eds. and trans. *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra: Schriften zum Islam*. Corpus islamo-christianum: Series graeca 3. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1995.

L = Lamoreaux, John C., ed. and trans. "An Unedited Tract against the Armenians by Theodore Abū Qurrah." *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 327–41.

M = Dick, Ignace, ed. and trans. "Deux écrits inédits de Théodore Abuqurra." *Le Muséon* 72 (1959): 53–67.

PG = *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 97.

PS = Pizzi, Paola, trans., and Samir Khalil Samir, ed. *Teodoro Abū Qurra: La libertà*. Patrimonio culturale arabo cristiano 6. Torino: Silvio Zamorani, 2001.

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PART I

DISCERNING THE TRUE RELIGION



Theologus Autodidactus

I grew up on a mountain where I knew no¹ other people.² One day, D200
a certain need compelled me to descend to civilization and to the com-
munity of my fellow human beings, and I observed that they adhered
to a variety of religions. One sect, adherents of the religion of the first
Hanifs,³ invited me to join their religion. They say that they worshipped
the seven stars (the sun and the moon, Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury,
and Venus) and the twelve zodiacal signs. This is because it is these that
create and govern this world, dispensing good luck and prosperity in it
as well as bad luck and hardship. Their prophet, who told them about D201
such things, is Hermes the Wise.

I left them and was met by some Magians.⁴ They said, “Don’t pay
them any attention! They’re not correct! Join us instead, as we have the
truth.”⁵ They say that their great god is called Zurvan (that is, Fortune).
Before the world was created,⁶ he offered sacrifices for a thousand years
that he might have a son, and his wife conceived a son named Hormazd.
Nine hundred years after his conception,⁷ Zurvan his father began to
doubt that he had in fact been conceived. His doubt caused there to

1. The reading *mā* seems dubious. One may compare, however, the instances of cumulative negation cited by Blau (*Grammar*, 316AB). 2. It will be recalled that the present treatise comprises the second section of Theodore’s *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*. For section 1, see pp. 165ff.; for section 3, pp. 41ff. 3. In the present context, “Hanifs” refers to the pagans of the region in and around Haran. Their religion consisted of a mixture of ancient Babylonian astral cult and Neoplatonism. See Chwolsohn, *Ssabier und Ssabismus*, as well as the more recent studies of Hjärpe (*Sabéens*) and Green (*Moon God*). 4. More properly, adherents of Zurvanism, the official form of Zoroastrianism during the Sasanid period. See, e.g., Zaehner, *Zurvan*. 5. Reading *aydinā*. 6. Reading *tukhlaq*, with Monnot. 7. Reading *tis‘ami’ah*, with Monnot.

be in his wife's womb another son (that is, Satan). Zurvan realized what had happened and said, "I'll give my sovereignty to whichever of my children is first to see my face." While still in his mother's womb, Hormazd learned of this and informed Satan of it. On learning of it, Satan pierced his mother's womb and came forth from her side. He came and stood before his father. He was darkness, black of face, and loathsome. His father said to him, "Who are you?" He replied, "I'm your son Satan, who arose from your doubt. Give me sovereignty as you promised." At this Zurvan was sad. In that he did not want to go back on his word, however, he gave him sovereignty over this world for nine⁸ thousand years. At the end of a thousand years, his mother gave birth to Hormazd, who came forth as lovely and beautiful light. He created the heaven and the earth, as well as the diverse intermediate elements. Notwithstanding that loveliness and beauty were to be seen in the world, it was dark and had no source of light.⁹ Hormazd was thus sad and took counsel with Satan, who suggested that he should marry his mother, which he did. He had sex with her and she conceived and bore the sun, for the light of the day. Satan also suggested that he should marry his sister, which he did. He had sex with her and she conceived and bore the moon, for the light of the night. It is for this reason that Magians marry their mothers, sisters, and daughters, that they might bear children like the sun and the moon, even as Hormazd their god. This then is a description of their gods. Like Hormazd, they are permitted, in whatever way pleases them, to indulge their worldly desires. Indeed, it was for the sake of these desires that Hormazd created them. Their prophet, whom they say brought them this truth, is Zoroaster.

D203 I left them and was met by some Samaritans. They said to me, "Pay them no regard! Join us instead, as we alone have the truth. We are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the beloved of God, the God of heaven and earth. He promised our fathers that he would deliver their seed from the land of Egypt and make them inherit the land of Palestine. This is in fact what happened. It took place at the hands of the prophet Moses. God sent him to Pharaoh and struck both Pharaoh and the people of Egypt with well-known wonders and signs and then brought forth our fathers from Pharaoh's hands by force. He parted the sea for them. He drowned Pharaoh and his armies. He led our fathers into the desert. He fed them with manna and quails. He made water flow from the rock. He gave them the divine law and declared for them the permitted and the forbidden. He destroyed the people of Palestine¹⁰ and gave their lands to our

8. Reading *tis*^c, with Monnot. 9. Translation tentative. For the construction, one may compare B33.9–10. 10. Adding *ahl* before *filastīn*.

fathers. We are their children, even until today. As long as we keep his law, he is kind to us. When we disobey it, he punishes us and makes us suffer distress in this world. Those of us who do good have a pleasant life in this world; those who do bad, distress. When we leave this world, there is everlasting destruction¹¹ and no resurrection.”

I left them and was met by some Jews. They said, “Pay them no regard! Don’t join them, for they are in error! As for what they told you, that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he gave them such promises concerning their seed, that he sent Moses and led them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan—all this really happened.¹² As for what they said about being the seed of Abraham and Israel, this is a lie. No! They are the offspring of Magians.¹³ It is we who are the seed of Abraham and Israel. In truth, it was our fathers that God made to inherit the land of Israel. For fifteen hundred years they dwelt there,¹⁴ in incomparable prosperity. They then sinned, and God grew angry with them and delivered them into the hands of the Gentiles, who exiled¹⁵ them from it. God promised our fathers, however, that he would send us the Christ, who would gather us from the ends of the earth into the land of Palestine, who would make us respected as we were initially, who would give us power over the Gentiles. He promised, too, that he would raise our dead and also gather them into that land and that he would command the earth to give us bread that is already baked, forever and ever.¹⁶ God does not lie; this is what will happen. It is for this that we wait. Don’t join anyone but us, for ours is the only true religion.”

I left them and was met by some Christians. They said, “Don’t let what the Jews say lead you astray. God has already sent this Christ about whom they speak. When they didn’t accept him, God became angry with them and scattered them to the ends of the earth. They have nothing to look forward to but ruin, forever and ever; their hope is in vain. You should adhere to the religion of Christ and to his teaching, that is, that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, three persons, and in this essence a single God.¹⁷ This is the true religion. It was given us by Christ, the Son of God, in the gospel. He also declared for us the permitted and the forbidden, and promised to raise the dead, rewarding those who did good with the kingdom of heaven and punishing those who did evil with hell. The only true religion is ours. Let no one deceive you.”

11. Meaning, the dead are blotted out of existence. 12. Translation tentative. 13. Cf. 2 Kgs 17:24. 14. Reading *mukūthan*, with Monnot. 15. Reading *wa-ajālūhum*. Cf. Syriac *agil*. 16. For this tradition, see Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 30b: “In the future, the land of Israel will bring forth ready baked rolls and fine woolen garments.” Cf. the discussion of this statement in Maimonides’ “Helek: Sanhedrin, Chapter Ten” (Twersky, *Maimonides Reader*, 414–15). 17. The expression “in this essence a single God” is hardly characteristic of Theodore’s manner of talking about the Trinity. It may well be that the text is corrupt.

I left them and was met by some Manicheans, who are also called Zindiqs.¹⁸ They said, “Beware! Don’t follow the Christians or listen to the words of their gospel. We have the true gospel, the one that the twelve apostles wrote.¹⁹ The only true religion is ours, and we are the only Christians. Our master Mani alone understands how to interpret the gospel. He taught us as follows: ‘Before the world was created, there were two gods. These differed in essence. One was light and good (that is, the good god). The other was wicked and darkness (that is, Satan). In the beginning, each was in his own domain. The darkness then noticed the luminous one, as well as his beauty and his loveliness. Out of desire for him, he attacked him and fought with him, wanting to capture him. The luminous one sought to fight against him, but soon the darkness was on the point of victory. When the luminous one came to fear for himself, he cut off a piece of himself and threw it to him. This the darkness swallowed. Heaven and earth, as well as what is between them, is made—by way of mingling—from the nature of the darkness and from the piece that the luminous one threw to him.’” The human being, for instance, is created from an internal soul and an external body, and they suggest that the soul is from the nature of the luminous one, while the body is from the nature of Satan, the dark one. The same holds with regard to the state of things. Everything in them that is good and pleasant is from the nature of the luminous one. Everything that is bad and harmful is from the nature of the dark one. For instance, water drowns those who are submerged in it but gives life and pleasure to those who drink it. The part that gives life is from the luminous one, while what drowns and destroys is from the darkness. As for snakes, scorpions, lions, panthers, creeping things, and the like, all these are from the darkness. This is the essence of their religion and of how they describe their gods. As for the permitted and the forbidden, they pander²⁰ to the worldly desires of those who wish to live a life of pleasure. They are not commanded to get married. Rather, whoever desires a woman can have her, and the same holds for women with regard to men. In fact, this is how they interpret the gospel, suggesting that, when Christ said, “Give to whoever asks,”²¹ he did not mean that when the poor ask for alms, you should give to them.²² Because it was God who caused the poor to have misery in this world, no one is allowed to give them anything, not even alms. If we do,

18. A traditional Muslim designation for either Manicheans or atheist materialists. 19. For this passage and the identity of the work in question, see Schneemelcher, *Apocrypha*, 1:378–79. 20. Monnot’s emendation is unnecessary; cf. the parallels at D246.5; 260.7, 15; 261.13. 21. Matt 5:42. 22. The text is clearly corrupt, perhaps even lacunose. Dick’s emendations, however, seem to reflect the sense of Theodore’s argument.

we disobey God, who, if he desires, makes them wretched, and who, if he desires, makes them prosperous. If God had wished to make them prosperous, he would have given them wealth in the same way that he gave it to the one from whom alms were being asked and would not have caused them to be needy. As concerns their interpretation of Christ's words, "Give to whoever asks," this has to do with men and women. He is saying to the woman, "If a man asks you for yourself, don't refuse him," and to the man, "If a woman asks you for yourself, give yourself to her." This and the like do they teach with regard to the permitted and the forbidden and with regard to matters of divinity.

I left them and was met by some Marcionites.²³ They said, "Don't join them! Their error is great! Join us instead, as we have the true gospel. About it and its interpretation our master Marcion was the most knowledgeable. He described and taught us matters of divinity. He said that there are three gods. One is jealous and just with regard to one's due. He does not tolerate sin. For those who do sin, he has neither indulgence nor mercy, only their deserved punishment. This is the god of the Old Testament,²⁴ the one who sent Moses and did certain deeds in Egypt. The second god is good, merciful, and beneficent. He abounds in kindness and punishes no one. This god is Christ. The third is dark and wicked, the pinnacle of all evil. This god is Satan."

D209

I left them and was met by Bardaisan.²⁵ He said to me, "Don't listen to them! They're not correct! Join me instead, for I have the truth. I tell you that there are five eternal gods: four with no intellect, one with. The one with intellect, because he has intellect, is stronger than the other four and conquered them, and from them created the world. These four without intellect are fire, air, water, and earth. It was the one with intellect who through his wisdom fashioned from them the elements of the world."

D210

I left them and was met, lastly, by some Muslims. They said, "Don't listen to any of those you just met! They're just a bunch of infidels who associate partners with God. The only true religion is Islam, which God sent to all people through his prophet Muhammad, who summons you to worship God alone and to associate nothing with him. He has charged

23. Followers of the second-century heretic Marcion. The particular form of Marcionism at issue here is that which posited a divine Triad, with one principle good, another just, and another wicked. While there was much variation in the theology of later Marcionism, this view seems to have been predominant. See Amman, "Marcion," 2029–30. 24. Monnot's emendation is unnecessary. Theodore often uses *al-ʿatiqah* to refer to the Old Testament. See D255.12. Other examples include B53.19 and B61.9. 25. A Syriac Christian poet and philosopher who died ca. 222. The present description of his teachings is very unlike other descriptions stemming from the early Middle Ages, whether Muslim or Christian. See Nau, "Bardesanites," 400.

you with the permitted and the doing of good and forbade you from the forbidden and the doing of evil. He has promised to raise the dead. For those who do good, the reward is paradise. From underneath it, there will flow forth rivers of water, milk, honey, and wine—a delight for those who drink. In it, for pleasure, there will be women with black eyes, ones that neither jinn nor men have touched, as well as whatever other good things a person desires, in castles of emerald, ruby, gold, and silver, and so on, forever and ever. For those who do evil, he has promised hell, the fires of which are not extinguished.²⁶

Parable of the Hidden King

D211 After meeting all these people, I began to reflect on what each had said and realized that all of them both agreed and disagreed about three things. As for what they agreed on, each claims to have a god, to have something permitted and forbidden, and to have a reward and a punishment—with one or two exceptions. As for what they disagreed on, they disagree with one another as to the attributes of their gods, as to what is permitted and forbidden, and as to what the reward and the punishment will be. Again, I reflected: Because God is kind and generous, when he saw his creation deviating from the true worship, he would have sent them messengers and a book, both in order to show them the true worship and to return them to it from their sins. And yet, there are many messengers and many books, and they disagree with one another! One of two things must be the case: either not even one of these messengers has come from God, or there is among them just one true messenger. Because of what we know about God's generosity and about how he cares for his creation, the latter must be the case. But how to recognize this one true messenger?

D212

It was then that I realized that my situation was like that of a king's son,²⁷ one with a father who was hidden and veiled, whom no one had ever seen, apart from his closest and most intimate friends. When a need arose in a certain country, he sent his young son to take care of it. To protect him from disease, he also sent one of his physicians, whom he appointed his son's wazir. (Neither the son nor the physician had ever seen the king.) The youth went to that land, where he neglected the physician and fell gravely ill. On learning of this, the father's love for his son would let him neither leave him in this state nor neglect him. He thus wrote his

26. Much of Theodore's description of paradise is from the Qur^ʿān: for "a delight for those who drink," see Qur^ʿān 37:46; 47:15; for "ones that neither jinn nor men have touched," see Qur^ʿān 55:56, 74. 27. Lit. "the son of a king, whose father is a king."

son a letter. In it, he spoke of three matters. First, he described himself. Secondly, he described for the youth his disease and what habits²⁸ had brought it about, forbidding him also from continuing to practice them. Thirdly, he described for him a medicine and how it would heal him, as well as how to conduct himself in the future in order to enjoy health and ceaseless felicity,²⁹ that no illness might befall him ever again. He also ordered him to continue drinking that medicine even after³⁰ he had regained his health. The king then summoned one of his messengers and gave him the letter, ordering him to travel to his son and deliver it. The messenger took the letter and set off to take it to the youth. D213

The king had many enemies, and there were many people who envied him. Because of his might, however, there was no way for them to harm him. When they learned that the king's son had taken ill, that his father was disturbed by this, and that he had thus sent his son a messenger and a letter—when they learned of this, I say, in that they may have found an opportunity to hurt the king through his son, each of them quickly got ready a messenger and forged a letter in the king's name. In these letters, they described the king, but falsely, and forbade the king's son from what is helpful while at the same time ordering him to do what is harmful. They also sent him a medicine, which would kill him if he drank it. Their messengers took the letters and began their journey, overtaking the king's true messenger before he could deliver his letter. D214

Having arrived together at the residence of the king's son, the messengers delivered their letters. On reading their letters, the king's son found that all disagreed with one another—about the description of the king, about what his father had commanded and forbade, and even about the medicines. He thus summoned them. When they had come into his presence, one began by saying, "I'm the king's messenger, and his is the letter I delivered." Another said, "He's a liar. He's not the king's messenger. I'm his messenger, and his is the letter I delivered." Another said, "They're both liars. I'm the king's messenger." They thus began to declare one another and all the others to be liars, while at the same time affirming themselves to be the true messengers. As for the true messenger, he was right there among them, declaring them liars and being declared by them to be a liar. He had become as one of them, with nothing to set him apart.

The king's son was confused, not knowing whom to believe. The physician then said to him, "Send them away for now. I'll find a way to distinguish among them. After all, I'm a physician and I understand these matters, which fall within the purview of my profession. Observe

28. Reading *al-ʿādāt* for *al-ʿāhāt*, here and in what follows. 29. Reading *wa-naʿīm*.

30. Reading with the ms.

D215 that their letters are at variance with one another. Among these letters, there can be only one from the king—if, indeed, there is even one. All their letters touch on three matters: first, the king’s description to you of himself; secondly, his declaration to you of the habits that made you ill, his forbidding you from them, and his guiding you to a state that will make you healthy; and thirdly, the medicine that will give you health and ease in a life forever untouched by illness. As I said, I’m a physician and I too understand the habits that cause illness and the states that lead to health. Further, I know your father’s attributes from your own likeness, for you are his son—even though I’ve³¹ never seen him. Come, let’s first examine these messengers’ medicines, what the king forbids and commands you in his letters, and his description of himself. If someone has a medicine that does good constantly; if there is in someone’s letter a description of the habits that I know lead to illness and these he forbids you, while at the same time he commands you to do what leads to health; if there is in it a description of your father that, on comparison, is found to agree with your likeness—if all this is true, I say, he must be the true messenger of your father. Him we shall accept; all who disagree with him we shall reject.”

D216 They collected the medicines, and the physician examined them. All were contrary to one another. All also forbade the king’s son from doing what was beneficial, while at the same time commanding him to do what leads to illness—with one exception. There was one letter in which there was a beneficial medicine. It³² was forbidding him from what would make him sick and commanding him to do what would make him healthy. The same held for the king’s description of himself. The physician compared all the descriptions to the youth’s attributes. And again, there was only one with a description that resembled him, and it was in the same letter that had given the true description of his illness and of the beneficial medicine. He thus took that letter and the medicine, and, putting his trust in it, he acted accordingly. He also summoned the one who brought it and declared him the true messenger of the king. The others he declared liars and drove away harshly.

The hidden king is God. May he be blessed and exalted! His son is Adam and his seed, whom God created. The physician is the mind, which God gave to Adam. By it, he is to recognize God. By it, he is to recognize and do what is right, while at the same time recognizing what is wrong and abstaining from it. The son’s neglect of the physician and his falling ill is Adam’s neglect of the mind, his falling into sin, his going forth from paradise to the earth, and his causing the mind to incline to

31. Reading *arahu*. 32. Reading with the ms.

the life of this world, a life like that of the beasts. The king's sending him a messenger represents God's sending, in truth, a messenger and a book to his creation. In this book, he gives them a true description of himself, according to which he is to be worshipped. In it, he forbids them from every form of evil and insolence and commands them to do good in this world. In it, he proclaims for those who do good their blessedness in the next world, as well as unending comfort, while for evildoers he promises hell, the fire of which is not extinguished.³³ This is the one true religion. As for the king's enemies, those who wanted to harm the king through his son, those who prepared messengers and letters and sent them so as to destroy him, these are the devils, who have done the same thing. The messenger of God and his true book have come into the world. Against him, each of those devils gathered, each declaring the others to be liars and summoning humanity to himself. Among them was the true messenger, and he, till now, was as one of them, unrecognized. These messengers are those I described above,³⁴ those who met me one after another when I descended from the mountain, each inviting me to join him—namely, the Hanifs, Magians, Samaritans, Jews, Christians, Manicheans, Marcionites, and Bardaisanites. (In the real world, there are yet other religions and still more disagreement.³⁵ We, however, have restricted ourselves to the aforementioned eight or nine and explained what each proclaims with regard to the attributes of God, the permitted and forbidden, and reward and punishment.)

We must now act like the wise physician. We must lay the books to one side and inquire of the mind, how, from the likeness of human nature, we might know God's attributes, which our senses do not see and our minds do not comprehend. We must then inquire how this nature can teach us about what is good and what is evil, about what is commendable and what is reprehensible, and finally, how it can teach us about the eternal reward with which God blesses it and about its punishment and eternal wretchedness. When we have discussed and come to understand these subjects, we shall compare those books that are in our possession. If we find a book with these things in it, we shall know that it is from God. That book we shall confess and accept; every other book we shall reject.

Human Nature as an Image of God

While God is unseen, through the likeness of our own nature's virtues, notwithstanding that God transcends and is contrary to our nature, our minds can see both him and the attributes according to which

33. Cf. Mark 9:48. 34. See pp. 1–6. 35. Reading with the ms.

he is to be worshipped. To illustrate this, consider the following:³⁶ We cannot see our own face in and of itself, but only through its likeness. Take, for instance, the man who looks in a mirror and sees his face from the likeness in it. When he does this, it is clear that he, through its likeness, has seen something unseen along with all its attributes. In terms of these attributes, the two faces resemble one another. For instance, suppose two strangers come to us, one knowing the man who looked in the mirror, the other not knowing him. Suppose further that they looked³⁷ at the face in the mirror. The one who knew the man would recognize that this is the face of his friend. The one who did not know him, when he saw him he would know that his is the face in the mirror. Accordingly, the mind infers from the one to the other and vice versa, from either of the two to that to which it corresponds.³⁸ At the same time, in terms of these attributes, the two faces³⁹ do not resemble one another, for the face of the man in and of itself transcends and is contrary to the likeness in the mirror. After all, he exists, while the image does not.⁴⁰ He sees, hears, and smells, while the face in the mirror does not. Accordingly,⁴¹ something⁴² unseen can be seen from its likeness, notwithstanding that it transcends and is contrary to its likeness.

In the same way, when with our minds we examine Adam's nature and observe its virtues, we can see God from it and have true knowledge of him, for that nature is his likeness, notwithstanding that God transcends and is contrary to it. (The situation is analogous to the face of a person in and of itself and its likeness.) Adam's nature has both virtues and defects. For instance, Adam, in his nature, today exists and tomorrow is gone, is living and dead, learned and ignorant, wise and unwise, powerful and weak. The same holds for his other attributes. They come in pairs. Some are virtues; others, defects. God is not comprehended through the defects of Adam's nature, nor does God resemble Adam in those defects. It is only with regard to his virtues that Adam resembles God. Indeed, one can see God from each one of his virtues and see each one of his virtues in God. After all, Adam's virtues came to him from God. The situation is similar to the likeness in the mirror. In that likeness, there is no attribute that is not also in the person, for everything in the likeness came to it from the face of that person. It is in this manner that we can see God from the virtues of Adam's nature.

36. Reading *al-jihah* (cf. D223.5). 37. Reading *wa-nazarā*. 38. That is, from the likeness to the real entity and from the real entity to the likeness. 39. Reading *al-wajhān* for *wa-l-ḥālah allatī*, and rejecting Dick's emendation. 40. Adding *ghayr* before *mawjūd*, and rejecting Dick's emendation. 41. Reading *idhan* for *idh*, and rejecting Dick's emendation. 42. Reading *shay'* for *shay'an*.

When with our minds we examine Adam's nature and see that it exists, we say: If Adam exists, he who caused him to be thus must surely exist. In other words, from the existence of Adam we see the existence of God. Nonetheless, God's existence is not like Adam's existence, for God's existence transcends⁴³ and is contrary to Adam's existence. After all, Adam's existence has a beginning and an end, while God's existence is above and contrary to that, being without beginning and having no end. So also, we see that Adam is alive and say: If Adam is alive, we know that God is alive. Nonetheless, God's life is not like Adam's life, but contrary to it. Adam's life is perishing and in order to persist requires, first, milk, and then, food and drink. It grows up little by little, such that he is now a child, now a youth, now an old man. This is followed by decrepitude, death, and destruction. The same hold with regard to whatever else touches the life of human beings. As for God's life, it transcends and is contrary to this. It has no beginning and needs nothing. It does not grow up and change from one state to another. It does not fall into decrepitude, death, or destruction. So also, we see that Adam has knowledge and say: If Adam has knowledge, he who caused him to be thus must surely have knowledge. From Adam's having knowledge, we know that God has knowledge. Nonetheless, God's knowledge is not like Adam's knowledge but transcends and is contrary to it. Adam obtained his knowledge through his senses or from someone who taught him. He does not know what was and will be, nor even much that is right in front of him. As for God's knowledge, it transcends and is contrary to this. He did not obtain it through his senses or from someone who taught him. From him, nothing that was or will be is hidden, from all eternity to all eternity. In a similar manner, when we see Adam's wisdom, his seeing and his hearing, his strength, his abundance of goodness and generosity, his righteousness, his patience and his mercy, his forbearance and his forgiveness, his justice, and all of his other virtues, we say: If Adam has these virtues, he who caused him to be such surely has wisdom, strength, seeing and hearing, magnanimity and generosity, righteousness, patience and mercy, forbearance, and justice. Because Adam is thus we know that God is thus. Nonetheless, in these attributes, too, God transcends and is contrary to Adam. It is as we explained above regarding existence, life,⁴⁴ and knowledge. Accordingly, it is in the virtues of his nature that Adam resembles God, and it is from these⁴⁵ that our minds see God and his attributes. In that we see them in Adam, we know that they are in God, notwithstanding that God's attributes transcend and are contrary to them, as we explained.⁴⁶

43. Reading *yartafi*^c. 44. Reading *wa-l-ḥayāh*. 45. Reading *minhā*. 46. Cf. the briefer forms of this argument at pp. 159–61 and 232–33.

D224 In a similar manner, Adam has yet other, more noble virtues that are also in God. Adam resembles God with regard to these in the same way that he resembles him with regard to the virtues we mentioned above, when we said that we with our minds can see God from them. I am speaking of begetting and headship.⁴⁷ We see that something resembling Adam in nature was begotten and proceeded from him.⁴⁸ We see, too, that he is head over this one who is like him. Since Adam begets and is head over one who is from him, he who caused him to beget and to be head must surely himself beget and be head over one who resembles him. Nonetheless, this is so in a transcendent and contrary manner. Adam's begetting of a son took place through a woman, sex, and development. So too, Eve proceeded from him "as bone of his bone,"⁴⁹ through a decrease of his body. Further, Adam preceded both his son and Eve in time. Moreover, though he is head over them and they share a common nature, their wills do not wholly agree with his. God's begetting of his Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit, however, transcends and are contrary to this. They did not take place through a woman or sex. They involved neither pregnancy nor development. There was no question of temporal precedence, only simultaneity. So too, God's headship over those who are from him involves no disagreement. Rather, those two agree with him in nature, will, eternity, and desire. Among them, there is absolutely no disagreement, excepting that one begot, another was begotten, and another proceeded, while the one who begot is head.

D225

Suppose someone denies that Adam and God resemble one another with regard to begetting and headship in the same way that they resemble one another with regard to the other virtues. We answer: You ought not to deny this. There are in Adam no virtues more noble or exalted than begetting and headship. After all, if Adam did not beget, he would have neither felicity of life, nor headship, nor speech, nor generosity, nor any of the other virtues attributed to him. His felicity of life would be with the pigs, asses, and other beasts—which is not felicity.⁵⁰ So too, there could be no headship if it were only over such as these,⁵¹

D226 for it would not be headship but degradation and dishonor to be called the head of ticks, pigs, scarabs, and worms.⁵² His speech, too, would be empty and unneeded, for he would have no one to understand or answer him. In the same way, none of his virtues would be counted virtues if he had no one who resembles him. Grant that all of Adam's virtues that are incomparably less than begetting are in God. Grant further that Adam

47. Reading with the ms. 48. For an argument similar to what follows, cf. pp. 142–44, 162–63, and 232–33. 49. Gen 2:23. 50. Because, it seems, Adam would have no equal with whom to share it. 51. Reading with the ms. 52. Similar arguments can be found below at pp. 140–42 and at pp. 226–27.

resembles God with regard to these lesser virtues and that they are not to be denied of God. If you grant this, then begetting, which is better than these other virtues, is most surely in God and not to be denied of him. If this were not so, then Adam would be better than God in that he has two virtues—the best of virtues—that are not in God, namely, begetting and headship. No sane mind can accept, however, that Adam has virtues that are not in God, as this is something absurd. Again, would it not be absurd that Adam is head of one like himself but God is head only of his creation? Adam would not be pleased to be head of the creation. Indeed, neither he nor any of us would be pleased to be head of pigs, asses, flies, bedbugs, fleas, scarabs, and worms. If Adam and we are not pleased with this, how is it that we attribute to God that with which we ourselves are not pleased? If we were to say that God is head, but only over angels and humans, this also would be degradation. After all, by nature, angels and humans stand further from God than do pigs, lice, and scarabs from us. While we and those animals share the nature of living being,⁵³ angels and humans share absolutely nothing with God. The distance between them is incomparably greater than the distance between heaven and earth. Accordingly, if someone were to attribute headship to God, but suggests that his headship is only over creatures, he has attributed to him ignominy⁵⁴ and degradation, as well as that with which he himself would not be pleased to be described. If there is attributed to Adam or one of us headship over another human being, one from him or like him, we do not consider⁵⁵ that degradation, but glory, exaltation, and honor. If this is so, then God—may he be blessed and exalted!—is surely head, not over his creatures, but over one like him. And if he is head over one like him, he, too, has begotten a Son and there has proceeded from him a Spirit, and he and Adam resemble one another with regard to begetting and headship. Thus, among the many things the mind can infer from the likeness of Adam’s nature is that God is three persons: one who begets, another who is begotten, and another who proceeds. In this manner, confirmation is given to the words of the speaker, who did not lie in what he spoke when he⁵⁶ said, “And God created humans, and in the image of God he created them.”⁵⁷ This, too, is among God’s attributes.⁵⁸

Even as our minds can infer God’s unseen attributes from the likeness of our nature, so also they can infer from our nature knowledge of the permitted and the forbidden, the commendable and the reprehensible, good and evil, what makes us righteous and what makes us corrupt,⁵⁹ as

53. Reading *al-ḥayawān*. 54. Reading *bi-l-qubḥ*. 55. Reading *narā*. 56. Omitting *Allāh*. 57. Gen 1:27. 58. Reading with the ms. 59. Reading *wa-yuḥsidunā*; cf. the juxtaposition of *al-qabiḥ* and *al-fāsid* at D228.9, 14–15 and D230.1.

well as what enables us to do these things. Instinctively, we all dislike⁶⁰ and recognize ugly and corrupt deeds when they are committed by our neighbor. For instance, suppose that someone deceives us or demeans us, mocks us, misleads us, rejects or reviles us, strikes us, takes something of ours,⁶¹ treats us ill, commits a loathsome act with our women folk, coerces us in something that is our own business, or anything else like this. If this happens, we instinctively dislike it, recognizing that it is something corrupt, reprehensible, evil, and forbidden. Accordingly, we can define what is corrupt, reprehensible, evil, and forbidden as follows: Do not⁶² do to your neighbor something harmful that you would dislike him to do to you.⁶³ As for what enables you to do this, it is that you not covet what your neighbor possesses.⁶⁴ Instinctively, we all like and recognize deeds that are good, proper, righteous, and permitted. For instance, we like it when our neighbor treats us with respect and generosity, meets our needs, is kind to us even though we treat him with insolence, forgives us even though we do him evil, and lavishes us with advice, which is the pinnacle of all good. Accordingly, we can define what is good, righteous, and permitted as follows: Do to your neighbor excellent and commendable deeds that you would like him to do to you. As for what enables you to do this, it is that you rid yourself of desire for this world and for everything that you or anyone else possesses. Our nature has thus taught us that what is evil and forbidden is that you do to your neighbor something reprehensible that you would dislike him to do to you, as well as what enables you to do this. It has also taught us that what is good and permitted is that you do to your neighbor the good deed that you would like him to do to you, as well as what enables you to do this.⁶⁵

D231 The objective of all that we have said above is love.⁶⁶ Love can be defined as preferring others to one's self. Take, for instance, the love of a king for an only begotten son born to him in his old age. He wishes him to inherit his kingdom. He is, after all, the apple of his eye and the very essence of his soul. He is unable to harm or make him sad in any way. Rather, for him he would sacrifice himself, his kingdom, and what he possesses. It is the same with those who are perfectly virtuous—except that their love is directed toward all people. If we behave in this manner we are in the likeness of God. This is because God—may he be blessed!—desires nothing in the world for himself, nor does he ever desire harm or sadness for any of his servants.⁶⁷ Rather, he bears with those who do him evil and is kind to those who forge lies against him, a

60. Reading *yakrah*; cf. D229.14 and *yuhibb wa-ya'rif* at D230.5. 61. Reading with the ms. 62. Reading with the ms. 63. Cf. Matt 7:12. 64. Cf. Exod 20:17. 65. For these last two sentences, I have abandoned Dick's numerous emendations. 66. Reading *al-ḥubb*. 67. Reading *'ibādihī*.

fount of goodness for the undeserving. Everything that is in the world he gives to human beings. With his angels, heaven and earth, and the intermediate elements, he serves their lives as a result of his kindness and generosity. He does not prefer the righteous to the unrighteous or the good to the wicked, but his good flows equally to both. Accordingly, the objective of the perfectly virtuous is God himself, who forbids them from evil and wickedness and commands them to do good and to become in their relations with others perfectly good, as is God himself. This, then, is among the things our nature teaches us⁶⁸ about what is forbidden and permitted in this world. D232

Our nature can also teach us about reward and punishment in the next world. Our minds recognize what constitutes our nature's felicity and wretchedness in this world. From these, we can infer what constitutes its felicity and wretchedness in the next world. For this reason, before we describe the latter, we must treat the former, only then making our inferences about the latter. In this world, the life of created beings has no permanence without external things to assist and uphold it. For instance, the life of human beings does not last and has no permanence apart from the external assistance of food and drink, air to breathe, and the like. There is nothing that lives in and of itself, with no need for other things to sustain its life: excepting God, every living being has permanence of life from other things, in the manner we have explained. For in every living creature, God has established a desire for what sustains and gives permanence to its life, a movement toward it, and an eagerness to seek it. God has also prepared objects from which it might obtain this. When a living creature obtains these, its life is felicitous; when it does not obtain them, its life is wretched. Take, for example, that by which the life of our own nature is sustained and for which our own desires strive: eating food, drinking water, breathing air, wearing clothes to ward off cold and heat, and dwelling in houses, in which we take shelter from sun and rain, snow and ice. (There are other, similar things that the nature of our life requires.) As for the objects toward which our desires are moved so as to obtain these necessities, these include earth for growing food, springs for water to drink, air to breathe, sheep for wool, earth for cotton, flax for clothing, as well as ropes,⁶⁹ thickets, rocks, and wood for building houses, and so on. Such are the objects from which we obtain sustenance. When from these our desires obtain sustenance for our life, we are felicitous; when they do not, we are wretched. It is like a man who travels in the desert, who is overcome D233

68. Adopting only the latter part of Dick's correction; for the rest, reading with the ms. 69. As mountains seem an odd item to include in a list of objects needed for building a house, I have emended *wa-l-jibāl* to read *wa-l-ḥibāl*. D234

by heat and scorching winds and grows thirsty, who searches for water but finds none, so that his innards burn and his tongue is parched, who is wretched in a manner than which there is nothing worse. If he is provided with cold water and partakes of it, however, his innards grow cool and his tongue is moistened, he takes pleasure in it and is refreshed by it, and is felicitous in a manner than which there is nothing greater. The same holds with regard to hunger and the other needs of our nature. Accordingly, the worldly felicity of humans consists in existence and in the obtaining of the objects that God has prepared for the sustenance of their lives and for which God has implanted in them desires. Wretchedness, on the other hand, is being deprived of these and lacking them.

D235 Our minds recognize that there are desires that God has implanted in our nature. Out of need for these, our nature is moved. By these, our life is sustained. For these, God has prepared objects, from which it obtains sustenance. If our nature obtains these, it enjoys felicity; if it does not, it is wretched. In the same manner, our minds also recognize that there are yet other desires implanted in our nature. These are not of this world. They represent, rather, perfect felicity and consummate longing. Corresponding to these, God has prepared objects, through which, for those who obtain them, there is felicity.⁷⁰ In short, when our nature obtains these, it enjoys felicity; when it does not, it is wretched. Each of us desires to live forever and not die. Each of us desires a body that cannot be touched by infirmity, injury, change, or corruption: if thrown into fire, that it not be burnt; if into water, that it not be drowned; if a boulder falls on it, that it not be crushed; if struck by a sword, that it not be wounded; if bitten by a snake, that it not be harmed. The same holds for the other misfortunes and infirmities that bring about harm in this world. Each of us desires, on looking at some city or land, to see both it and what it contains, that there come between our sight and what
 D236 it desires neither distance, nor mountain, nor wall, nor house, nor veil, that no aspect of that city or land be hidden from our sight. Each of us desires to have perfect knowledge, that is, a full knowledge of good and evil, the permitted and the forbidden, and so on, correctly and without error. Each of us desires to be able to repulse all evil and not flag in the performance of what is good, just, and righteous. Each of us desires unceasing wealth, that we might distribute it to all. Each of us desires to be merciful and gentle, pure, good, and just, and—the summit of every virtue—to love all and be loved by all. Each of us desires to live in unceasing and unmeasured felicity. The same holds for what is like these desires. The object of such desires is God, in and of himself. May he be

70. Reading with the ms.

blessed and exalted! He is living and does not die. He does not change and is not subject to corruption. No infirmity befalls him. He sees all and from him nothing that was or will be is hidden. He has perfect knowledge, of good and evil, of the permitted and the forbidden. He is able to repulse evil and do good perfectly. He possesses unceasing wealth, which he gives to all. He is kind and merciful, good, pure, and just. He loves all and is loved by all. His life is characterized by unceasing felicity. D237

Now that we recognize these exalted desires implanted in us, as well as their object, we must know the following: God implanted in us worldly desires and prepared objects corresponding to them, that we might obtain them and enjoy felicity. God did not deprive us of these objects, lest we be wretched. That would not befit him. Rather, he generously granted them to us, for the felicity and sustenance of our life, as befits him. In precisely the same manner, since he implanted in us desires and he is their object—may he be blessed and exalted!—we know that he does not keep us from himself, lest he make us wretched. That would not befit him. Rather, he generously grants himself to us, and we dwell with him and touch him, partaking of his sweetness and felicity through these desires. It is for these that our souls long. They represent perfect felicity and consummate longing. Through him, we become gods and enjoy him forever. Accordingly, the summit of our nature's felicity is that we become gods and enjoy God. We do not mean to suggest that we shall change from our human nature and become gods by nature. This is impossible. It is not right for the created to become uncreated. Rather, we remain as we were in our human nature, while coming to contain God's nature and through it becoming gods—without change. To illustrate this, consider a piece of iron that is placed in fire, heated, and then removed. It becomes fire but is not changed from its nature. No, D238 it is now iron that contains fire and acts according to fire's nature, for it now burns, gives light, and heats. So also, our nature without change contains and encompasses⁷¹ God's nature. May he be blessed! For this reason, through touching him, we acquire life that is eternal, immortal, untouched by change, corruption, or infirmity, and this, from the totality of his virtues, for which he implanted in us desires, as we have explained. The virtues to which I refer are the virtues of God that we mentioned above,⁷² when we compared them with the virtues of Adam's nature and suggested that God transcends and is contrary to Adam in them. We noted that Adam exists but that he is not permanent, but that God, who also exists, transcends and is contrary to Adam's existence, in that he is permanent and does not pass out of existence. This virtue,

71. Reading *tashtamil wa-tukhālīt*. 72. See pp. 11ff.

as well as all of God's other virtues, in which he transcends and is contrary to Adam's nature—it is for these that God implanted desires in us, thinking it good to bestow them on us and bless our natures with them, forever, in the manner we have explained. This is the felicity about which our nature has taught us that it is that than which⁷³ nothing is greater. All this is like that thirsty man we mentioned above:⁷⁴ when he found the cold water and drank it, through it he enjoyed felicity; when he lacked it, he was wretched.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the felicity of finding him⁷⁶ and the felicity of finding water to drink are not equal, nor are the wretchedness of lacking him and the wretchedness of lacking water equal. Rather, the nobility and exaltedness of God's felicity over the water is comparable to his own nobility and exaltedness over the water; so also, the intensity of the wretchedness of lacking him is greater than the intensity of the wretchedness of lacking water. This blessing is God's reward for his beloved. This wretchedness is his punishment for those who disobey him. It is this that our nature teaches us.

Discerning the Religions

D240 Knowing the things explained above, we must now act like the wise physician,⁷⁷ comparing the religions we encountered and examining what each says about God, the permitted and the forbidden, and reward and punishment. If we find one that agrees with what our own nature has taught us, we shall know for certain that it is true, that it is from God, and that through it alone God is to be worshipped. We shall wholeheartedly accept it, take our stand on it, and worship God through it, casting aside, rejecting, and despising the rest. On examining the matter, we find that the gospel alone contains what we learned from our own nature.

D241 The gospel alone contains what we learned about God being three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Christ said to his disciples, "Even as my Father sent me, I have sent you. Go forth to the Gentiles and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and teach them to do all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you until the end of the age. Amen!"⁷⁸ This is exactly what our own nature taught us, as a result of its being in the likeness of God. As for the other religions, not one gives any such guidance. Rather, they describe their gods according to the

73. Reading with the ms. 74. See pp. 15–16. 75. Rejecting Dick's emendation. 76. Reading *ni'emat wujūdihi* for *wujūd ni'emat*, and rejecting Dick's emendation. 77. See pp. 7–8. 78. Actually, Theodore has here concatenated John 20:21 and Matt 28:19–20.

imaginings of their human and earthly minds. One says that the Deity is stars. One says that God loves two children, Satan and Hormazd, who married his mother. Others say that he is just a single person. Others say that there are two gods with different natures, one good and one evil, the good one being God, the evil one being Satan. Others say that there are three gods, one just, one good, and Satan, who is wicked. Others say that there are five gods, four without intellects and a fifth with intellect. Others say “one, eternal, who did not beget and was not begotten.”⁷⁹ Thus do they describe God, not one of them hitting on a true account of him. Their descriptions are from the earth, not from God. The gospel’s description alone is from God. We know this because it offers us what our own nature taught us, as a result of its being in the likeness of God, as we explained above. D242

So too, the gospel records that Christ commanded his disciples to do what is permitted and to refrain from what is forbidden, to do what is good, to refrain from what is bad, and to be perfectly good, and this in a manner that accords with what our own nature has taught us about refraining from evil and doing good. To this end, he said, “Behold, what you do not like other people to do to you, do not do it to them, and what you like other people to do to you, do it to them.”⁸⁰ He also taught how one might acquire the ability to refrain from evil and be perfectly good. This takes place in four different ways: first, abandon and reject the things of the world; secondly, love God and put him above the world; thirdly, love other people and put them above the world; and fourthly, forego retaliation, cling to forgiveness, reward evil with good, and imitate God. This is what Christ said about renunciation: “Sell all you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. Take up your cross and follow me.”⁸¹ Again, “In the world, do not take bread for two days nor two sets of clothing nor a bag nor copper in your belt.”⁸² Concerning the love of God and putting him above the world, Christ said, “In the world, whoever loves father or mother, wife or child, relative or money, more than me, is not worthy of me.”⁸³ Concerning our love for one another, Christ said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. By this people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”⁸⁴ This is the type of love where we prefer the one loved to ourselves: “Even as I have loved you, I sacrificed myself for you.”⁸⁵ Concerning forgiveness, rewarding with good, and the imitation of God, he said, “It was said to the ancients, ‘An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.’ I say to you, however: Do not requite evil with evil. Rather, if someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the left. If someone takes your clothes, give him your cloak as well. If D243

79. Qurʾān 112:2–3. 80. Matt 7:12. 81. Matt 19:21; 16:24. 82. Matt 10:9–10. 83. Matt 10:37. 84. John 13:34–35. 85. Cf. John 15:12–13. D244

someone forces you to go one mile, go two. If someone asks you, give, and if someone asks you for a loan, do not refuse. Do not hate your enemies, but love them. Bless those who curse you and do good to those who drive you away. Pray for those who conquer and oppress you, that you might be the child of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise on the good and the bad, on the righteous and the unrighteous.”⁸⁶ The gospel thus commands us to do the same perfect good that our nature teaches—and in this is health.⁸⁷ After all, those who please others with what pleases themselves, those who cast aside and renounce love for the world, those who place love for God above the world and their brethren above both it and themselves, those who renounce retaliation, those who forgive, those who requite evil with good, those who love their enemies, those who imitate God, the summit of every good and virtue, and become his children—they are the most exalted of human beings, and it is they who have banished sickness from their nature and caused it to be in perfect health. Of this health, too, our nature has taught us. With respect to this second subject, we see that not one of the other religions recognized or commanded such things. Indeed, the situation is quite the opposite. They permitted their followers to cling to the world and pandered to their desires for it and to their enjoyment of its sweetness. This was something that slew their nature and made it ill, barring it from love for the creator and from love for one another. Like wild animals, they commanded nothing of virtue, but only vengeance and revenge. Indeed, they were not satisfied with vengeance, but went even further. They abuse, but do not accept abuse, and if abused, they strike, and if struck, they kill.⁸⁸ Nor do they limit themselves to this, but they take their swords and go forth to those who have done them no harm, killing and taking them as booty. All the religions consider this acceptable. I cannot help but wonder how they claim God commands them to do this, even though this is contrary to our nature and causes its corruption! God—may he be blessed and exalted!—does not desire our nature’s corruption, but its goodness, for he has ordered our nature to keep away from corruption. As for what would cause our nature to inherit hell, God would command neither that, nor our nature’s corruption, nor something that bars our nature from himself. Thus, whoever claims that our nature’s corruption is from God, that person has erred in suggesting that it has come from God. Whoever makes our nature good and healthy, whoever brings it something that draws it near to God, that person is from God. Accordingly, in that the holy gospel alone brings this, it alone has come from God. Of this there can be no doubt.

86. Matt 5:38–45. 87. Reading *al-sihḥah*; cf. D245.18, 246.1 and 247.5. 88. This same image is also found at p. 45.

We turn now to reward and punishment. In the gospel, Christ promised the righteous and the unrighteous the same things that our own nature taught us. The righteous will dwell and be one with the Deity in eternal life, the joy of which is unceasing. The unrighteous will be separated from that life, being in hell forever. On this subject, Christ told his disciples in the gospel, “Those who love me will keep my commandments; and the Father will love them, and I and the Father will come to them and make our dwelling with them.”⁸⁹ Again, “If you love me, keep my commandments; and I shall ask the Father to give you another comforter, one to be with you forever—the spirit of truth. He was not seen in the world, and no one recognized him or was able to accept him; you recognized him, however, for he dwells with you and is in you.”⁹⁰ Accordingly, whoever keeps Christ’s commandments becomes the eternal dwelling place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and by them is loved. In that Christ wished to teach them that this would happen not just on earth but also in heaven, he said, “The Father loves you, for you have loved me and believed that I came from the Father and have come into the world; and I shall leave the world and return to the Father.”⁹¹ Again, “Believe in God and believe in me. How many dwelling places there are in my Father’s house! If this were not so, I would not have told you that I go to prepare dwelling places for you.”⁹² Again, “I shall come again and gather you to myself, so that where I am you may also be.”⁹³ Accordingly, from heaven, from the Father, Christ came into the world, and to the Father, to heaven, he returned.⁹⁴ For those who believe in him, he is preparing dwelling places in heaven with the Father, so that where he is they might also be. It is clear that they will dwell both with the Father and in Christ. After all, Christ went to his Father in heaven and left them behind in the world, and he beseeches the Father concerning them, that he might protect them, until the time comes when he will gather them and they will be one both with him and with the Father. It is thus that he says, “Father, they have received me and know with certainty that I come from your presence, and they have believed that you sent me. And now, I beseech you for them; I am not beseeching you for the people of the world but for those whom you have given me, those who belong to you. All that is mine is yours, all that is yours is mine, and in them I am glorified. I am no longer in the world; they are still in the world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them through your name, the name you have given me, that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them in the world, I protected

89. John 14:23. 90. John 14:15–17. 91. John 16:27–28. 92. John 14:1–2. 93. John 14:3. 94. Reading *ad*; cf. D250.17.

them through your name. Those that you gave me, I protected them; not one of them was destroyed, except for the son of perdition. Father, it is not for these alone that I beseech you, but for those who through their words will believe in me, that they may be one. As you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, so also may they be one in us, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that we might all be perfectly one, and so that the world might know that you sent me and that I loved them even as you loved me. Father, my desire is that they may be with me where I am, so that they may look on my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before you formed the world.”⁹⁵ Accordingly, Christ came from the Father to the world and to him returned, and he is in his Father and his Father is in him, and he is in them and his Father, too, is in them. Again, he made them as he is, that is, as he said, “in his Father” and “one with him.” Accordingly, as indicated by Christ’s words in the gospel, the dwelling place of the righteous is⁹⁶ the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in heaven, while the dwelling place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also the righteous, and they are one with him in heaven. If the dwelling place of God is the righteous and the dwelling place of the righteous is God, and they are one with him, they are in eternal life, without death, without perishing, and they are like him. As the gospel also says, “God loves his Son and has entrusted him with everything. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever disobeys the Son will not see life; God’s wrath remains on him.”⁹⁷ Again, John the evangelist said, “Until now, we did not know for what we were created. From now, we know that we shall see God as he is and shall become like him.”⁹⁸ Accordingly, just as our own nature taught us that it desires God, yearns to see him and to dwell in him, and to become, like him, a god, enjoying his eternal life and his unceasing blessing, so too the gospel has taught and promised. For the following reason, too, we recognize that the gospel is truly from God: he created us for one reason, that he might bless both us and his holy angels with himself and not that he might bless us with food, drink, and sexual relations with women—a blessing that he gave to asses, pigs, and other animals. As the holy gospel says, Christ answered those who asked him about marriage in the next world, “You have erred in your reading of the scriptures and have not understood the power of God. It is only in this world that men marry women and women belong to men. As for the next world, men will not marry women nor will women take men. Instead, like angels of God, they will arise together and become the children of God, having become children of the resurrection and gods with him in eternal life”⁹⁹—not in nature, but through the communion of life, according to

95. John 17:8–12, 20–24. 96. Reading *huwa* for *huwa fa-huwa*. 97. John 3:35–36. 98. John 3:2. 99. Matt 22:29 and Luke 20:34–36.

the example we gave above: the piece of iron that becomes fire without destroying its nature or changing from it.¹⁰⁰ This is something that does not occur to any of the other religions. It simply does not enter their heads. All they can think about is the earth, food and drink, fornication and the pleasures of the body. They know nothing else. Like beasts, it is for this alone that their souls yearn and it is of this alone that they think.

The gospel is thus the true religion of God, through which alone he is to be worshipped. This we learn from the three things our nature taught: first, that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; secondly, concerning the permitted and the forbidden, that we are to please others as we please ourselves, forsaking evil and doing good, standing firm in righteous love and imitation of God; and thirdly, concerning reward and punishment, that the righteous will see God, dwell in him, share with him in his blessed life, and become, like him, gods forever—though without changing their natures—while the unrighteous who believe not in Christ will be separated from him and in their separation experience eternal wretchedness. Because of this, we believe this religion, accept it, and cling to it. For its sake, we endure tribulations in this world, through the promised hope. For it, we die, hoping through it to meet the face of God. So too, we cast aside all other religions, push them away and drive them off, counting them as nothing.

D253

What about Judaism?

Suppose someone objects: The only religion you accept is the gospel's. You do this because of what you have said about how perfectly it describes God, the permitted and the forbidden, reward and punishment—something you claim your own nature teaches you. You also believe that no other religion is from God, declaring him too exalted to have sent the human beings whom the other religions describe, because of their sins and defects. If all this is so, then you have denied that the prophet Moses was sent by God and have declared what he brought to be sin and defect, for he did not bring what the gospel brought. Rather, what he brought is contrary to the gospel and quite defective. Thus, it must be that you think Moses not to have been sent by God. To this we respond: In this book, we have sought to confirm our religion by reason, not by scripture. With regard to reason, we do not think that it should be accepted that Moses was from God. The same holds for what the other prophets brought. This is because of the defects in what they brought and because it is contrary to what our nature teaches. With regard to reason, the only religion we accept as divine is the gospel, because its message is

D254

D255

100. See p. 17.

so perfect and correct, as we have explained. From another perspective, however, we accept that Moses and the prophets, but no others, are from God, and this, for two reasons. First, we know that the gospel is from God. We accept and believe everything in it. The gospel tells us that Moses and the prophets—those mentioned in the Old Testament—were sent by God. We thus believe in Moses and accept those prophets. Secondly, we inquired of the gospel why God sent Moses with this defective religion. In describing the Deity, why did he proclaim the Father alone and summon to him alone? Why did he not bring a perfect understanding of the permitted and the forbidden? Why did he permit so many things? Why did he make no mention of the perfect reward for which we were created, or of punishment? When we inquired of the gospel about this, it told us that this was because of the people’s weakness. As for his description of the Deity, this was because the people were worshipping innumerable devils and idols. Moses thus commanded them, “Get rid of your innumerable multitude of gods and worship God alone.” It was his hope that when they had abandoned their gods and come to worship God, God would reveal to them his Son and Spirit, at a time when it was necessary that they worship him perfectly. It was for this reason that he at that time revealed to them the Father alone. Something similar holds with regard to the permitted and the forbidden. The people were addicted to the ways of the Gentiles—murder, robbery, adultery, theft, false testimony, and so on. They were completely unable to stop doing evil and incline toward good. Because of this, he gave them a law that dealt with the stopping of evil but still permitted them many things. As for doing good, he left this aside until the proper time should come. With regard to reward and punishment, the people were not immediately able to withdraw from the blessings of this world and patiently hope that they would receive a reward from God after death. Their hearts were immersed in worldly desires. These alone they knew. They sought only immediate gratification. Knowing that through it he would draw them to himself, God thus gave them the land of Palestine, something for which they were hoping. This is what the gospel teaches us, and we believe in all that it teaches us about Moses, namely, that he was sent by God and that these subjects are defective for the aforementioned reasons.¹⁰¹ It is thus that we believe that Moses and his message are from God. If not for the gospel, however, we would not believe that Moses is from God. Indeed, on the basis of reason, we would reject him most earnestly. So also, we believe that the prophets are from God on account of the gospel, not on account of reason. Since Christ told us that

D256

D257

101. Rejecting both of Dick’s emendations.

they were prophets, we believe them. At the same time, since we know all the acts of Christ, have read about them in their books, and have found that they precisely described beforehand all his acts, we also believe that they are prophets. In short, we do not believe in Christ and his mission through the books of the prophets. Rather, we believe that they are prophets, first, because Christ called them prophets, and secondly, because we see his deeds described in their books.¹⁰² D258

102. Parallels for the preceding argument can be found at pp. 36–39 and 178.

Chapter 2

Against the Jews

God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and chose him to establish a religion for the children of Israel.¹ He commanded him to go to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and deliver from his hands the children of Israel.² As for Moses, he declined God's offer³ and made excuses, refusing⁴ God in light of the magnitude of the task he wanted to assign. He said to God, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and save your people from his hands?" God answered, "I shall help you. I shall strengthen your words. Go and gather the elders of the children of Israel and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, has sent me. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.'" Moses said to God, "If I were to go to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' they would say to me,⁵ 'What is his name?' What shall I say to them?" God replied, "Tell them, 'HE WHO IS sent me to you.'" And God said, "I am HE WHO IS. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses then said to God, "Perhaps I shall go to them and tell them these things about you, and they will say to me, 'You are a liar! God did not appear to you!' What shall I say to them?" God replied, "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "A staff." God said to him, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground and it became a snake. It frightened Moses, and he began to flee from it. God said to him, "Take it by the tail." Moses took hold of its tail and the snake again became a staff. God then said, "Put your hand

1. It will be recalled that the present work constitutes the first part of the ninth treatise in Bāshā's edition; part 2 is found below, translated under the title *On the Councils*. 2. What follows is a summary of Exod 2-3. 3. Adding *min* before *Allāh* and omitting *min al-ba'thah*, with S. 4. Reading *wa-ta'abbā* and omitting *al-khawf*, with S. 5. Reading *lī*, with S.

inside your sleeve.” Moses put his hand inside, and behold, it became leprous,⁶ white like snow. God said to him, “Put it back in your sleeve.” Moses put it back and then took it out, and behold, it had returned to the color of skin. God said to him, “If the children of Israel believe in the first sign, so be it; if not, they will believe the second sign. If they do not believe in the second sign, however, draw some water from the river and pour it on the ground, for it will become blood, that they might believe that the God of their fathers has sent you to them.” After God had given him the ability to perform wonders, Moses consented—with difficulty—to be sent to Egypt.

Miracles Justify Religion

The wise infer from the account of Moses that those examining a religion need not accept it from its propagator unless it is accompanied by wonders. After all, Moses, being a philosopher,⁷ knew that if he were to go and claim that God had sent him to establish a religion but were not to prove the truth of what he said through wonders—wonders that could not be performed without God’s help—everyone with any sense would have just cause to chide him and throw his words back in his face, to despise and reject him. At the same time, he knew that if he were given the ability to perform wonders, he would have a powerful tool with which to influence those who were earnestly seeking good for themselves and to lead them to join the worship of God that he was seeking to establish for them. So too, the wise need not accept a religion unless it is founded on divine wonders, which prove that the one propagating it is from God. As for those who accept a religion on any other grounds, they have renounced and set aside sound judgment about that very matter for which sound judgment was created in them; they have given themselves over to harm and capitulated in the face of one who would entice them to destruction and distract them from the way that leads to the blessedness that alone our minds desire.

The Miracles of Moses, Christ, and His Disciples

Those who accepted Moses’ religion were rightly guided—and this, for no other reason than that Moses confirmed both his prophecy and that he had been sent by God by performing wonders that could only be performed through the power of God. Moreover, when he brought arcane knowledge to those who had accepted him, telling them how God created heaven and earth and informing them of incomprehensible

6. Omitting *yaqiqan*, with S. 7. Adding *al-faylasūf* after *Mūsā*, with S.

things that had taken place long ago, they did right when they compelled themselves to believe and trust him, for⁸ only one whose efforts were directed in accordance with God's and whose summons was to his right and proper guidance would have been able⁹ to perform such wonders. So too, Christ our God, the true wisdom, did not begin to teach anything until he had manifested his divine power through wonders. He allowed those afflicted with diverse sicknesses and various painful illnesses to be brought, as well as those subject to every manner of demonic influence,¹⁰ and he cured them and blessed them with perfect health.¹¹ After this had taken place, he was approached by crowds from Galilee, Jerusalem, and the district¹² of the Jordan.¹³ When he saw the crowds around him, he summoned his disciples, opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹⁴ He then recited to them his teaching and established for them his law, step by step, assuming the image of Moses.¹⁵ Moreover, he continued to mix wonder with law and law with wonder, until he fulfilled the whole of his mission, was crucified, buried, and rose on the third day. Those who followed Christ on account of his innumerable wonders were thus rightly guided. Indeed, they were as justified in this as were those who accepted Moses because of his wonders.

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If you compare how Moses and Christ performed wonders, you will find that, though both are powerful, Christ is the more powerful. How so? Christ's wonders can be neither enumerated nor counted. Moreover, he did not restrict himself to the performance of wonders in person, but granted his disciples the power to perform them in his name. Moses, on the other hand, performed a limited number of wonders, and these he performed not through his own power but through the power of God, whether because he was commanded or by praying to him. At the same time, Moses never summoned anyone and said, "Go forth and perform wonders in my name." All such differences between Christ and Moses are understandable. After all, Christ was God and the Son of God, and was thus able to perform wonders through his own power and to enable those he selected to perform similar wonders in his name. As for Moses, however, he was a servant, subject to God's command, and his ability to perform wonders was not his own but God's. It was thus that he would not perform a wonder until God had suggested to him that he should or until he had prayed to God for permission.

8. Omitting *Allāh*, with S. 9. Reading *yaqwa*, with S. 10. Adding *wa-man kān ya' nū (?) bihi al-junūn fi kull nahw* after *al-mu'adhdhibah*, with S. 11. Cf. Matt 4:23. 12. Reading *wa-kūrat*, with S. 13. Cf. Matt 4:25. 14. Matt 5:3. 15. The allusion is to the Sermon on the Mount and its image of Christ as the new Moses.

In the same way that Moses used to perform wonders through the power of God, whether at his command or by praying to him; so also Christ's disciples used to perform wonders, not in the name of God but in the name of Jesus Christ and through his power, whether at his command or by praying to him. Notwithstanding, the disciples were far more powerful than Moses in the performance of wonders. After all, Moses only performed a wonder after it had been suggested to him or he had prayed to God, whereas the disciples performed most of their wonders without praying. All they needed to do was say, "In the name of Christ, let this dead man arise," or "Let this blind man open his eyes," or "Let this paralytic be healed," and it would happen just as they said. Nor was this all, but when St. Peter would walk, whenever his shadow fell on the sick, it would cure them; similarly, when they would take St. Paul's apron and place it on the sick, they would be healed.¹⁶ Through these disciples the words of David were confirmed: "The Lord will grant those who proclaim the good news a word¹⁷ with much power."¹⁸

Miracles and Prophecy

The Jews were less justified in accepting Moses than were the Gentiles in accepting Christ. Indeed, the latter is as much greater than the former as the sun's light is greater than a lamp's. The Gentiles were content with the wonders they saw Christ's disciples performing in his name. This was enough to summon them to accept Christ and have faith in everything that he himself said and that his disciples said about him. Indeed, they would have accepted him even if the law of Moses and the prophets had not prophesied him. The situation is analogous to what happened when Moses came to the children of Israel: they believed him¹⁹ and accepted what he related to them from God, solely because of the wonders he performed among them. They did this even though no one before Moses had prophesied his coming. Further, after he had performed his wonders, the children of Israel did not compel him to confirm himself through a prophecy uttered by some predecessor. So too, the Gentiles would be permitted²⁰ to believe and trust Christ on account of the innumerable wonders that he himself performed and his disciples performed in his name²¹—even if Moses and the prophets had not prophesied him. Because of the exalted nature of the earlier prophecy of Moses and of all the other prophets, however, how much more

16. See Acts 5:15 and 19:11–12. 17. Adding *kalimah* after *al-mubashshirīn*, with S and the LXX. 18. Ps 68:11 LXX. 19. Omitting *wa* before *ṣaddaqūhu*, with S. 20. Reading *yasa^cuhum*, with S. 21. Adding *bismihi* after *wa-talāmīdhuhu*, with S.

necessary is it to accept Christ²² than Moses! These prophets spoke of Christ and the whole of his mission, the crucifixion,²³ the stabbing,²⁴ the nailing of his hands and feet and the dividing of his clothes,²⁵ the spitting in his face and the whipping of his back,²⁶ how by his wounds we would be redeemed from our sins and cured from the illness of our misdeeds,²⁷ how he would be given vinegar to drink and myrrh to eat.²⁸ Such passages in the prophets are well known. My Jewish friend, I cannot help but be amazed that you accept Moses because of his limited number of wonders but do not accept Christ because of his innumerable and countless wonders. If you were fair, you would have to accept Christ, even if Moses and the prophets had not prophesied him. You did, after all, accept²⁹ Moses through his wonders alone and did not also make him confirm himself through some prophecy uttered by a predecessor. B145

Moses Did Not Preclude Christ

If Moses had commanded you to accept no prophet after him, as Christ commanded the Christians,³⁰ you would indeed have an excuse for doubting Christ. The trouble is that Moses, in his holy law, continually held out the hope of a prophet who would come after him.³¹ He commanded you earnestly to heed and obey this prophet in all that he commands. He threatened you with death should you disobey this prophet. He said that this prophet would be like him and that he would establish the law and a new covenant. (Based on this passage, you would be required to reject all prophets, whosoever they might be, except for this one you were commanded to obey. Moses, however, also reported that Jacob prophesied to you that prophecy would not cease among you until Christ, the hope of the Gentiles, had come to you.³² By this, he confirmed all the prophets before Christ but then singled out this one.) Many times, speaking in God's name, Moses commanded you to obey this prophet. Because of such passages where Moses tells you about the coming of this prophet who will establish a covenant, he must not keep you, even for a moment, from accepting Christ and having faith in him because of the wonders he performed. You are required to ponder in your mind and then proclaim: "The prophet whom Moses commanded me to obey is this one—and this, because of the innumerable wonders that he performed, the likes of which, moreover, even Moses did not do. Indeed, even if Moses were to rescind his command—neither ordering that this B146

22. Reading *yugbal*, with S. 23. Isa 65:2. 24. Zech 12:10. 25. Ps 22:16–18. 26. Isa 50:6. 27. Isa 53:5. 28. Ps 69:21. 29. As noted in the introduction, S's lacuna begins here. 30. Cf. Luke 16:16. 31. The allusion here and in what follows is primarily to Deut 18:15–20. 32. Gen 49:10.

prophet be obeyed, nor forbidding it—it would still be incumbent on me, if I am fair, to accept him through these wonders alone and not also require him to confirm himself through some prophecy uttered by a predecessor, even as I accepted Moses.”

So also, my Jewish friend, you should note well that this prophet will establish the law and a new covenant. It is for this reason that God repeatedly singled him out by indicating that you should obey him. For instance, hear what God said through the prophet Jeremiah: “The days are coming, says the Lord, when I shall establish a new covenant with the children of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I established with them when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.”³³ Similarly, David said to the Lord, “Raise up for them, Lord, one who will establish a law, in order to teach the Gentiles that they are only human.”³⁴

That Christ Actually Did Miracles

My Jewish friend, it may be that you will say: It was among my ancestors and in their days that the one they call Christ appeared. Because they have all passed away, I cannot know whether he really performed wonders. To this we reply: Proof lies close at hand, if in fact you are concerned for the salvation of your soul. You can know that Christ performed the aforementioned wonders from the fact that the Gentiles accepted him and from the fact that he brought them to accept what was contrary to their intellect, will, and desire. He transferred them from a life of ease to one of hardship, from sloth to self-restraint, from wealth to poverty, from license to rigor, from their licentious desires to the complete abandonment of the world for his sake. He made them deny the body’s pleasures and the world’s glory. He caused them to prefer their own death, through every manner of detestable torture, to the denial of him. To them he said, “Those who deny me before others, I shall deny them before my heavenly Father.”³⁵ Again, “Consider what I have said to you in secret so that you yourselves might make it known on the housetops. Fear not him who kills the body but is unable to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to kill the soul and the body together and cast them into hell.”³⁶ Again, “Those who destroy their souls for my sake find them in eternal life.”³⁷ Again, “Whoever follows me and does not hate father and mother,³⁸ brothers and sisters, children and relatives, is not worthy of me.”³⁹ Again, “I leave you⁴⁰ like sheep among wolves.⁴¹ The world will be happy and you will be sad.⁴² The days are

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33. Jer 31:31–32. 34. Cf. Ps 9:19–20 LXX. 35. Matt 10:33. 36. Matt 10:27–28. 37. Cf. Matt 10:39. 38. The text of S resumes here. 39. Matt 10:37; Luke 14:26. 40. Reading *mukhallikum*, with S. 41. Matt 10:16; Luke 10:3. 42. John 16:20.

coming when those who kill you will think they are offering a sacrifice to God.”⁴³ He established the practice of self-mortification: cutting off their desires, for instance, and uprooting their wills. He said, “If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to him the other. If someone takes your cloak, give him your clothes. If you look at a woman to lust after her, you have committed adultery with her in your heart. If you say to your neighbor ‘You fool’ or ‘You idiot,’ you deserve the fire of hell.”⁴⁴ Again, “You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Love those who love you and hate your enemies.’ I say to you, ‘Love your enemies and do well by praying for them.’”⁴⁵ (There are other, similar things.) Tell me, my Jewish friend, why is it that the Gentiles accepted Christ despite the hardship and death he required of them? To make matters worse, it was loathsome that Christ suffer crucifixion, pain, and degradation. It was loathsome that his enemies insult him, that they nail his hands and feet and hang him on a piece of wood, that they give him vinegar to drink and myrrh to eat, so that he sweated sweat that was clotted⁴⁶ like blood. So also, it was loathsome that he say while on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁴⁷ All this⁴⁸ should have kept those who heard from following Christ and considering him God—and yet, it was as such that all the Gentiles considered him. Clearly, Christ would never have been accepted if not for the actual performance of the wonders mentioned in the gospel and in the writings of the disciples. Surely it is these wonders that overcame the Gentiles’ intellects and compelled them to accept and have faith in Christ.

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Suppose that Christ had intended to deceive. If he were to experience the aforementioned forms of degradation, he would have had to command his disciples to conceal them from the Gentiles and rather to extol him among them and to make his life seem attractive. In addition, he would have spoken in such a way as to entice them through an appeal to the permissiveness of his religion and to its ability to fulfill their desires, as this is something that would make them hasten to him. He did not do this, however. Far be it from him! Rather, he made himself loathsome to those who issued the summons to have faith in him and made them endure death and being slain for his sake—confident that the power of his wonders would overcome their minds and draw them to him.⁴⁹

Is the following, too, not amazing? Moses invoked and extolled God, saying that he created heaven and earth and that he transcends heaven.

43. John 16:2. 44. Matt 5:39–40, 28, 22. 45. Matt 5:43–44. 46. Reading *khāthir*, with S (cf. the parallel at B73.14). The allusion is to Luke 22:44. 47. Matt 27:46. 48. Reading *hādhihi al-umūr*, with S. 49. Adding *idlālan bi-anna qūwat a‘ājibihī taḡlibib ‘uqūlahum wa-tajbidhuhum* (read *wa-tajdhuhum*) *ilayhi* after *sha’nihi*, with S.

He also glorified and exalted God in every other⁵⁰ conceivable manner. Moses then began to deliver the children of Israel, releasing them from servitude to Pharaoh, parting the sea for them, making manna and quails come down for them, causing water to flow for them from the rock, and killing the Gentiles for them. He also said to them, “God will make you so powerful that you will kill the Gentiles of Syria and possess and inherit their land.”⁵¹ Further, Moses established a law that was full of license. All this notwithstanding, not one Gentile followed him. Indeed, not even the children of Israel were persuaded by what he said or believed in his God. Rather, God descended on Mount Sinai, the mountain shaking under him and smoking, the sight of this striking fear in the hearts of the children of Israel. In no time at all, however, they were worshipping the calf—even while they were still at the foot of Mount Sinai.⁵² And what of Christ’s disciples? They went to the Gentiles and said loathsome things about Christ among them. They recalled the aforementioned pains and the cross. They recalled his words, even though they made him seem weak. Moreover, they required of them the hardship Christ had prescribed for them. Notwithstanding, the whole world responded to their summons. Everyone must recognize that this would never have happened apart from the value of the wonders that the disciples were performing in Christ’s name, which wonders are as far above those of Moses as the heaven is above the earth.

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My Jewish friend, you cannot say that the Gentiles followed Christ because of tribal zeal resulting from their being related to one another. Such a charge might rather be brought against you. Indeed, one would be justified in charging⁵³ you with having followed Moses because of tribal zeal—after all, he was one of you—and because you were ennobled through the turn in fortune he brought and through the kingdom God gave him. As for the Gentiles, there is absolutely no occasion for such a charge to be brought against them and their reasons for following Christ. After all, the disciples who summoned them were Jews, and they summoned them to one who was in outward appearance a Jew.⁵⁴ This should rather have summoned them to shiver and flee from him, for the Jews were enemies of all the Gentiles. Further, they did not intermix with their summons anything to appeal to their ambitions, ennoble them, or increase their power. Rather, the opposite was the case. Accordingly, my Jewish friend, you must recognize that none of the Gentiles would ever have considered Christ to be God and subjected themselves to him in an obedience that every day touched the very core

50. Adding *bi-ghayr* after *wa-atā*, with S. 51. Not a literal biblical citation. 52. Exod 32:1–10. 53. Reading *yuwabbikh*, with S. 54. Cf. the similar expression at p. 50.

of their souls, if not for the aforementioned wonders that the disciples performed among them in Christ's name.

Perhaps you will say that the Gentiles followed Christ out of ignorance. If this is your opinion, induce yourself to believe the loathsome things said of Christ and the religious obligations he imposed, and then go and persuade even one ignorant person of their truth. You would not be able to do this. Rather, the ignorant more than anyone else would be eager to avoid accepting such things, for, like animals, all they care about are their appetites. The minds of the ignorant are more likely to take pleasure in⁵⁵ words that are deceptive and vulgar. Indeed, my friend, the ignorant would be more ready to accept your religion than that of the Christians—and this, because of what we have already mentioned: its overt glorification and exaltation of God, its inducement to be afraid of him, its granting them license and catering to their desires for an earthly kingdom, political power, honey and milk, polygamy and divorce whenever one wants it. Need we mention its urge to subjugate the Gentiles and your claim that you will be their masters and they your slaves, while their daughters become your slave girls, or that you will build yourselves a city and a temple out of emeralds and sapphire?⁵⁶ It is things like this that seduce the ignorant. It is things like this that they desire. If someone were to go and summon to such a religion, promising that those who accept it will receive such things, would it be any wonder if people followed that person, especially if they are blown along by the wind of a favorable turn of fortune that they will receive? (It is as we ourselves have seen it happen.)⁵⁷

My friend, suppose you instead say that it was only the wise Gentiles who followed Christ, and that it was their wisdom that summoned them to follow him. It would then be necessary for you to do as they did: you have, after all, just attributed wisdom to them. Nonetheless, those who are wise in worldly matters do not accept the loathsome things said of Christ and attributed to him. Indeed, such things are beyond the world's wisdom,⁵⁸ surpassing⁵⁹ the minds of all people until the⁶⁰ Holy Spirit is poured out on them and persuades them that Christ is God. It is as St. Paul said: "No one can say 'Christ is Lord' except through the Holy Spirit."⁶¹ If you do not believe this, go and summon to Christ every one who is wise in worldly matters and persuade even one of them of the truth of what you say. You would not be able to do this. Worldly wisdom cares only for worldly glory, and it does not⁶² believe what contravenes

55. Reading *yusarr bihi*, with S. 56. Cf. Tob 13:16. 57. Seemingly, an allusion to Islam. 58. Adding *li-annahu fauqa hikmat al-dunyā* after *al-dunyā*, with S. 59. Reading *yafūt*, with S. 60. Omitting *ni'mat*, with S. 61. 1 Cor 12:3. 62. Reading *wa-lā*, with S.

the laws of nature, which laws it and not the intellect of the common folk can fathom,⁶³ and it adorns itself with insolent words that are deceptive in their sweetness. The summons to Christ is the complete opposite. It is as Paul said, “In the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom knew not God, for God wanted to save⁶⁴ those who would believe through the foolishness of the summons.”⁶⁵

B151 If you say that those who followed Christ were intellectually average, you have said something that is simply untrue. The intellectually average aim at a secure judgment with respect to the external things of the world, and they accept only what accords with what they⁶⁶ have long known through experience and sensory perception. As for the summons to Christ, it is simply impossible to proclaim it to those who think this way. Rather, such as these recoil from it and find it extremely repulsive.

If you accept what we have said, you must surely recognize that the Gentiles who accepted Christ—no less than five-sixths⁶⁷ of human beings—did so both because of the wonders they saw, which wonders are mentioned in the gospel and in the writings of the disciples, and because of the power of the Holy Spirit, who in a mysterious fashion entered their minds and persuaded them of the truth of Christ’s claim about himself, that he is God and the Son of God, even though he experienced with regard to the pains and the cross what he is said to have experienced, as well as that he did not experience such pains out of weakness or in vain, but for a good reason, even though that reason was hidden from those whose hearts were not enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Surely, what we have said confirms that the Gentiles accepted Christ because of the wonders mentioned in the gospel and in the writings of the disciples. The fact that they did this compels your own mind also to believe and confess those wonders, as if you yourself had personally seen them.

Christ Confirms Moses

As for the wonders, they establish Christ’s own claim about himself, that he is God and the Son of God. In turn, Christ and his disciples testified and confirmed that Moses and all the prophets were prophets. In the present day, too, it is through the testimony of Christ and his disciples that the wise receive confirmation that Moses and the prophets were sent by God.⁶⁸ As for you, my Jewish friend, if in the present day you were compelled to bring a rational proof with which to confirm Moses or one of the prophets for even a single person, you would not be able to do

63. For the sense of *ghās* here, cf. B155.8. 64. Reading *yuhyī* and omitting *min*, with S. 65. 1 Cor 1:21. 66. Reading *ilayhim*, with S. 67. A similar figure is found at p. 52. 68. Cf. pp. 24 and 178.

so. Notwithstanding that you had the law of Moses for roughly a millennium and a half,⁶⁹ you were unable⁷⁰ to persuade⁷¹ even one Gentile that the law was from God. Indeed, not even your own fathers adhered to the law or to the worship of God. When Christ came, however, through his wonders he persuaded all the Gentiles and for them confirmed Moses and the prophets. Christ became, as it were, their herald.

This, in truth, is what Christ did—and what could be more worthy of him? After all, it was he who had sent them and commanded them to prophesy and foreshadow him, lest the human mind deny him when he appeared, walking on the earth. How so? The prophet Micah came and prophesied of him, saying, “Hear, all you Gentiles, and listen, all you peoples; and let the Lord testify to you, for the Lord will go forth from his place and descend to tread on the earth. All⁷² this is for the sake of the sin of Jacob and because of the transgressions of Israel.”⁷³ Jeremiah, too, said of him, “This is our God; no other can be counted with him. He found the way to knowledge and gave it to Jacob his beloved and to Israel his friend. And after that he appeared on the earth⁷⁴ and lived among human beings.”⁷⁵

As for Moses, God told him to make Aaron a priest and to offer sacrifices according to the pattern shown him on the mountain.⁷⁶ In what follows, I shall show you that here there is a priest other than Aaron, of whom Aaron is an image, and that here there is a sacrifice other than those sacrifices, of which those sacrifices are an image. David came and explained for you that priest, of whom Aaron is an image. He informed you that a Lord sits on the throne at the right hand of God and that he is a Son begotten of God before all eternity: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, till I place your enemies under the footstool⁷⁷ of your feet.’”⁷⁸ To this one God also said, “I begot you from the womb, before the light.”⁷⁹ He also said to him, “You are a priest forever, after the image of Melchizedek.”⁸⁰ Explaining for you that sacrifice of which your sacrifice is an image, Isaiah said that Christ said of himself, “I did not disobey or doubt. I gave my back to the whips and my cheek to the slap. I did not turn my face from the humiliation of spittle.”⁸¹ He also said in Isaiah, “He had not appearance or glory⁸² that we should look at him. He had not appearance or beauty, but his appearance was lowly, not even that of a man. He was a wounded man, who knows that he bears sicknesses. He

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69. Adding *fi yadayka* before *naḥw* and omitting *akthar*, with S. 70. Reading *taqdar*, with S. 71. Reading *tuḡni*^c, with S. 72. Adding *kulluhu* after *hādḥā*, with S and the LXX. 73. Mic 1:2–3, 5. 74. Adding *‘alā al-ard* after *dhālika*, with S and the LXX. 75. Bar 3:35–37. 76. Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30. Cf. Acts 7:44; Heb 8:5. 77. Adding *mawṭa*^a after *taḥta*, with S and the LXX. 78. Ps 110:1. 79. Ps 110:3. 80. Ps 110:4. 81. Isa 50:5–6. 82. Reading *jalāl*, with S and the LXX. Cf. B86.12.

was lowly and of no account. He bore our sicknesses, and for our sakes he suffered. We accounted him in illness wounded by God, afflicted. He was only wounded for the sake of our iniquities, and there befell him calamities for the sake of our sins. The punishment for our peace was upon him, and by his wounds we were healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has erred from the path. The Lord handed him over for the sake of our sins. He did not open his mouth when he was afflicted; like a sheep that is led to slaughter and like a lamb before the butcher, so he was silent and did not open his mouth out of his humility.⁸³ This, my Jewish friend, should make it clear to you, if you will be reasonable, that Aaron your priest was an image of this priest and that your sacrifice was an image of this sacrifice. After all, if your priest were he who could get forgiveness for your sins and your sacrifice were that through which your sins would be forgiven, this priest that David mentioned and this sacrifice that Isaiah mentioned would be just empty play in which God engaged, and Moses would vainly have told you that he was making for you an image of what God had showed him on the mountain. As it is, however, Moses told you⁸⁴ that what you have is just an image, and David and Isaiah came and explained for you that image. You did not understand it at the time, however. It was as Moses said to you, “You have seen what God did
 B154 in your presence, but God did not give you eyes with which to see, ears with which to hear, and hearts with which to understand.”⁸⁵ My Jewish friend, if the things you saw were not an image of something else, if by them something else was not meant,⁸⁶ how could Moses have told you that you have seen what God did in your presence but that God did not give you eyes with which to see, ears with which to hear, and hearts with which to understand? These things indicate to you, rather, that what you have is only an image and something by which another is meant. Confirming this for you, David said, “Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not understand your wonders.”⁸⁷

Conclusions

This should suffice, my Jewish friend, if you are possessed of intelligence and⁸⁸ desire to obtain what is good for your soul. Healing has come to you; and it would have come to you sooner if you had accepted it from the teachers of Christianity who spoke through the Holy Spirit and made clear everything about Christ, using both reason and scripture together. The arguments I have presented above are a compelling confirmation of

83. Isa 53:2–7. 84. Adding *innamā ṣana^c laka huwa ṣūrah li-mā arāhu Allāh fi al-jabal wa-lākin Mūsā akhbaraka* after *akhbaraka*, with S. 85. Deut 29:2–4. 86. Reading *yakun yu^cnā bi-hā* for *takun ta^cnī*, with S. 87. Ps 106:7. 88. Reading *wa* for *aw*, with S.

Christianity. From them, there is no escape for those possessed of reason and good intention, for reason surely leads to Christ, and Christ confirms Moses and the prophets. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament thus belong to us, even as Solomon the son of David said in the Song of Songs, “On our doors are all fruits, both old and new.”⁸⁹

89. Song 7:13.

Chapter 3

That Christianity Is from God

We assert, too, that there is yet another way for our minds to infer that the Christian religion is from God.¹ This has to do with why the Gentiles submitted to the disciples of Christ and accepted this religion from them, something which took place through the power of God and had nothing to do with the power of human beings and their ability to compel others, their use of tricks, or their appeals to ambition. Such things are characteristic of the other religions, the adherents of which came to submit to their leaders either through human compulsion or through ambition or through tricks.² Indeed, as the mind can see, there are many things that cause some people in the world to submit to others. Sometimes people submit to a noble person on account of that person's nobility and to a rich person on account of what that person can give. Or consider a ruler. To him people are willing to submit for a variety of reasons: some because the ruler compels them, others because they are afraid of the harm he can do, others because they hope to obtain things through serving him, yet others because they can become powerful through him. Sometimes people submit to a wise person³ because of that person's wisdom. Sometimes people submit to someone who panders to their appetites and caters to their desires and to their predilection for what gives pleasure to their nature. Sometimes they submit to an intellectually agreeable doctrine of God, accepting it because everyone finds it agreeable. There are other, similar reasons. D259
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1. It will be recalled that the present treatise comprises the third section of Theodore's *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*. Section 1 of this treatise is to be found below at pp. 165ff.; section 2, above at pp. 1ff. 2. Translation tentative. Dick was right to excise the dittography. Even so, the text still seems problematic, not least because of the lack of concord. One wonders if there is not a short lacuna, perhaps after *li-anna alladhina*. 3. Reading *rajul ḥakim*.

How Other Religions Were Propagated

Imagine someone who goes and summons people to God in the aforementioned ways, especially if this person is a noble, a king who compels others with the sword, one who offers them worldly gifts, might, and nobility, one who panders to their appetites for the world and its pleasures, one who brings them an account of God that is simple and agreeable to the minds of the common folk (perhaps an account that someone had already proposed, one with which the common folk were already familiar). If someone did this, would it be any wonder if people submitted to this person and came to follow his religion? If this person wanted to establish that his religion was from God, the fact that people were following it for the aforementioned reasons would hardly⁴ be an acceptable argument. After all, from ancient times until the present there have been religions like this in the world. The prophet Daniel bears witness to the truth of what we say.⁵ He told how Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, made for himself a god of gold (or rather, an idol), one sixty cubits tall and six cubits wide. He erected it in Babylon and summoned the people of his kingdom⁶ to worship it, making it known that whoever did not worship it would be cast into the furnace and consumed by fire. Everyone gathered and worshipped, excepting three youths: Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael. These he cast into the fire. In much the same way, the common folk still submit to their kings through compulsion. Accordingly, is it any wonder that people submit to one who goes and summons to a religion if at the same time he strikes with the sword those who do not follow it and exalts those who do, pandering to them with the comforts of this world, its glory and its wealth, providing generously for their appetites for it and its delights and pleasures? This is especially true if before this they were in a wretched state and had never seen or even heard of good things and if this person taught them an account of God that vulgar minds find agreeable, an account that was to be found in earlier religions and through which the world had already been worshipping God for many ages.⁷ All this is like what happened in the case of Nebuchadnezzar: kings compel those under them to do what they want; so too, people submit to what is untrue so as to keep their lives, because of their appetites or ambitions, or so as to obtain might. For this reason, accordingly, it is not established that such a person's religion is from God.

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4. Reading with the ms. 5. Dan 3:1–23. 6. Restoring the order of words in the ms., reading *ilayhi* for *ilāh*, and adding *ahl* before *al-mulk*. 7. One suspects that Theodore is thinking especially of Islam.

How Christianity Was Propagated

A religion is established to be from God if the one who summons to God does so in a manner contrary to the aforementioned ways. An example would be the disciples of Christ. They were twelve Jews, and, in the opinion of the Gentiles, the Jews were the most wretched and most odious nation in the world. Indeed, these twelve were the most despised and lowly of those in their own nation. They had in this world neither rank nor nobility with which to entice others and make followers of them. They had in this world neither wealth nor dwelling nor place of refuge, neither two pieces of clothing nor food for two days, not even a bag,⁸ nothing such that people would follow them in hope of receiving something. They had in this world neither power nor authority nor influence, neither an ability to compel nor the power to exalt, nothing such that anyone would follow them, whether through compulsion or fear or out of a desire to be exalted through them. Rather, they were quite the opposite: everyone compelled them, despised them, and treated them ignobly. Among them there was none who understood how to write or was possessed of worldly wisdom, such that people might follow them because of it. Furthermore, they summoned to the Christian religion, permitting no one to indulge their appetites for the world, its many women, its delights, or its glories, such that people might follow them. Rather, quite to the contrary, they taught that the things of the world must be wholly abandoned. Moreover, they did not summon to faith in something of which the Gentiles had ever heard or which their mortal minds found agreeable or to which anyone before them had summoned. It was, instead, something both new and strange. Indeed, this was their message: “God sent his Son from heaven. He came to a virgin and took flesh from her. He was born from her both as God and as man. He grew up in the world like one of us. When he summoned the Jews to have faith in him, they did not heed him. Instead, they rejected him, they treated him with insolence, they struck him, they crucified him, they killed him, and they buried him. After three days, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. It is through faith in him alone that one has salvation from sin and hell and entrance into the kingdom of heaven. He is both God and the Son of God. He sent us to proclaim this to everyone that they might be saved.” Such a faith is unacceptable to the minds of the wise, to the minds of the ignorant, and to the minds of those in between.⁹ So too, it is equally fitting that no one accept the disciples because of the circumstances that¹⁰ we mentioned,

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8. Cf. Matt 10:10. 9. For this threefold division of humanity, cf. pp. 35–36, as well as 52 and 216. 10. Reading *al-ḥālāt allatī* (cf. D264.2–3). Even so, the translation is tentative.

D264 namely, that the disciples were among the most despised people in the world. Notwithstanding this faith and these circumstances that we mentioned, we see that all the Gentiles accepted them. The disciples turned them from the worship of their filthy and unclean demons—even though this was the religion in which they, their fathers, their grandfathers, and their grandfathers’ grandfathers had been raised—and filled the four corners of the world with this religion, which persists until the present. It is clear that none of this was a result either of human power or its tricks or of this religion’s permissiveness and willingness to indulge sexual appetites. Rather, all this resulted from the power of God and his wonders. In short, the Gentiles only accepted this religion because it was in no way tainted by human power and trickery. Confirming what we have said is what Christ told his disciples in the holy gospel, “Even as my Father sent me¹¹ to you, go forth to all the Gentiles and make disciples of them, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to do all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Whoever believes, lives; whoever does not believe, D265 is defeated and overcome.”¹² “After Jesus said these things to them, he ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. They went forth and proclaimed this everywhere, and the Lord aided them and confirmed their words through the signs and wonders that they were doing and through which all the Gentiles accepted them.”¹³ And so, our claim is confirmed, namely, that it was through the power of God that this religion was accepted by the Gentiles, without taint of human power or tricks, permissiveness or ambition. For this reason, it is without doubt from God and is the only valid religion.

A Possible Objection

Suppose someone says: The Gentiles accepted Christianity not through the power of God and his wonders, but because Paul and his associates led them astray. To this we reply: How could that be? The Gentiles used to serve demons and worship idols of stone and wood. Christianity brought them back to the worship and service of God. Further, the Gentiles used to be sunk in the filth and mire of the world, in a bottomless abyss from which none can escape. Christianity cleansed them, set them free from all that, and purified them. Let me explain. D266 The Gentiles used to take great delight in the best of the world’s food and drink and in intoxicants. Christianity delivered them from that and obliged them to fast vigorously and to limit themselves to bread

11. Reading *ba'athani*. 12. John 20:21; Matt 28:19–20; Mark 16:16. 13. Mark 16:19–20.

and water. Like horses, the Gentiles used to contend with one another in the marrying of women and in the taking of concubines, along with adultery so filthy and vile that it is not proper to mention it. Christianity severed them from all that and obliged them to chastity and, for those who want to live in this world, to be content with one woman—and this is the custom to the present day. The Gentiles used to wear royal clothing, spun with gold, of kinds innumerable, and to sleep on a wide variety of equally priceless beds. Christianity made this odious to them, and they came to be content with woolen clothes and with sleeping on mats and the ground. The Gentiles used to plunder madly the wealth of others and to conquer them in the same way. Christianity made them cease and caused them to distribute their own wealth and possessions to the poor and needy. The Gentiles used to live in castles and houses that were plated and coated with gold and silver. Christianity made this odious to them and obliged them to wander the deserts and dwell in caves and caverns like wild animals. The Gentiles used to be unwanted beasts, swallowing others and crushing their bones, eating their flesh without mercy or regret. Christianity turned them from this and caused them to be as sheep among wolves, who bear insults patiently, who forgive those who strike them, who offer their left cheek when slapped on the right, who give their cloak when their clothes have been taken, who go two miles when forced to go one, who give when asked, who do not refuse when asked for a loan, who bless when cursed, who love when they are hated, and so on. This is how the Gentiles were; into this Paul and his associates turned them. If what I have said is true, my friend, it is you who are astray. Indeed, there can be no doubt that guidance for you consists of the precise opposite of all this. You insult, but cannot bear insults. You strike, but will not be struck. Indeed, if you are insulted, you strike, and if you are struck, you kill.¹⁴ This and everything else that we have described are to be found among you in their opposite form. I do not suppose that those who are wise and those who understand what is right and proper will concur with you—and with good cause, for you have turned things around, making guidance into error and error into guidance. I fear for you, should you persist, that to you will apply the curse of the prophet Isaiah, who said, “Cursed are those who make the sweet bitter and the bitter sweet, the light darkness and the darkness light, the good evil and the evil good.”¹⁵ Accordingly, Paul and his associates did not lead the Gentiles astray, but guided them in the
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forementioned fashion.

14. This same image is also found at p. 20. 15. Cf. Isa 5:20.

That Christ and the Apostles Performed Wonders

Again, if you suggest that it was not through wonders that Christ's disciples brought the Gentiles to submit to the Christian religion, we answer you as follows: In this too you have spoken in error. If you desire proof that it was through God's signs and wonders that the disciples brought the Gentiles into submission and not through error as you claim, bring us one of your own men, that we might teach him the Christian religion. Let him be one of your wisest and most clever. Then go and send him to al-Bujjah,¹⁶ to Sind¹⁷ and India, and to the people of China, all of whom to this day worship idols. Let him proclaim this religion to them and summon them to it, asking them to enter it. You will see whether he will be accepted by any of the wise or the intellectually average or be able to lead any of them astray. If they do not accept the religion of your man, who was so wise, how did all Gentiles accept the disciples, who were so quiet and calm, who had none of the world's cleverness or wisdom? Accordingly, it must have been through the power of God and his wonders that they accepted it. If you persist in your denials, bring this man of yours and let Christ¹⁸ protect him and give him the power to perform wonders in the same way that he gave it to a certain one of his disciples and used to protect him. Let him now go to India, even as Thomas his disciple went to it so long ago. We shall see whether your man is now not unable¹⁹ to accomplish what Thomas once accomplished there.²⁰ As the stories about him tell, when he came to India, he proclaimed to them the Christian religion, saying, "God sent his Son from heaven to the world. He took flesh from a virgin and was begotten from her as a man. The Jews crucified him. He died and was buried. After three days he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven where he sat down at the right hand of the Father. He is God the Son of God. It is he who will raise the dead and judge them, requiting everyone according to what they deserve because of their good and bad deeds. There is no salvation except through faith in him." When the kings of India heard what he said, they answered, "Poor man, you must be mad!" To them he replied, "I'm not mad. Do you want proof? Bring me a corpse and I'll show you." When they had brought him a corpse, he said to them, "Who but God can give life to this corpse?"

16. A group of tribes living between the Nile and the Red Sea, on the border between modern-day Egypt and Sudan. See de Goeje, *Masâlik*, 83, 230. 17. The region in and around the lower course of the Indus river, falling today within the borders of Pakistan. 18. Reading *al-Masîh* for Dick's suggested *Allâh*, because of the following references to "his disciples" and "his disciple" and the parallel at D270.1–2. 19. Adding *lā* before *ya'jiz*. Cf. the parallel at D270.2. 20. Similar arguments are to be found at pp. 52 and 217–19.

When they agreed that God alone could do this, he said to the dead man, “In the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified in Jerusalem, arise!” The dead man arose. It was only then that the kings came to believe in Christ; and not them alone, but others, whoever saw this.²¹ Accordingly, your man, too, if Christ were to protect him and he had this power, he would not be unable to accomplish the same thing. When the mind observed him initially,²² when he had neither this power nor this protection that Christ granted to his disciples [. . .],²³ the Gentiles submitted to him in this religion, and not through the power of human beings, their tricks, their might, their ambitions, or their error. D270

Conclusions

Know for certain and do not doubt: This religion is from God. In it, there is no doubt. Apart from it, there is no grace.²⁴ There is no true religion except through it.²⁵ To God be praise and glory, and to the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever! Amen! May his mercy be on all of us!

21. Reading with the ms. 22. Reading with the ms. 23. Grammar and sense suggest that a lacuna should be posited. 24. Reading *minnah* for *minhu*. 25. Reading with the ms.

On the Confirmation of the Gospel

There are four reasons why people accept religions. If a religion is not B71 accepted by its adherents for these reasons, surely that religion is true, divine, and correct. These reasons are permissiveness, might, tribal zeal, and the persuasion of vulgar minds. If a religion is characterized by permissiveness, a charge can be laid against those who follow it: that it is precisely its permissiveness that summons its adherents to accept it. If a religion appeals to the ambitions of its adherents with the might they will attain through it, those who accept it stand liable to the charge that it is their desire to obtain might through it that summons them to accept it. If a religion's leader and propagandist is a relative of those who accept and advocate it, and those who accept it gain eminence by following this propagandist to whom they are related, a charge can be brought against those who accept it: that it is this desire for eminence through their relative that summons them to accept it. If the vulgar mind hastens to a religion and is easily persuaded by it, that religion is readily recognized to be a form of deception, especially if the other factors we mentioned are present, or even some or just one of them. If a religion is not characterized by permissiveness, does not summon to a might that appeals to the ambitions of those who accept it, has not in it tribal zeal for a relative, such that those who accept it gain an agreeable eminence, and there is not in it the persuasion of the fleshly mind—if all these things are lacking, I say, surely that religion is pure, unadulterated, correct, and divine.

How Christianity Was Propagated

One religion alone is free of the aforementioned four factors, and that is Christianity. What permissiveness is found in the gospel for those who

accept it? It says, after all, "If someone strikes one cheek, turn to him the other. If someone steals your cloak, give him your clothes. If you look at a woman so as to lust after her, you have committed adultery with her in your heart. If you say to your neighbor 'You fool' or 'You idiot,' you deserve the fire¹ of hell."² (There are other, similar things.) With what might did Christ our God appeal to our ambitions, saying that we would obtain it by following him? He told us, after all, "I leave you like sheep among wolves. The world will be happy but you will be sad. The days are coming when those who kill you will think they are offering a sacrifice."³ (There are other, similar things.) What tribal zeal can anyone detect in the religion of the Christians, who are drawn from every nation of the world? Each nation has its customary manner of worship, which it inherited from its ancestors and forefathers. This manner of worship is an object of pride for it, something to be defended, propagated, and extolled. And yet, the nations left all this behind and brought themselves to a man who was in outward appearance a Jew.⁴ They followed him, even though every single one of those nations considered the Jews to be most odious. Further, they were not pleased to say of him that he was simply some prophet or messenger sent by God or some righteous man.⁵ Rather, they said that he was nothing less than their God and savior, the creator of heaven and earth, of what is seen and unseen. Accordingly, it should be clear that this religion is completely free of tribal zeal and that neither compulsion nor ambition summoned people to it. What of the non-Christian religions? Suppose someone were to suggest that these too were entered by every nation. Whoever says this should know: With the exception of Christianity, whenever a religion was entered by persons from a nation other than that which originally adopted it because of tribal zeal or because of the might that was obtained through it, those persons entered it for the following reasons. Some were taken prisoner in war and enslaved. Others were compelled by degradation⁶ and oppressive burdens⁷ or were harmed in some other way: all of this making them lose their resolve and drawing them to that religion. Others⁸ were won over by one of the factors we have already mentioned. Nothing like this is found in Christianity, however. Every nation entered it without appeals being made to their ambitions and without coercion. Further, those who entered it brought an incomparable distress on themselves and severed themselves from the glories of their fathers so as to worship this man who was in outward appearance a Jew. And

1. Reading *nār jahannam* (cf. B147.11–12). 2. Matt 5:39–40, 28, 22. 3. Matt 10:16; John 16:20, 2. 4. For a similar expression, see p. 34 and below. 5. An allusion to Islam? 6. Reading *al-istidhlāl* (cf. B150.2). 7. Reading *wa* for *wa-ādarat bihi*, with BD. 8. Adding *man* after *wa-immā*, with BD.

why? Twelve men went forth to summon to the worship of this man. Each was cut off from his companions. Each went to a different nation, more specifically, to that nation's homeland, where its might and influence were greatest. Each stayed until he brought that nation to worship this Jewish man. Further, each of these disciples was among the most wretched and lowly, the poorest, far distant from everything that people desire. As for the persuasion of the vulgar and fleshly mind, it too is wholly excluded from the gospel. The gospel says that Christ the Son of God was begotten of the Father before the ages and that the Father is not prior to him. It says that this Son at the end of time descended to take up residence in the belly of a woman and from her was begotten as a man, while remaining God as he always had been. It says that he was a child in the cradle, who suckled and through eating came to reach maturity. The gospel says that this eternal Son offered sacrifices to God in the temple⁹ and that because Herod sought him, he fled to Egypt. It says that he fasted, was tempted by the devil, and prayed; that he felt hunger and thirst and grew tired; that fear came on him, so that he sweated sweat that was clotted like blood;¹⁰ that his enemies seized him, and insulted and disgraced him when they spat in his face; that they beat¹¹ him about the head, flogged him, and crowned him with thorns; that they mocked him, nailed his hands and feet, and hung him on a piece of wood; that they gave him vinegar and gall to drink; that they pierced him with a lance; that blood and water flowed out from him; and that, while this was happening, he cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" All this the gospel says of Christ. There is no one whose mind could be persuaded that God is thus described or that such things could happen to him. Accordingly, the persuasion of the vulgar mind is wholly excluded from this religion, as also are the other aforementioned properties. It has thus been confirmed that the gospel is divine, pure, correct, and unadulterated. "In it, there is no doubt."¹² Against it, no charge can be brought. It is "the religion of truth"¹³ that God has commanded. Apart from Christianity, there is no other true religion.

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Christianity and Wonders

No one can examine the gospel and what it says of Christ and not recognize that the gospel was accepted solely as a result of incomparable wonders, which could only be done by one who has God's aid. Here's why.

9. An allusion to the purificatory sacrifices mentioned at Luke 2:22–24.

10. Cf. Luke 22:44. 11. Reading *wa-taraqū*, with BD. 12. Theodore is here—playfully—citing the Qur^ʿān's own claim about itself (Qur^ʿān 2:2; 10:37; 32:2).

13. Cf. Qur^ʿān 9:29, 33; 48:28; 61:9.

With respect to their minds, people are inevitably either wise, ignorant, or somewhere in the middle.¹⁴ What we have said that the holy gospel records of Christ, however, regarding his eternal birth from God and his second birth from the Virgin Mary, what befell and happened to him, and what he said—neither the wise, the ignorant, nor those in between could be persuaded to accept such things. Tell me, then: How did all the nations come to confess this religion? Or if not all, at least five-sixths of them?¹⁵ Everyone knows about what happened to one of the disciples.¹⁶ When he went to a certain nation to summon it to this religion, the inhabitants of that nation rejected him because of the loathsomeness¹⁷ of that to which he was summoning them and the harshness of what he was imposing on them, for everything in his message was contrary to their way of thinking, their desires, and their appetites. They thus sought to kill him, and because he was lowly and wretched, it was in their power to do so and to treat him in whatever way they wanted. They would have, too, if he had not said to them, “Bring me the bodies of some people who have died!” When they had brought those bodies, he made them arise. He did not say to the dead person, “Arise in the name of God!” but “You who are dead, to you I say, in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, whom the Jews crucified in Jerusalem, arise!” And the dead person instantly arose. So also, the disciples cleansed the leprous and healed the sick. They cast out demons. They extinguished fires and made waters flow. They caused mountains to vanish. They repelled wild animals. They did each of their innumerable wonders, however, not “in the name of God,” but “in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, whom the Jews crucified in Jerusalem.” When the nations saw that all creation humbled itself before the name of Jesus the crucified Nazarene, they were convinced that he was God and the Son of God. They also came to recognize that his incarnation, his sufferings, and the whole of his mission—all things that the human mind finds loathsome—were for him neither weakness nor something without purpose. They came to understand that there were good reasons for these things, even if their mortal minds were incapable of comprehending them. When they came to believe in him, however, the Holy Spirit disclosed what Christ had graciously accomplished for them through his cross, notwithstanding that¹⁸ for the sake of his mission this had been hidden from them before they had faith in him. Surely this is how the nations came to accept the

14. For this threefold division of humanity, cf. pp. 35–36, as well as 43 and 216.

15. A similar figure is found at p. 36. 16. This refers to Thomas, “the apostle of India.” Cf. the parallels at pp. 46 and 217–19. 17. Emending *shafāʿat* to read *li-shanāʿat*. This emendation is partially confirmed by B and D, which bear *li-shanaʿ*.

18. Adding *ʿalā* before *mā*, with BD.

gospel and have faith in Christ. Of this, the scriptures tell.¹⁹ Of this, other narratives speak.²⁰

Conclusions

We give thanks to Christ, who brought about our salvation through his pains and led us to his Father through his wounds,²¹ making us his inheritance and pouring out on us the blessings of his kingdom. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

19. Reading *khabbarat*, with BD. 20. Translation tentative. 21. Emending *bi-rūḥihi* to read *bi-jurūḥihi*.

On the Characteristics of the True Religion

My friends, every religion and all who believe in the resurrection as M63
a day of judgment agree with us on this point: There is just one religion that God wants human beings to have, and it is according to the dictates of this religion that he judges them on the day of the resurrection, with no one entering paradise except through it. Come, let us examine together, in a sincere manner, the characteristics of this religion. As for us, the community of Christians, we know that the true religion of God, which he wants human beings to have, has three characteristics.

Three Marks of the True Religion

The first characteristic is that God sends his messengers to all the nations of the world. This we know for the simple reason that we have no doubt that God is just and that it would not befit¹ his justice if he were to judge all the nations of the world on the day of the resurrection without having sent his messengers to them. Indeed, if he were to do so, he would no longer be just. If someone suggests that God judges human beings according to the dictates of a religion that he communicated via messengers to just some, that person attributes unfairness to God. If God only sent messengers to some nations and neglected others but then judged them all by the same standard on the day of the resurrection, there is only one thing to which we could compare him—may he be blessed and exalted! Imagine a man who has fifty slaves in fifty hamlets. When it comes time to sow the fields, he sends to some and commands them to sow. To the others, however, he does not send. When it is time for the harvest, he sends

1. Reading *yatahayya*², with P.

to all his slaves and assembles them. He then judges all of them together according to the amount of grain they have, punishing those who did not sow²—and his punishment is harsh, continual, and never ending, and is accompanied by his command that the punishment not be lifted from them as long as he lives. Who does not recognize that the one who does this is unfair? May God be exalted above this, and may he know that we are not among those who say such things of him!

M64 The second characteristic is that the messengers God sends must be able to perform wonders and signs. These attest³ that the one doing them is God's messenger. Such was the case with the miracles and wonders Moses performed in Egypt in Pharaoh's presence. These attested that he was God's messenger. Because of them, Pharaoh's people will have no defense before God on the day of the resurrection for neglecting to follow Moses, what he said, and what he brought from God. Indeed, if God had not given the messengers that he sent to human beings the ability to perform wonders, he would not have on the day of the resurrection any just reason to charge them with having declared his messengers liars, with not having accepted them and put their trust in them, and with rejecting what they brought. In short, if God—apart from wonders—were to punish the nations that did not accept his messengers, he would no longer be just. There is only one thing to which we could compare him. Imagine a man who has fifty slaves in fifty hamlets. To his slaves in his hamlets he sends messengers with a letter on which there is no seal. His slaves refuse to have anything to do with his messengers and do not accept his letters, saying to them, "We shall not accept your letters. If they were authentic, our master would have put his seal on them." When it reaches their master that his slaves disregarded his messengers and declared his letters false, he is angry at them and punishes them harshly, commanding that the punishment not be lifted from them as long as he lives. This too is among the most horrid and unfair things that one could do. May God be exalted above it!

The third characteristic is that God's messengers must instruct the nations to which they are sent in their native tongues, so that those nations might understand them and receive what they bring. Why is this? If God were not to give the messengers he sends to human beings the power to address them in an understandable manner, he would not have a just claim against them on the day of the resurrection should they declare his messengers liars and not believe and accept their message. In short, if God were to punish the nations that did not accept his messengers, notwithstanding that those messengers had addressed them in

2. Reading *wa-ʿadhdhab kull man lam yazraʿ* for *fā-ʿadhdhabahum . . . lam yazraʿ*, with P.

3. Reading *tashhad*, with P.

an unintelligible fashion, he would no longer be just. There is only one thing to which we could compare him. Imagine a man who sends a foreign messenger to his slaves in his hamlets, commanding them to come. The messenger goes and delivers the message⁴ of their master. In that they do not understand him and comprehend his message,⁵ they end up staying where they are. When news of this reaches their master, he is angry at them and punishes them harshly, commanding that the punishment not be lifted from them as long as he lives. This too is among the most horrid of things that one could do and one of the most loathsome things that could be said of God. May he be exalted above it!

Conclusions

The true religion of God, which alone he accepts on the day of the resurrection, must combine in itself these three characteristics we mentioned: its messengers must have gone forth to all the nations of the world; they must have performed among them signs and wonders; and they must have addressed each nation in its own tongue. If it has these three characteristics, those who do not accept God's⁶ messengers have no excuse or defense on the day of the resurrection. It is clear that not one of the peoples of the world can say that there is in the world a religion whose messengers went forth to all the nations of the east and the west, with wonders and signs, and addressed each nation in its own tongue—with a single exception, that most famous of religions, about which all the nations of the world, to the ends of the earth, know and have heard, namely, the Christian religion. Its messengers, the apostles of Christ, went forth to the ends of the earth, to the east and to the west. [. . .]⁷

4. Reading *risālat*. 5. Reading *mā* for *mā mā*, with P. 6. Reading *Allāh* for *al-Masīh*, with P. 7. Given its abrupt conclusion and the lack of an invocation (apart from a scribal note, which reads: “finished, through the aid and strength of God”), it is necessary to suppose, contrary to its editor, that the end of the present treatise is lacking. The ancestor of P, too, must have been lacking. It bears, however, a few final sentences that appear to be a scribe’s attempt at rectifying the lacuna: “Thus, there is neither excuse nor defense on the day of judgment for those who neglect this religion and do not accept it. To our Lord and our God be praise, forever and ever! Amen!”

PART II

DISCERNING THE TRUE CHURCH



On the Councils

With¹ what arguments might we² benefit the orthodox, that is, the Chalcedonians,³ but not the Nestorians, the Jacobites, the Julianists,⁴ the Maronites,⁵ nor the other heretics who lay claim to Christianity? Each of these sects imagines that our efforts to confirm Christianity work to their benefit alone, they being the only true Christians. We have already confirmed Christianity over against every other religion and shown that it alone is true;⁶ we must now differentiate orthodoxy from these heresies, showing that it alone is Christianity and that all these heresies are false. Some time ago, we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, demonstrated this in a scholarly manner for intellectuals able to fathom abstruse matters such as are impenetrable to the common folk.⁷ This scholarly approach, however, is not persuasive to the common folk, whether merchants, farmers, or others like them. We must conclude: Which of them can be healed⁸ by that manner of argumentation? We

1. It will be recalled that the present work constitutes the second part of the ninth treatise in Bāshā's edition. The first part of this treatise was translated above under the title *Against the Jews*. 2. Reading *naḥnu bi-hādhā* for *bihi*, with S. 3. Reading *al-urtudhuksīyah al-mansūbīn ilā* for *al-Naṣārā illā*, with S. 4. Followers of Julian of Halicarnassus (d. after 518), who broke with the Monophysites in the early sixth century over the question of the incorruptibility of Christ's body. In Theodore's day, it would seem that Julianists were to be found primarily in Armenia and Egypt. 5. Reading *wa-l-Mārūniyah*, with S (cf. Bāshā, *Mayāmīr*, 191). For Theodore, as will be seen in a moment, the Maronites arose as a separate sect for their defense of Monothelitism, a christological view condemned by the third council of Constantinople (680). Cf. Samir, "Abū Qurrah," 25–33. 6. A reference to the types of works translated in the first part of the present volume. 7. Perhaps a reference to Theodore's *On the Death of Christ*. 8. Reading *wa-qulnā wa-man yaṣīl ilayhi* for *wa-qalīlan mā yaṣīl ilayhim*, with S.

must therefore devise another clear method and lucid procedure, one that can be followed both by those who are wise and by those who are just plain folk, both by the philosopher and by the merchant. Using this method, we shall confirm orthodoxy and make its light shine as bright as the sun, that it not be hidden from anyone, either young or old, that no one might have an excuse for rejecting it. It will be an inescapable indictment for heretics who delight in their perversity. It will bring joy to the orthodox, with the help of the Holy Spirit, when they see that their faith is correct and their religion is right. (We encourage⁹ them, however, to unite piety and righteousness with their faith, lest they fail to benefit from this method, such that their having it becomes for them a curse when they lack the deeds required of those who would be obedient to Christ.) What then is this manifest method that confirms¹⁰ orthodoxy? How one would like to know!

Which Is the True Church?

B156 Now then, my friends, as for us, the community of everyone who lays claim to the Christian religion, we agree to the extent that we adhere to and believe in the books of the Old and New Testaments. We are divided only because we are at variance as to the meaning of these books. It is this that divides us into separate churches¹¹ and prohibits us from praying together. One of two things must be the case. Perhaps we should say that we are all acceptable to Christ, in that we abide by the books of the Old and New Testaments, which were written for us by the Holy Spirit, and that Christ will not call us to account if we have misunderstood the meaning of the words that are in those books. Contrariwise, perhaps we should say that adherence to these books will not be acceptable if it is accompanied by a misunderstanding of the true import of what the Holy Spirit meant by the words of these books, in what concerns religious essentials. Suppose some say that Christ will be pleased with you simply because you adhere to these books, even if you do not understand their true meaning, in what concerns religious essentials.¹² Those who say this have turned Christianity into Judaism. They have made it aim at words rather than an understanding of those words. They have commanded Christians to gather in their bodies¹³ in a single church and in unified prayer, even though in their spirits they are divided. They have exhorted them to¹⁴ worship on the outside one God but on the inside diverse gods. They think it fine to

9. Tentatively emending the text to read *wa-nushajji'uhum*. 10. Reading *yuhāqqiq*, with S. 11. Deleting *wa* before *'alā*, with S. 12. Adding *fīmā lā budd li-jawharihi alladhī* (read *li-jawhar al-dīn?*) *minhu* after *ma'ānihā*, with S. 13. Reading *ajsādihim*, with S. 14. Omitting *wa* before *an*, with S.

invoke one Christ with their tongues, while imagining many christs in their hearts. Far be it from Christ to be pleased with such worship! It is as he said, “I do not bring strife in place of tranquillity.”¹⁵ There is no other possibility: All Christians, if their profession be true, must worship Christ, the Father, and the Spirit with an unadulterated understanding of the meaning of the books of the Old and New Testaments. If they do not, they have become Jews, not content unless they say either that God changes¹⁶ from state to state or that there are many gods. How so? When they hear Moses say that “God is a consuming fire,”¹⁷ they become Magians, for the only thing they can think of is the fire the Magians worship. When they hear the prophet Daniel say, “He is the ancient of days and his hair is like pure wool,”¹⁸ they imagine God to be a grand old man. When they hear Ezekiel say, “From the waist up, he is fire and like lapis lazuli, and from the waist down, he is fire,”¹⁹ they imagine either that he has changed from his former state or that this God is different from those seen by Daniel and described by Moses. How loathsome when these three images of God are all mixed together in the mind of the believer! So too, when they hear Christ say of himself, “I am the door,”²⁰ they imagine a door. When they hear him say, “I am the vine,”²¹ however, they reckon that he has changed or they think that this Christ is different from the other one. (There are other similar passages.) Accordingly, one must adhere to the true meaning of scripture, in what concerns religious essentials; otherwise, there will be no true worship of God.

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If what we have just argued is true, it follows that Christ dwells in just one of the different churches, notwithstanding that each claims to adhere to the true Christianity. What then should be done by merchants and farmers, and indeed by all people—a few excepted—when their minds are incapable of comprehending the true meaning of scripture and Christ will not accept anything else from them? Could we say that Christ has imposed on them something they are incapable of doing? Far be it from him! Indeed, if he had done this, he would have turned his descent from heaven for them and his shedding of blood for them into a curse for them. If he has imposed this on them, and²² he does not impose on them something that they are incapable of doing, and we know that most of them—a few excepted—have minds that do not comprehend what has been imposed on them, how then are they to find this path appropriate for their minds,²³ such that when they travel it,²⁴ they will arrive thereby²⁵ at the true meaning of scripture? Not one

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15. Cf. Luke 12:51. 16. Reading *yataghayyar*, with S. 17. Deut 4:24. 18. Dan 7:9. 19. Ezek 1:27. 20. John 10:9. 21. John 15:1. 22. Reading *wa-huwa*, with S. 23. Reading *tablughuhā*, with S. 24. Reading *salakūhā*, with S. 25. Adding *bi-hā* after *waṣalū*, with S.

heretic has discovered this path or been led to it.²⁶ No! The heretics have no share in life. They have only words in the dark.²⁷ By these, they deceive the gullible and utter falsehoods.²⁸ When the ignorant hear them, they think them a fount of wisdom. In this way, they induce them to follow them, when they speak words that are obscure. Even the heretics themselves do not understand these words, however. Rather, it is as the apostle Paul said: “He does not understand what he says, nor does he prove anything.”²⁹ As for this lucid path, it is in the possession of orthodoxy, and by it they are led to eternal life. We know that Christ would not have neglected such a weighty matter and that he would not have left common folk without a lucid method, which their minds might be able to understand and which might guide them to the true meaning of scripture, which he imposed on them—not least because both he and his disciples knew that these heresies would arise and that Satan would sift the church through them, so that she might come into possession of her true wheat.³⁰

Ancient Israelite Councils

As for the method in question, the Holy Spirit manifested it in the law through Moses the chief of the prophets. How so? God revealed to him laws and commanded him to use these to judge the children of Israel. Moses delivered these laws to the priestly judges, charging them to judge between the children of Israel, and he appointed from them commanders of ten, fifty, one hundred, and a thousand, ordering them to execute judgment among the children of Israel in a just fashion.³¹ To them he said, “As for what is clear to you in these laws, observe and execute it over your brothers. If anything in them is unclear or you have doubts about it, refer it to me, that I might refer it to God; and I shall bring you the truth about it.”³² This was their practice as long as Moses was with them. When God decided that Moses should die on the other side of the Jordan, Moses knew, by the Holy Spirit, that if the children of Israel were to lose him, they would fall into confusion and doubt and be dispersed and divided. He thus gave them, through the Holy Spirit, the second law³³ and left them a perpetual successor. To them he said, “Children of Israel, if any case is difficult for you and you have doubts³⁴ about it—between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of lawsuit and another, one kind of impurity and another, one kind of quarrel and another—so that there are disputes

26. Omitting *lahu wa*, with S. 27. The words of scripture without understanding? 28. Lit. “and twists his lips.” 29. 1 Tim 1:7. 30. Cf. Luke 22:31. 31. Cf. Exod 18:25–26; Deut 1:15. 32. Deut 1:16–17. 33. Meaning the renewal of the covenant in Deuteronomy. 34. Adding *wa* before *shakaktum*, with S.

in your courts, you should go to the place that the Lord your God will choose for the invocation of his name. Take refuge there in those days and come to the priests, Levites, and judges who will be there in those days. They will examine the matter and declare to you the true judgment. Follow the decision they declare to you from the place that the Lord your God will choose for the invocation of his name. Be careful to do all that they prescribe for you and act according to the law and the judgment that they speak to you. Turn not aside from what they advise you, either to the right or to the left. If someone is proud and does not heed the priest, who will serve in the name of the Lord your God, or the judge, who will be there in those days, let that person be killed. Purge the enemies from the children of Israel, so that the whole nation might hear and be warned by this and thus refrain from enmity.”³⁵ Do you not see that Moses did not grant the right to examine and decide controversial cases to any of the people, whether those with a claim to knowledge or those without such a claim? Rather, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he should give this authority to the council of priests and judges who would be in the place that God would choose for the invocation of his name. So too, he did not allow anyone to participate with them in examining controversial claims. Rather, he commanded the people, whoever they might be, regardless of whether they thought themselves wise, resolutely to carry out the decision of that council, whether it be for or against them. He also ordered the death of those who were filled with pride and would not humble their hearts to accept what had been decided, thinking their own notions better than the council’s. Moses only ordered the death of such folk because he knew the following: When these doubts and controversies were entrusted to the members of this council, the Holy Spirit would surely guide their minds to what is correct and allow³⁶ only what is true to proceed from them—regardless of their intelligence or circumstances. Suppose someone agrees that the Holy Spirit commanded people to obey this council with regard to difficult cases, but goes on to claim that he allowed erroneous judgments to proceed from this council. Whoever says this makes the Holy Spirit responsible for leading the nation astray. Indeed, whoever says this is truly the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit,³⁷ in that he makes the Holy Spirit, who is the sun of guidance and the treasury of light, to be the cause of error. Far be it from God that such a thing be so! Rather, we believe and know in our hearts that the Holy Spirit would not have allowed this council to issue a ruling that was anything other than proper.

B160

35. Deut 17:8–13. 36. Omitting *wa-lā yada*^c, with S. Cf. the parallel at B160.12.
37. Cf. Mark 3:29.

Councils in the Apostolic Age

In the sacred New Testament, of which the Old Testament is only an image, the Holy Spirit employed the same procedure that he used in the Old Testament. If there was some point of religion about which Christians disagreed, he made them refer it to the council of the apostles. Moreover, he appointed for these apostles a single head. All controversial³⁸ cases were to be referred to this person and to his council. The Holy Spirit also ordered that they judge such cases according to what he himself would show them. Our claim is confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles.³⁹ While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, they were chosen by the Holy Spirit to travel among the Gentiles and preach the gospel of Christ. They went and did what they had been commanded and then returned to Antioch. While they were there, men from Jerusalem went down to Antioch, teaching the brethren, "If you were not circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them and argued the point. With regard to this dispute, everyone agreed that Paul, Barnabas, and some others should go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. On their arrival at Jerusalem, certain Pharisees who had become Christians arose and said to the apostles, "When Gentiles become believers, you must circumcise them and order them to keep the law of Moses." At this, the apostles and elders gathered to look into the matter. There was much debate until Peter arose and said, "Brethren, you know that in earlier times God decided that the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel from my mouth and that they should believe. God, who knows the heart, purified them and gave them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts. Why do you disagree with God and put on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? We believe that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus, just as they will be." To this James responded, "Brethren, listen to me. Simon has related⁴⁰ to you how God was pleased to take from the Gentiles a nation for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'After this I shall return, and I shall build the dwelling of David, which was rent; I shall renew its ruins, and I shall raise it up, that the rest of humanity might seek the face of the Lord, and all the nations over whom the name of the Lord is invoked, says the Lord, the one who will make this happen.' Accordingly, my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God; rather, I think that they should be commanded to abstain from the pollution of

38. Reading *al-ghāmidah*; cf. B158.20 and B160.12. 39. What follows is a summary of Acts 15. 40. Reading *qasṣ*, with S.

idols, from unchastity, from the meat of improperly sacrificed animals, and from blood.” It then seemed good to the apostles and to the elders, along with the whole church, to choose two men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, two men held in honor by the brethren—with the following letter:⁴¹ “From the apostles and elders and the brethren to the church that is in Antioch and Syria and the brethren who are of the Gentiles, greetings. We have heard that men from among us went forth and disturbed you with their words and unsettled your spirits, saying that it was necessary for you to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, which we did not command them to do. It seemed good to us all to select two men and send them to you, along with our brothers Barnabas and Paul, who have sacrificed themselves for the sake of Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas and commanded them to deliver our words with their own mouths. Behold, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to impose on you a burden beyond these essentials, that you refrain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of improperly sacrificed animals, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell!”⁴² Judas and Silas took leave of the council and went down to Antioch. They gathered the church together and delivered the letter; and when they read it, the church rejoiced in the encouragement that had come to them. Judas and Silas, who were prophets, also encouraged the brethren with many words, and strengthened them. Do you not see that those who went down to Antioch, commanding circumcision and the keeping of the law, were from the community of the Jerusalem brethren, while Paul and Barnabas, who disagreed with them, were prominent apostles? When the two groups⁴³ quarreled in Antioch about the subject of their disagreement, the church accepted the opinion of neither Paul and Barnabas nor of those other men. Rather, they referred all of them to the council of the apostles, of which St. Peter was the head and leader. When the council of apostles had come to a unanimous decision in the case, they issued their decision as to what they thought best and ascribed their decision to the Holy Spirit, saying, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” Do you not see that this council, to which Christ entrusted the right to examine matters of heresy, thought only what the Holy Spirit thought and that it is necessary for every controversial matter of religion to be referred to this council? No one, whether old or young, is permitted to have opinions that differ from this council and to advise the church to

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41. Reading *ma'ahumā*, with S. 42. Adding *sihḥū* after *tašna'ūna*, with S. 43. Reading *al-fariqān*.

accept such opinions. Indeed, apart from the council, the church did not even accept such opinions from St. Paul and Barnabas, notwithstanding that they were the sun of the world. No one, whether bishop or patriarch or anyone else, is permitted to say to the church, “Accept what I say, apart from the apostles.”

Bishops of Rome, Councils, and Heretics

You should understand that the head of the apostles was St. Peter, he to whom Christ said, “You are the rock; and on this rock I shall build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.”⁴⁴ After his resurrection, he also said to him three times, while on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, “Simon, do you love me? Feed my lambs, rams, and ewes.”⁴⁵ In another passage, he said to him, “Simon, Satan will ask to sift you like wheat, and I prayed that you not lose your faith; but you, at that time, have compassion on your brethren and strengthen them.”⁴⁶ Do you not see that St. Peter is the foundation of the church, selected to shepherd it, that those who believe in his faith will never lose their faith, and that he was ordered to have compassion on his brethren and to strengthen them? As for Christ’s words, “I prayed for you, that you not lose your faith; but you, have compassion on your brethren, at that time, and strengthen them,” we do not think that he meant St. Peter himself [and the apostles themselves].⁴⁷ Rather, he meant nothing other than the holders of the seat of St. Peter, that is, Rome, [and the holders of the seats of the apostles]. Just as when he said to the apostles, “I am with you always, until the end of the age,”⁴⁸ he did not mean just the apostles themselves, but also those who would be in charge of their seats and their flocks;⁴⁹ in the same way, when he spoke his last words to St. Peter, “Have compassion, at that time, and strengthen your brethren; and your faith will not be lost,” he meant by this nothing other than the holders of his seat. Yet another indication of this is the fact that among the apostles it was St. Peter alone who lost his faith and denied Christ, which Christ may have allowed to happen to Peter so as⁵⁰ to teach us that it was not Peter that he meant by these words. Moreover, we know of no apostle who fell and needed St. Peter to strengthen him. If someone says that Christ meant by these words only St. Peter himself [and the apostles themselves], this person causes the church

44. Matt 16:18. 45. Cf. John 21:15–17. 46. Cf. Luke 22:31–32. 47. One wonders whether the bracketed materials here and in what follows are not scribal interpolations and emendations—in short, attempts to bring Theodore more nearly into the fold of later orthodox ecclesiology. Their presence clearly offends against the sense of Theodore’s argument, which requires the bishop of Rome alone as guarantor of the six councils. 48. Matt 28:20. 49. Reading *wa-ra‘iyatihim*, with S. 50. Omitting *ayy*, with S.

to lack someone to strengthen it after the death of St. Peter. How could this happen, especially when we see all the sifting of the church that came from Satan after the apostles' death? All of this indicates that Christ did not mean [them]⁵¹ by these words. Indeed, everyone knows that the heretics attacked the church only after the death of the apostles—Paul of Samosata,⁵² Arius,⁵³ Macedonius,⁵⁴ Eunomius,⁵⁵ Sabellius,⁵⁶ Apollinaris,⁵⁷ Origen,⁵⁸ and others. If he meant by these words in the gospel only St. Peter [and the apostles themselves], then after [them]⁵⁹ the church would have been deprived of comfort and would have had no one to deliver her from those heretics, whose heresies are truly “the gates of hell,” which Christ said would not overcome the church.⁶⁰ Accordingly, there is no doubt that he meant by these words nothing other than the holders of the seat of St. Peter,⁶¹ who have continually strengthened their brethren and will not cease to do so as long as this present age lasts.

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Do you not know that when Arius arose, by command of none other than the bishop of Rome, a council was summoned against him. This holy council anathematized Arius and his heresy, and the church accepted this council and rejected Arius, even as in earlier times the church of Antioch had accepted the letter of the apostles and rejected the heretics instructing it to be circumcised and keep the law. When Macedonius arose and said certain things about the Holy Spirit, again, by command of the bishop of Rome, a council was summoned against him at Constantinople. This holy council anathematized him, and the church accepted this council, even as it had accepted the first council, and expelled Macedonius, even as it had expelled Arius. Through these two councils, the church learned to say that the Son⁶² and the Spirit

51. Originally “him”? 52. Bishop of Antioch, deposed in 268 for christological views that suggested that Christ was, by nature, a mere man. He was considered by the orthodox to have been a precursor of Nestorius. 53. Presbyter of Alexandria (d. 336), condemned by the council of Nicea (325) for rejecting the full divinity of Christ, teaching instead that he was created by the Father. 54. Adding *wa-Maqadhānīyūs*, with S. Macedonius was a claimant to the see of Constantinople (d. ca. 362), regarded by the orthodox as the founder of the Pneumatomachoi, who denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, a view condemned by the council of Constantinople (381). 55. Arian bishop of Cyzicus (d. 394), founder of the Anomeans, who denied that the Son and the Holy Spirit were essentially like the Father. 56. A third-century theologian who was condemned for considering the Son to be merely a different mode of the Father and for teaching that in the passion the Father suffered. 57. Apollinaris of Laodicea was condemned by the council of Constantinople (381) for denying that Christ was fully human. The orthodox considered him a precursor of Monophysitism. 58. Alexandrian theologian (d. ca. 254), whose christological and eschatological views were condemned by the second council of Constantinople (553). 59. Originally “him”? 60. Matt 16:18. 61. It will be noted that here, in Theodore’s summary, mention is made of Peter alone. This would tend to confirm the presence of the above-positited scribal interpolations and emendations. 62. Reading *al-Ibn*, with S.

are of the essence of the Father and that each of them is God, eternally with and of the Father. The church accepted these two councils in the same way that the church of Antioch had earlier accepted the council of the apostles. Even as the church of Antioch did not have competence to judge along with the apostles, so also no individual had competence to judge along with these two councils. Even as what the apostles wrote in earlier times to the church of Antioch was nothing less than the thought of the Holy Spirit, so also the church has no doubt that the thought of these two councils is the thought of the Holy Spirit. Earlier, the church
 B166 of Antioch did not accept the opinion of either Paul or Barnabas or of the others until it had referred them to the council of the apostles. It then waited for the decision of that council; and when it came, it was comforted by it. In the same way, the church did not accept the opinion of either Arius or Macedonius or of the holy fathers who then opposed them until it had referred the matter to the holy council. It then awaited its decision; and when it came, it accepted it, being comforted and made joyous by it.

When Nestorius⁶³ arose and said certain things of Christ, the church disclaimed his words and, as was their custom, referred him to the holy council. By command of the bishop of Rome, a council against him was summoned at Ephesus. This holy council expelled him and declared his teachings false, and the holy church accepted that council, expelled Nestorius, and rejected⁶⁴ his teachings. The church knew that it had no competence to judge along with that council, but that, rather, it was required to follow that council because of the Holy Spirit, as we have already explained. As for you, Nestorian, know that you are in error. You have slipped off the rock on which the church was built. You have been exiled from Christ. You have been separated from those who dwell in him.⁶⁵ All this is because you did not accept the decision of the holy council—notwithstanding that the Holy Spirit requires you to accept it and it is nothing less than the decision of the Holy Spirit himself. It is a wonder that you have followed Nestorius, even though you were not commanded to follow him. You have set him above both St. Paul and Barnabas. While the church thought it good not to accept those two, even though they were the light of humanity, you have accepted Nestorius and abandoned the holy council, even though it is necessary for you to follow it. You have set yourself on a weak foundation. You have put your faith in the mind of a human being. You have abandoned the aid of

63. Bishop of Constantinople (d. ca. 451), condemned by the council of Ephesus (431) for rejecting the full divinity of Christ and refusing to acknowledge Mary as the Mother of God. 64. Reading *wa-jahadat*, with S. 65. Tentatively reading *sukkānihi*.

the Holy Spirit. Know that you have no excuse. After all, you accepted the decision of the first two councils, submitting yourself to them without debate, even as the Holy Spirit commanded you. Your soul took offense at this third council, however, notwithstanding that the Holy Spirit commanded you to accept it in the same way that he commanded you to accept the earlier councils. You have put your own notions on an equal footing with his. You have ceased to trust in the Holy Spirit, who helped that council and spoke through it. If you accuse this council of error, know that Arius and his associates laid similar accusations against the first council, alleging its faults as their reason for rejecting it. Macedonius and his associates, too, laid accusations against the second council, finding fault with it and using this as a pretext for rejecting it. Even as they, in your opinion,⁶⁶ have no cause to lay accusations against those two councils, so too, know that you have no excuse before Christ for laying accusations against this third council. B167

When Eutyches⁶⁷ and Dioscurus⁶⁸ arose and said certain things about Christ, the church disclaimed their words and holy fathers arose to argue against them. Nonetheless, the church accepted the opinion neither of those two nor of those who were arguing against them. Rather, as was their custom, they referred the two to the holy council. By command of the bishop of Rome, the fourth council was summoned against them at Chalcedon. It anathematized them and declared their teachings false, and the church accepted the words of this council, even as it had accepted the first three councils, expelling Eutyches and Dioscurus and rejecting their teachings. The church knew, after all, that it had no competence to judge along with that council and was confident that the council's decision was surely the decision of the Holy Spirit. As for you, Jacobite, how is it that you accept the first three councils, submitting yourself to them and not imagining yourself competent to judge along with them, but you do not accept this fourth council? No! You have preferred Eutyches and Dioscurus to it, placing them above both St. Paul and Barnabas. While the church did not think it right to accept what those two had to say, even though they were the sun of the world, you have accepted the opinions of Eutyches and Dioscurus.⁶⁹ You have decided to support yourself not on the pillar of truth that the Holy Spirit appointed for you, but on what is merely a crushed reed. You have allowed your flesh to

66. Omitting *wa-lā*, with S. 67. A Constantinopolitan monk condemned by the council of Chalcedon (451) for teaching that the incarnate Christ was possessed of but a single, divine nature; for the orthodox, the father of Monophysitism. 68. Bishop of Alexandria (d. 454), supporter of Eutyches, deposed by the council of Chalcedon. 69. Adding *wa-faḍḍaltahumā 'alā mār Būluṣ wa-Barnābā ḥaythu lam tara al-kanisah taqbal min hādḥayn wa-kānā shams al-'ālam fa-qabilta anta min Awṭiṣhūs wa-Dhiyasqūrus* after *wa-Dhiyasqūrus*, with S. Cf. the parallel at B166.16–17.

B168 be cut to pieces and your soul's blood to flow, and yourself to die a spiritual death—all this, because you insist on following one whom you were not enjoined to follow, or rather, one whom you were prohibited from following as if he were the snake that was the implement of tyranny.⁷⁰ After that, you were continually carried from the doctrine of one man to that of another, who changed and transformed your religion, until in the end you had to be called both “those with many heads” and “those with no head.”⁷¹ You came to resemble a stone that slips off⁷² its foundation and continues to roll until it falls as far as it can fall. So too, Eutyches, Dioscurus, Theodosius,⁷³ Severus,⁷⁴ Jacob,⁷⁵ as well as others, set you to roll, each of them introducing into your religion a corruption that accorded with his own opinion, each of them opposed both to his associates and to the truth. If you lay accusations against this holy council, do you not see that you were not the first to criticize the holy councils? Indeed, Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, as well as their associates, each and every sect—with all their hearts, they criticized the council that anathematized them. As for you, what you say about this fourth council is nothing other than what each of them said of the council that anathematized him. If you approve of their having faulted the holy councils that were before this fourth council, you should follow them in this and speak as they do, publicly lifting from your neck the yoke of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶ If you fault them for laying accusations against those holy councils and condemn them for erroneously disagreeing with them, however, you should fault yourself for laying accusations against this fourth holy council and condemn yourself for erroneously disagreeing with it.

B169

As for the fifth council, there is no longer anyone defending the heresy it condemned.⁷⁷ We thus have no one with whom to engage in debate, as we did in the case of the earlier heretics.

Macarius,⁷⁸ Cyrus,⁷⁹ and Sergius⁸⁰ then arose and said certain things of Christ. The church disclaimed their teaching and fathers met them in

70. Meaning, of course, the serpent of Gen 3. 71. That is, the Acephaloi or “headless ones,” another name for the Monophysites who in 482 separated from the bishop of Alexandria for his refusal to condemn Chalcedon. 72. Reading *yazill*. 73. Monophysite bishop of Alexandria (d. 566) until his deposition by Justinian, considered the last great Monophysite theologian of the sixth century. 74. Monophysite bishop of Antioch (d. 538), who was deposed in 518 by Justin I, widely regarded as one of the most important systematizers of Monophysite Christology. 75. Jacob Baradaeus (d. 578), bishop of Edessa and founder of a separate Monophysite hierarchy. 76. That is, by also rejecting those earlier councils. 77. That is, the Three Chapters and Origenism. 78. Bishop of Antioch deposed for his Monothelitism by the third council of Constantinople (680). 79. Monothelite bishop of Alexandria condemned by the third council of Constantinople (680). 80. Bishop of Constantinople (d. 638) and important Monothelite theologian, condemned by the third council of Constantinople (680).

combat, debating with them and resisting⁸¹ their teachings. The church, however, was resolute in not accepting either their opinion or that of those who were debating with them. Instead, they referred them all to the council, as was their custom. By command of the bishop of Rome, the sixth holy council was summoned at Constantinople. It anathematized them and declared their teachings false, and the holy church accepted this council even as it had accepted the earlier councils, separating itself from Macarius and his associates and scorning their teachings. As for you, Maronite,⁸² you submit to and accept the first, second, third, and fourth⁸³ councils, and do not think yourself worthy of interfering with their opinions, which is as the Holy Spirit commanded you. Why then, when it comes to the sixth council, do you forget the Holy Spirit's instruction and become so drunk that you will never sober up? You have attacked your fathers, whom you should have treated with respect by following the bidding of the Holy Spirit and adhering to their definition of the faith. Like a dog,⁸⁴ you have set yourself to revile them and to do away with their definition of the faith. You have torn down the fence protecting you from Satan and gone forth and allowed yourself to be seized by wolves. This is negligence on your part and it is leading you to destruction. If you lay accusations against this holy council, you should know that you are not the first to do this. Each of the earlier heretics—whatever his stripe—laid accusations against the council that anathematized him, nor was he prevented from adding to this accusation all that Satan implanted in his heart. If you fault them for laying accusations against those councils, you should be quick to fault yourself for laying accusations against this sixth council. Give up your erroneous ways and allow yourself to receive guidance! If you do not fault them for condemning those holy councils, you should go ahead and get rid of your restraint. Join your friends and speak as does each heresy since then!

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Three Possible Objections

What general accusations might you heretics lay against these councils? There are only three possible reasons for you to detest these holy councils. You might say that the council you detest issued a decision that was simply wrong, whether out of ignorance or bad intention. You might say that the council was summoned by an emperor, and for this reason it must not be accepted. You might say that there was before the council you detest another council that forbade that anything be added to or taken away from what it decreed, and for this reason the later council must not be accepted.

81. Reading *wa-yaruddūna*, with S. 82. Reading *Mārūni*, with S. 83. Adding *wa-l-rābi*^c after *wa-l-thālith*, with S. 84. Omitting *al-kalb*, with S.

If one of you says that these councils issued decisions that were wrong, whether out of ignorance or bad intention, the one who says this is asserting the right to examine what the Holy Spirit allowed neither him nor anyone else to examine. Such a one is overcome by pride, which prevents him from submitting to the decision of the council. Such a one surely deserves spiritual death. It is as you have heard: The holy law of Moses allowed no one to share with the council in examining controversial matters or to have individual opinions that differed from the decision of the council; and if someone did arrogate to himself such rights, he most certainly and without question deserved death.

B171 Heretic, suppose you say that the council you detest was summoned by an⁸⁵ emperor and thus must not be accepted. Does no one remember the first two councils and⁸⁶ each of the other councils accepted by someone who professes Christianity today, namely, that each and every one of these was summoned by an emperor? The following facts are known to all. The council of Nicea was summoned by the emperor Constantine the Great. As for the second council, the emperor Theodosius the Great summoned it at Constantinople. The third council was summoned at Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger. The emperor Marcian summoned the fourth council at Chalcedon. The emperor Justinian the Great summoned the fifth council at Constantinople. As for the sixth council, it was summoned at Constantinople by the emperor Constantine, the son of Heraclius.

Maronite,⁸⁷ if you detest the fifth and sixth councils because they were summoned by emperors, suggesting that they do not merit acceptance because emperors exercised coercion on people in them and for them, you yourself do wrong when you accept the fourth and earlier councils. After all, each of those councils was summoned by an emperor, as we have just shown. Every heretic anathematized by one of those councils has alleged an excuse like yours, saying that the emperor who summoned the council coerced the people into rejecting him and that it was through his coercion that the council was summoned against him. If you permit yourself to reject⁸⁸ the decision of those two councils, in that they were summoned by emperors, then permit the Jacobites and Nestorians, Macedonius, Arius, and their associates⁸⁹—whatever their stripe—to reject the decision of the council that anathematized him, for it too was summoned by an emperor. If, however, you will not permit them to reject the decisions of those councils because they were summoned by emperors,⁹⁰ do not permit yourself to reject the decision of those councils because they were summoned by emperors.

85. Adding *aḥad* before *al-mulūk*, with S. 86. Reading *wa* for *ḥaythu*, with S.
 87. Reading *Mārūnī*, with S. 88. Reading *al-intifāʿ*? (cf. B172.1). 89. Reading *wa-aṣḥābihim*, with S. 90. Reading *al-mulūk*, with S.

Jacobite, if you detest the fourth council, which anathematized you, because it was summoned by the emperor, suggesting that its decision thus need not be accepted in that the emperor coerced the people in it and for it, you yourself do wrong when you accept the third and earlier councils, each of which was summoned by an emperor. You have also given⁹¹ Nestorius, Macedonius, and Arius an excuse, none of whom accepted the decision of the council that anathematized him. Rather, each of them, like you, alleged that the emperor coerced the council into convening against him and coerced the people into accepting the council's decision. If you permit yourself to reject the decision of this fourth council because it was summoned by an emperor, you must permit each of them to reject the decision⁹² of the council that anathematized him. If, however, you do not permit each of them to reject the decision of the council that anathematized him, you should not permit yourself to reject the decision of the fourth council. Otherwise, you are⁹³ unjust and unfair, or rather, insane and stupid.⁹⁴

Nestorian, we apply to you the same argument to which the Jacobites and Maronites⁹⁵ were subjected. You ought not detest the council that anathematized you because it was summoned by an emperor and for that reason reject its judgment. If you do, you have given Macedonius and Arius an excuse for rejecting the decisions of the councils that anathematized them: they, after all, offer the same excuse as you. Moreover, if you do this, you have annulled whatever doctrines you yourself received from those two councils.

Such an argument cannot be used to fault even one of the councils. Rather, the church should praise Christ for humbling the emperors to her, that they might serve her fathers and her teachers. After all, every emperor in power when those councils were summoned was responsible with regard to the council⁹⁶ for supporting it financially,⁹⁷ for restraining the people, that the fathers might reflect on matters of religion in peace and quiet, and for putting its decision into effect.⁹⁸ The emperor himself had competence neither to reflect on matters of religion nor to confirm the council's decision in any way; all he did was serve the fathers, listening to them and obeying them, receiving all that they decided in matters of religion, without in any way participating in their reflections. If any of you heretics who now lay claim to Christianity fault the aid that the emperors gave to councils or their attendance at them, you thereby willingly nullify everything that we Christians have and return us to the point where

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91. Reading *wa-awsa^cta* (cf. B172.16). 92. Adding *qaḍīyat* after *daf^c*, with S. 93. Reading *wa-illā kunta*, with S. 94. Adding *safīhan* after *majnūnan*, with S. 95. Reading *Mārūnī*, with S. 96. Reading *yalī al-malik min amr al-majma^c annahu* for *min . . . idh*, with S. 97. Reading *bi-naḥqāṭihi*, with S. 98. Reading *wa-yunḥidh*.

all we have to cling to is the texts of the Old and New Testaments. And in that case, it would not matter if any of us says, as did Arius, that the Son is created, or, as did Macedonius, that the Holy Spirit is created. By suggesting this, he has breached the church's wall, which protects the flock from every ravening wolf⁹⁹ expelled from her, and has corrupted the whole religion and turned Christianity into Judaism.

Heretic, suppose that you—whatever your stripe—were to say of the council that anathematized you: An earlier council decreed that nothing be added to or taken away from what it established; accordingly,¹⁰⁰ there is no need to accept this later council. If you say this, you must realize that you understand neither what you say nor its implications. Every¹⁰¹ decision of every one of those holy councils was nothing other than a medicine prepared by the Holy Spirit in order to rid the church's body of the disease of the particular heresy condemned by that council. When the council said that no one was to add to or take away from its decision, it only meant: No one is to contradict us and fashion for the sickness of this heresy condemned by us a medicine other than the one we prepared through the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit does not contradict himself. The council did not say to the church: If the sickness of another heresy troubles the church after the sickness of the heresy it anathematized, the holy fathers, her physicians, are not to gather and remove that sickness from her, as it removed the sickness that was troubling her in its own time. If the council had done this—and far be this from it—it would have allowed¹⁰² every later sickness to have power over the church, in that the council prevented the fathers from treating her. This would be contrary, however, to the Holy Spirit, who made these councils a perpetual and everlasting substitute for the apostles, even as Moses had made those councils to which he ordered obedience a perpetual substitute for himself in every controversy that would arise among¹⁰³ the people of the law.

Heretic, suppose that you were to persist and say that the council you accept forbade anything to be added to or taken away from its decree for the simple reason that it did not want there to be any later councils. If this is what you say, it is time for you to annul all the councils, from first to last. After all, St. Paul said to the church that if either he or an angel from heaven were to come and teach something other than what he himself had taught, he is to be condemned.¹⁰⁴ Heretic, according to what you have said, this verse would permit Arius to say to the council of Nicea, "I shall not accept what you teach, because St. Paul has

99. Cf. 1 Pet 5:8. 100. Reading *wa-li-dhālika*, with S. 101. Adding *kull* after *li-anna*, with S. 102. Adding *qad khallā al-kanisah an* after *la-kāna*, with S. 103. Reading *bayna* for *min*, with S. 104. Gal 1:8.

forbidden anyone to teach the church something that he himself did not teach her.” As for Macedonius, it would enable him to say to the second council, “I shall not accept what you teach, because St. Paul has forbidden anyone to teach the church something that he himself did not teach her. Moreover, the earlier council also forbade anything to be either added to or taken away from its decision.” Heretic, if this seems right to you, you have returned us to the point where all we have to cling to¹⁰⁵ is the texts of the Old and New Testaments. And in that case, it would not matter if any of us says, as did Arius, that the Son is created, nor does B175 it do him any harm to say, as did Macedonius, that the Holy Spirit is created, nor can anyone be faulted for talking like his favorite heretic. In sum, because of you, Christianity has been turned into Judaism, as we earlier said.

The matter is not as you heretics say. You have misunderstood the words of the fathers. The holy church resembles, rather, the son of an emperor, while the fathers resemble physicians. The emperor charged the physicians to protect the son’s body and to keep it free from every manner of sickness. As for the heresies, they resemble those sicknesses. Now then, consider the physicians responsible for the son’s body. It could not in any way be said that one of them erred, if, on seeing a sickness befall the emperor’s son and freeing his body from it with a medicine that he prepared, he then said, “No one has the authority to change any of this medicine that I’ve prepared.” In saying this, the physician meant only to forbid others from treating the son’s sickness with a medicine other than that which he had already prepared. He did not say to later physicians, “If another sickness should later befall the body of the emperor’s son, you have not the authority to treat it.” Indeed, if he had, he would be responsible for the death of the emperor’s son, in which case he would be behaving toward the emperor in a deceptive and hostile manner. In the same way, each of these holy councils only prepared medicine for the heresy that had broken out in its own day, teaching the people that its medicine was both effective and adequate for the sickness of that heresy and that no one had the authority to treat or combat that heresy in a manner contrary to that in which it was treating and combating it. None of them commanded the later spiritual physicians that, should a heresy break out in their own day, they were not to prepare a medicine B176 in order to eliminate it. Indeed, if they had, they would be behaving toward Christ in a deceptive and hostile manner. Far be it from a council convened by the Holy Spirit to do this! You heretics have misunderstood the fathers’ words. Satan, the enemy of Adam’s seed, has mocked you

105. Reading *natamassak*, with S.

and led you to blaspheme the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁶—and this, through your finding of fault with conciliar decisions, which are nothing less than the decisions of the Holy Spirit. It is as I have already told you that the apostles themselves said: When they issued their decision against the heresy that had broken out in their own day, they said that “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,”¹⁰⁷ thereby informing all people that their thought was nothing other than the thought of the Holy Spirit. Whoever blasphemes the decision of one of the councils thus blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Heretic, it may be that you will say that the council that anathematized you was responsible for annulling an earlier council, as one can conclude by examining the implications of its words. You thus claim to know¹⁰⁸ that the council was not from the Holy Spirit, in that the Holy Spirit does not annul himself. Heretic, to you we say: You are coarse of mind and the Holy Spirit does not give his light to you because of your deviant intention. It is for this reason that you think that the council that banished you from the church annulled an earlier council. You have not the authority, however, to mingle your reflection with the reflection of the council—if, that is, you understand what the Holy Spirit commanded you in the law through Moses the head of the prophets. Rather, you must resolutely accept the decree of the council; and if you do not, you are compelled to die a spiritual death. The Holy Spirit would not have allowed an error in any matter to issue from the council of St. Peter, that is, the bishop of Rome¹⁰⁹—and this, because the council attributed to him its reflection on controversial matters of religion, as we have shown you many times. If he were to have allowed this, then the Holy Spirit himself, in that he required people to obey the council, would be the one who leads the people into the error that council issued. Far be it from the Holy Spirit to do that! Heretic, if you permit yourself to reflect on the decision of the council that anathematized you and to examine its words and say that they disagree with an earlier council, permit Arius to reflect on the decision of the council of Nicea, which anathematized him, and to say that its words disagree with what is in the gospel and¹¹⁰ the apostles. So too, permit Macedonius to reflect on the decision of the second council, which anathematized him, and to say that its words disagree with the decision of the first council. I do not suppose that you will do this; accordingly, you also are not permitted¹¹¹ to¹¹² mingle your own reflection with the decision of the council that anathematized you.

106. Cf. Mark 3:29. 107. Acts 15:28. 108. Adding *qad ta'lam* after *za'amta*, with S. 109. Reading *mār Buṭrus alladhī huwa usquf Rūmīyah* for *al-rusul*, with S. 110. Reading *al-injīl wa*, with S. 111. Adding *idhan wa-lā anta tukhallā* after *hādhā*, with S. 112. Reading *an* for *idh*, with S.

You heretics, all of you, if you accept¹¹³ my arguments, neither you nor anyone else is permitted by the Holy Spirit to accuse these holy councils of defect or to disagree with their decision for any reason. If this were not so, it would be in vain that the Holy Spirit commanded through Moses the head of the prophets that everyone who does not accept the decision of the council be killed, for there would surely be an excuse for everyone to lay accusations against the council that issued a decision against him. It is not possible for anyone to reject its decision through such an accusation and then escape death. Rather, the Holy Spirit allowed no one to reject the decision of a council, but most certainly enjoined death on everyone who disobeyed it, whoever he might be. He made no exceptions. He allowed no one to escape death by laying accusations against the council or by any other means. The same applies to you heretics, all of you. Know well that whoever¹¹⁴ disobeys the holy councils will die a spiritual death.¹¹⁵ The Holy Spirit will refuse to dwell¹¹⁶ in your hearts. Beware the one who dwells in you instead!¹¹⁷

An Exhortation to the Heretics

All you who disobey the Holy Spirit, understand this: If someone among you lays no undue claim to knowledge, the way of right guidance has been revealed to him and he has no excuse for abandoning the holy councils. His mind most surely understands both the necessity of following these holy councils and that there is nothing to prevent any of you being exiled from the kingdom of God and going forth in bonds from the throne¹¹⁸ of Christ, should he not follow them. As for those of you who do lay undue claim to knowledge, you resemble the priests of the Jews and the Pharisees. They turned the ears of the Jews from the instruction of the Holy Spirit and filled them instead with the dregs of their own minds. They made them so drunk¹¹⁹ as to prevent them¹²⁰ from accepting Christ—to whom the law was guiding them—and induced them to believe lies about him. In the same way, you have deceived these poor people and turned their hearts from obedience to the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the mouths of the holy councils. You have filled them with the coarseness¹²¹ of your minds and the darkness of your intellects and what you seek through the blindness of your hearts, inducing them to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. May God fight against you! How you have

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113. Reading *qabiltum*, with S. For the idiom, cf. B56.6. 114. Reading *anna kull* for *dhālika wa-kull*, with S. 115. Omitting *fa-inna al-masiḥ yumituhu* and adding *yamūt* after *al-rūḥānī*, with S. 116. Reading *sakanihi*. 117. Cf. Matt 12:44–45. 118. Reading *‘arsh*, with S. 119. Reading *fa-askarūhum*, with S. 120. Reading *ikhtajalahum*, with S. 121. Reading *faẓāzat*, with S.

been destroyed and destroyed others! You have ensnared those who followed you and cast¹²² them into the pit of hell, and Satan has ensnared all of you and cast you¹²³ into the hell fire prepared for him and his angels,¹²⁴ so that you have become for him companions and consolation in his destruction. How can¹²⁵ any of you withdraw to one side, while the council stands on the other side? How can you summon people, saying, “Come to me,¹²⁶ all of you! Doubt this council and believe in me, for I have knowledge and I am a better friend to you than this council!” Woe to you! How can you claim to have achieved a spiritual wisdom beyond that of all others—in reality, a Satanic blindness? How can you claim to have become so capable of discerning matters for others—in reality, so capable of deceiving both yourself and them? If you in fact are as you ignorantly think yourself to be, the Holy Spirit would long ago have directed others to you, that they might know of your exalted status. He would have described you to them in his holy scripture, even as he described the aforementioned council. He would have implanted in the holy scripture signs pointing to you, even as he pointed to this holy council. He would have urged others to follow you, even as he urged them to follow the council. How astonishing you are!¹²⁷ You are blind, and you do not understand what you say and what you prove, even as St. Paul said of those like you.¹²⁸ Ignorance is deep-seated within you, and error surrounds you on every side. Because of your coarseness and your foolishness, however, you are not aware of this. I cannot help but wonder at those poor people who abandon the holy councils, to which they were guided by command of the Holy Spirit, while submitting themselves to your authority, that you might guide them. It is as if you are the blind man of whom our Lord spoke in the gospel, “The blind leads the blind and both fall into the pit.”¹²⁹ They constantly take for themselves teachers of error like you, because of the tickling of their ears, as St. Paul said.¹³⁰

Conclusions

As for us, the community of the orthodox and the children of the holy church, we give praise and thanks to Christ our God, who made us resolutely obedient to the holy councils, through which the Holy Spirit spoke. Reaching his haven and finding refuge in the enclosure¹³¹ of his sheep, we are now safe, through his protection, from Satan, the ravaging

122. Adding *wa-awqa^ctumūhum* before *ilā*, an emendation partially supported by S, which reads *wa-waqa^ctum*. 123. Reading *wa-awqa^cakum*, with S. 124. Cf. Matt 25:41. 125. Reading *yaqdar* and adding *‘alā* before *an*, with S. 126. Reading *ilayya*, with S. 127. Reading *minka* for *min dhālika*, with S. 128. Cf. 1 Tim 1:7. 129. Matt 15:14. 130. Cf. 2 Tim 4:3. 131. Reading *ṣirat*, with S.

wolf,¹³² who lies in wait for our souls,¹³³ that he might attack those who stray from the church and seize them as if they were prey and quarry. We ask our Lord and God Jesus Christ to make us always stand firm on the rock of his holy church and to give us to drink from the cup of her teachings, until through love of those teachings we are drunk with a drunkenness that fills our minds and opens our hearts to obedience to him and to the keeping of his commandments. By these commandments, we shall be saved and inherit the kingdom of heaven prepared for everyone who is built on the foundation of St. Peter, which foundation is of the Holy Spirit. O Holy Spirit, give us the knowledge of Christ, the eternal Son, God the Son of God, who became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, for the sake¹³⁴ of our salvation. To him be praise, glory, might, and honor, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always¹³⁵ and forever and ever! Amen!

132. Cf. 1 Pet 5:8. 133. Reading *anfusanā*, with S. 134. Reading *shaʿn*, with S.
135. Reading *wa-dāʿiman*.

Chapter 7

Epistle to the Armenians

An epistle on the undefiled orthodox faith, sent by the blessed¹ Thomas, PG1504
the patriarch of Jerusalem,² to the heretics of Armenia, composed in Arabic
by Theodore Abū Qurrah, the bishop of Haran, and translated by me, the
most humble³ Michael, presbyter and syncellus of the apostolic throne of
Jerusalem,⁴ by whom also it was delivered.⁵ This epistle clearly establishes
that the confession of faith in Christ our true God defined by the council of
Chalcedon is without fault and [. . .] of every truth.⁶

Introduction

Christ our Lord and God said to Peter the chief of the apostles,
“You are Peter, and on this rock I shall build my church, and the gates PG1505
of hell will not prevail against it.”⁷ The Lord, having just referred to
himself as “the Son of Man,” said this to Peter after Peter said to him,
“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”⁸ Both statements⁹ were

1. Omitting *pappa*, with O. 2. The chronology of the patriarchate of Thomas, also known as Tumayriq, is poorly attested. He must have ascended the throne by 807, however. See Blake, “Deux lacunes,” 42–43, as well as the bibliography there cited. 3. Adding *emou tou elachistou* after *Michaël*, with MO. 4. Adding *Hierosolumōn* after *thronou*, with MO. 5. Michael the Syncellus was born in Jerusalem in 761, appointed syncellus (assistant) to the Patriarch in 811, relocated to Byzantium ca. 812 (at which time he presumably also delivered the present letter), and died in 846, after many struggles in defense of icons. For an overview of his life, see the introduction to Cunningham, *Michael the Syncellus*. 6. Reading *en hēi saphōs apo-deiknutai amōmon kai pasas alētheias* [. . .] *Jomenon* [wear to the ms. has rendered roughly three letters illegible] *einai ton para tēs en Chalkēdoni sugkekrotēmenēs sunodou peri tēs eis Christon ton alēthinon Theon hēmōn pisteōs horisthenta logon* for *monēn . . . logon*, with O. 7. Matt 16:18. Reading *autēs* for *se*, with MO. 8. Matt 16:13, 16. 9. That is, that Christ is “the Son of Man” (man) and “the Son of God” (God).

combined in Christ our Lord, and it is thus confirmed that he is both God and man. It is necessary, my beloved, that all Christians undertake to test and examine their faith. If they find that their faith affirms that Christ is both God and man, they ought to be satisfied with it, cling to it, and protect it, even to the point of death. If, however,¹⁰ it turns out that the end result is something else, they must loathe, flee, and detest that faith, excising from their hearts both the crudity of that faith and passionate attachment¹¹ to the ancestors from whom it was inherited. It is as David said, “Listen, O daughter, see, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house; and the king will desire your beauty.”¹² One acquires a beauty truly desirable by Christ, the true bridegroom, the king of kings, when one casts off passionate attachment to one’s fathers and ceases to be content with what they handed down. My friends, since matters are thus, come, let all of us hasten together¹³ to the aforementioned faith of the most unshakeable¹⁴ rock, Peter,¹⁵ the leader of the apostles, and let us believe that Christ is both God and man.

Nature and Hypostasis

One must know this: Since the same is God and man, he is surely a single hypostasis; but because he is both God and man, he has two natures, one divine and the other human. Because he is really God, he must have a divine nature; because he is truly man, he must have a human nature. As for this single hypostasis, this is the eternal Son: he who was timelessly and impassibly begotten of the Father before the ages, he who is a single hypostasis of the Trinity,¹⁶ he who is God, equal to the Father, eternally possessed of the Father’s essence. In the last days, however, this eternal Son became flesh and a man of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, though in a manner that involved neither change nor alteration, becoming as one of us in all things, apart from sin, assuming our nature, which he did not already have, while continuing to have the divine nature, which eternally he already had. For this reason,¹⁷ this eternal Son, after his incarnation, the same is both God and man, a single hypostasis of¹⁸ the Trinity, who has both the nature of the Father and of the Holy Spirit and our human nature. To say this, however, does not imply that the Trinity received an addition.¹⁹ Indeed, my friends, from²⁰ the very fact of

10. Omitting *kai*, with O. 11. Omitting *kai tēn* before *prospatheian*, with O. 12. Ps 45:10–11. 13. Reading *hama* for *amphoterōi*, with MO. 14. Reading *aklinestatēs* for *aklinous tautēs*, with O. 15. Adding *Petrou* after *petras*, with MO. 16. Adding *hos estin hypostasis mia ek tēs Triados* before *hos*, with O. 17. Reading *tōi toi* for *houtōs*, with O. Cf. PG1513B14, with the emendation suggested below. 18. Adding *ek* before *tēs*, with O. 19. That is, the Trinity did not become a quaternity through the addition of a fourth hypostasis. 20. Reading *ap’* for *ep’*, with O.

what we have said, it is clear²¹ that the Trinity did not receive an addition, since we do not²² say that God is one hypostasis and man another, but that the hypostasis²³ that is God, the same²⁴ is man, with no question of two different hypostases.²⁵

It is not true to say that because²⁶ Christ is a single hypostasis he must have just one nature. If this were so, we²⁷ would have to say that this one nature is either wholly divine, or wholly human, or both divine and human together, or neither divine nor human. If this one nature is wholly divine, Christ is God and not man.²⁸ If this one nature is wholly human,²⁹ Christ is man and not God. If this one nature is both divine and human together, it is the nature neither of the Father and³⁰ the Holy Spirit nor of human beings. On either count,³¹ the charge of blasphemy will be attributed to the one who thinks this and such a one will be abandoning sound³² reasoning.³³ If this one nature is neither divine nor human, Christ is neither God nor man. Therefore, however we look at things, we are compelled to say that Christ, who is a single hypostasis of the Trinity, has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature, for which reason both statements are rightly referred to him: namely, his own statement that he is “the Son of Man” and Peter’s statement concerning the same,³⁴ that he³⁵ is “the Son of the living God.” Whoever says that Christ is two hypostases makes St. Peter, in responding to Christ, answer him malapropos, concerning someone about whom Christ had not asked. Christ had asked about the Son of Man, but Peter answered that the same one who had asked the question was the Son of God. Now then, if the hypostasis that is the Son of Man³⁶ is different from the hypostasis that is the Son of God, Peter’s mind erred, and his answer concerned someone about whom he had not been asked, as we just said. If this had been the case, however—God have mercy!—the Lord would not have praised his response nor declared him blessed for his answer, ascribing it to the revelation of the Father.³⁷ Accordingly, the definition of the synod of holy fathers convened in Chalcedon rightly

21. Reading *saphes*, with O. 22. Reading *ou* for *oude*, with O. 23. Adding *Theon einai heteran de anthrōpon alla tēn hypostasin* after *hypostasin*, with MO. 24. Reading *tēn autēn* for *tautēn*, with O. 25. Adding *kai allēn* after *allēn*, with MO. 26. Reading *tōi* for *to*, with O. 27. Adding *hēmin* after *pantōs*, with O. One may compare M, which bears the erroneous *ei mē*. 28. Adding *ho Christos ara Theos esti kai ouk anthrōpos* after *akratos*, with O. 29. Adding *ei de estin hē mia physis hautē anthrōpinē akratos* after *anthrōpos*, as required by the sense. M and O are also lacking here. 30. Adding *tou Patros oute* after *oute*, with MO. 31. That is, whether Christ lacks the divine nature or the human nature. 32. Reading *errōmenēs*, with MO. 33. Reading *phrenos* for *phuseōs*, with O. 34. Adding *tou* before *autou*, with O. 35. Reading *autos*, with O. 36. Adding *ho de ton auton di’ hon ēn hē erōtēsis tou Theou Huion huparchein ēmeipsato ei toinun hē hypostasis hētis estin ho Huios tou Anthrōpou* after *anthrōpou*, with MO. 37. Matt 16:17.

expounded the true teaching about how we should confess Christ, by defining him to be a single hypostasis of the Trinity having two natures, one divine and the other human, as we have already said.³⁸

PG1509 To illustrate, take three gold coins. Put one into fire and heat it until it becomes fire—though it remains gold as before. Put the other two here and a large number of live coals there. Between the two coins and the coals put the coin that has been heated and become fire. If you do this, you will see³⁹ that the coin⁴⁰ in the middle has both the full nature of the other two coins,⁴¹ being gold like each⁴² of them, and the nature of the coals, being fire like each of them. The coin in the middle is a single hypostasis of the trinity of coins, in that it assumed the nature of the coals (that is, fire), rather than a single coal from those coals, becoming, instead, as one of them. In the same way, the eternal Son, when he descended from heaven (let those who hear understand the descent in a manner worthy of God), did not assume one of our hypostases, but our nature, becoming as one of us, apart from sin, as the divine apostle said, “In every respect he was tempted as we are, yet without sin.”⁴³ Thus, after the incarnation, the eternal Son had the Father’s and the Holy Spirit’s nature, which nature he always had, and our human nature, being a single hypostasis of the Trinity—though, as already noted, the Trinity⁴⁴ did not receive⁴⁵ an addition.⁴⁶

One must not treat the nature as a hypostasis or the hypostasis as a nature; otherwise, we Christians will have to say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three natures even as they are three hypostases or that they have one hypostasis even as they have one nature. Both propositions are foreign to the Christian confession, the one being the opinion of Arius and the other that of Sabellius.⁴⁷ Rather, the truth is as Gregory the Theologian said: “A Monad is adored⁴⁸ in Trinity and a Trinity in Monad.”⁴⁹ The⁵⁰ Monad is a Monad of nature, not a Monad of hypostasis, while the Trinity is a Trinity of hypostases, not a Trinity of natures. Whoever says that the nature is a collection of all⁵¹ the hypostases will suggest that St. Gregory claimed that Monad and Trinity⁵² signify the same thing. In that case, it is to be concluded that it is the same for

38. Cf. p. 84. 39. Reading *theasaio*, with MO. 40. Omitting *ton* before *chrisinon*, with O. 41. Reading *tēn te phusin tōn allōn duo chrisinōn teleian for tōn allōn . . . phusin*, with O. 42. Reading *hekateron*, with O. 43. Heb 4:15. 44. Adding *tēs Triados* before *prosthēkēn*, with O (cf. PG1505D8–9). 45. Reading *eisdexamenēs*, with M and the parallel at PG1505D9. One may compare O, which bears *prosdexamenēs*. 46. See pp. 84–85. 47. For a similar treatment of the views of Arius and Sabellius, see p. 110. 48. Reading *proskunoumenē*, with M. Cf. O, which bears *hēn proskunoumen*. 49. Greg. Naz. *or.* 25.17 (SC 284:198); cf. also his *or.* 6.22 (SC 405:176). 50. Adding *hē* before *Monas*, with O. 51. Adding *pasōn* before *einai*, with O. 52. Omitting *tēn* before *Triada*, with O.

him⁵³ whether one says “Monad in Trinity” or “Trinity in Monad,”⁵⁴ and from there he will be compelled⁵⁵ to say “Unity in Unity.” Could anyone devise anything more shameful than this! Our opponent⁵⁶ will perhaps censure the one who makes such an argument against him, saying, “The force of⁵⁷ his words supports me just as much as you. Even as, when you hear the Theologian speaking of Monad, you understand⁵⁸ Trinity, so also, when I hear him speaking of Trinity,⁵⁹ I understand Monad. Thus, it is to be concluded that you⁶⁰ also end up teaching ‘Monad in Monad.’” Now then, if,⁶¹ even as you affirmed that statement for yourself, you affirm this⁶² statement for me, without doubt your mind will be shown⁶³ to be confused, and the law of contradiction will be nullified, which is impossible. Should you not affirm it, however, it will rightly be said to you that you also have no right⁶⁴ to the statements and that you have audaciously and without restraint perverted them⁶⁵ to your own liking. Since both of these statements⁶⁶ that we are making about the nature and the hypostasis are true, and⁶⁷ they were not recognized,⁶⁸ our opinion has been wholly confirmed, namely, that the natural Monad is something other than the hypostatic Trinity and that the faith always persists in the confession of the natural Monad and the hypostatic Trinity,⁶⁹ as was said by Gregory the Theologian⁷⁰ and by the whole choir of the holy and inspired fathers.

Again, suppose they say that the nature is both common and individual and that the⁷¹ common nature is all the hypostases, while the individual nature is one hypostasis. Let them answer a question for us. Are the Father and the Son equal according to nature; that is, do they or do they not share the same nature⁷² and essence? If they do not agree that they are equal according to nature, they have placed themselves beyond the pale of Christianity. If they do agree that the Father and the Son are equal according to nature (and surely they will),⁷³ let them

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53. Reading *ison autōi*, with MO. 54. Adding *ē Triada en Monadi* after *triadi*, with M. It may be noted that O bears *ē Triada en Triadi*. 55. Reading *sunōsthēsetai*, with M. One may compare O, which bears *sunōthēthēsetai*. 56. Reading *ho antitassomenos* for *hoti antitattomenon*, with O. 57. Reading *en* for *kai*, with MO. 58. Reading *noeis*, with O. 59. Omitting *tēn* before *Triada*, with O. 60. Reading *soi* for *moi*, with O. 61. Reading *ei men oun* for *kai kathaper*, with O. 62. Reading *toutoni* for *touton ei*, with O. 63. Reading *phōrathēsetai*, with MO. 64. Reading *exousiastēs*, with O. 65. Adding *autous* before *pros*, with O. 66. Reading *eisin hoi duo logoi houtoi* for *einai houtoi hoi logoi*, with O. 67. Adding *kai* before *ēgnoēntai*, with O. 68. Sense unclear. It may be that the text is corrupt. 69. Adding *kai tēs hupostatikēs Triados* after *Monados*, with MO. 70. Reading *theologos* for *theios*, with O. 71. Reading *hē men* for *ei men hē*, with O. Cf. M, which bears *ei men*. 72. Reading *homophueis*, with MO. 73. Reading *sunthēsetai de* for *sunthētai d' oun* with O.

answer another question for us. As for this nature according to which the Father and the Son⁷⁴ are equal, is it common or individual? If they say that it is common, they will be forced to say that the Father and the Son are equal⁷⁵ in three hypostases.⁷⁶ If they say, however, that the nature according to which the Father and the Son are equal is individual, they will be compelled to say that the Father and the Son are equal in hypostasis; and, for the one who says this, the Father and the Son will be one hypostasis. Both consequences are quite defective⁷⁷ and blasphemous.⁷⁸ Accordingly, the true account is⁷⁹ the confession of the assembly of the holy and like-minded fathers that was gathered in Chalcedon, namely, that the nature is not all the hypostases together, nor is it one hypostasis. Rather, the nature exists always in its Monad,⁸⁰ while the hypostases exist always in their⁸¹ Trinity, even as the divine Gregory said, theologizing, “Teach⁸² this much alone, that a Monad is adored in Trinity and a Trinity in Monad, with a distinction and a union that are unknowable.”⁸³

It is impossible for anyone to say that if the natural unity is something other than the Trinity of hypostases, then the natural unity and the Trinity of hypostases are four things. This is because each of the hypostases is filled by the nature, and no thing⁸⁴ is numbered with the thing by which⁸⁵ it is filled. Accordingly, the mind suffering from every sort of difficulty is led of necessity to confess the most orthodox and undefiled confession of the holy synod of Chalcedon, namely, that Christ is a single hypostasis of the Trinity having two natures, one divine and the other human. It is also impossible for anyone to say that if Christ is a single hypostasis, he must⁸⁶ have one nature, and that if he has two natures, surely he has two hypostases.

We have confirmed and established the confession of the like-minded and blessed fathers of the assembly⁸⁷ of Chalcedon, which confession is exactly the same as the faith of Peter,⁸⁸ the chief of the apostles, which we expounded above. And this confession is the rock⁸⁹ against which the

74. Adding *ho* before *Huios*, with MO. 75. Reading *isous*, with MO. 76. By the rather clumsy expression “equal in three hypostases,” Theodore/Michael seems to mean that each of the hypostases of the Trinity is all the hypostases of the Trinity. 77. Reading *eptaismena*, with O. 78. For a similar treatment of the common and the individual nature with regard to Christ’s two natures, see *Opusculum 2* at PG1488BC. 79. Omitting *hon*, with MO. 80. Reading *heautēs Monados* for *autēs Henados*, with O. 81. Reading *heautōn* for *autēs*, with O. 82. Reading *didaske* for *didaskei gar*, with O. 83. Greg. Naz. or. 25.17 (SC 284:198). 84. Adding *de pragma* before *pragmati*, with O. 85. Reading *hōi* for *tōi*, with MO. 86. This seems to be the sense. The use of *aparachōrēton*, however, is unusual. 87. Adding *sustēmatos* after *paterōn*, with MO. 88. Adding *Petrou* before *pistin*, with MO. 89. Reading *petra*, with O.

gates of hell will not prevail,⁹⁰ and in it will be the portion of all Christians forever, even if Beliar,⁹¹ who works to make sure that we have neither life nor salvation, has raised up against it many divisions—with the permission of Christ, that it might be established that his divine words about it will never in the least be made void and will not in any way be defeated.

Properties, Energies, and Wills

This also needs to be said: Since the divine nature and the human nature are joined together in the eternal Son⁹² after his incarnation,⁹³ he has two natural properties, two natural⁹⁴ energies, and two natural wills, for a nature cannot be considered⁹⁵ real unless it has everything⁹⁶ that pertains to the perfection of that nature. Let those who hear understand what we have said in an appropriate manner, namely, that the two natural properties and the two natural⁹⁷ wills and energies belong to the same eternal Son (a single hypostasis of the Trinity, whom we have clearly shown to have two natures) and not to two different⁹⁸ hypostases. Indeed, my friends, it is possible⁹⁹ for a single hypostasis to have different energies and still remain a unity. Let me give you an example. We see that Paul has the potential to see, hear, speak, and reason. If¹⁰⁰ seeing, hearing, speaking, and reasoning are different energies, each of which is distinct from the other, but Paul is a single hypostasis, even though he has all four of these energies (rather, he sees with his eye, not with some other bodily member; he hears with the ear, not with some other member; he speaks with the tongue, not with some other part of the body; he reasons with the mind, not with something else)—if this is true, I say, then each of the hypostatic energies has a natural potential in the hypostasis, which is a substrate that underlies the act that the hypostasis effects, and thus what is effected belongs to the hypostasis. It is thus that Paul, who is a hypostasis, has the potential to speak with his tongue,¹⁰¹ as do all human beings; the words Paul speaks, however, and when he utters them, these belong to Paul. Accordingly, one must not deny that the eternal Son, who is a single¹⁰² hypostasis of the Trinity, has, after his incarnation, both the divine nature, like the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the human nature, like every other human being, in

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90. Reading *katischusousin*, with O. 91. That is, the devil (cf. 2 Cor 6:15). 92. Adding *tōi aidīōi* before *Huīōi*, with MO. 93. Adding *meta tēn heatou enanthrōpēsīn* before *echei*, with MO. 94. Adding *idiōtētas kai duo phusikas* before *energeias*, with MO. 95. Adding *hē* before *katalēpsis*, with MO. 96. Reading *panta*, with O. 97. Adding *idiōtētes kai hai duo phusikai* before *thelēseis*, with MO. 98. Adding *allēs kai* before *allēs*, with MO. 99. Reading *endechomenōn*, with MO. 100. Adding *ei oun* before *hē horasis*, with O. 101. Reading *glōttēi* for *gnōmēi*, with O. 102. Reading *onta mian* for *hapanta*, with O.

the manner that we have explained. For this reason,¹⁰³ granted the truth of what we have said, the divine nature in the eternal Son's hypostasis was in and of itself a substrate for the divine deeds that he did during his incarnation and his sojourn on earth. So too, the human nature in the eternal Son's hypostasis was a substrate for the human deeds he did while sojourning among human beings and living on earth,¹⁰⁴ which deeds are peculiar to him and to no one else. The same applies to his two natural properties and wills.

How the Son Died

We must not leave the following unclear for the readers of our treatise: To say that the eternal Son became human is to say what Athanasius and Cyril, the patriarchs of Alexandria, as well as all the inspired fathers, said, namely, that when he made for himself from the holy Virgin Mary flesh endowed with an intelligent and rational soul, he made his human flesh and his human soul¹⁰⁵ belong to his hypostasis, even as a person's flesh and soul belong to that person's hypostasis. Just as someone with a human body and a human soul is a human being, so also, when the eternal Son made for his hypostasis a human body and a human soul and caused these to belong to it, he became, in truth, a human being. Just as a person's body and soul belong to that person's hypostasis and not to any other human hypostasis, so also, the eternal Son's body and soul belong to his hypostasis and not to any other human hypostasis.¹⁰⁶ Because he has both of these, he surely has the human nature. This nature, however, belongs not to his hypostasis alone but to each human hypostasis.¹⁰⁷ Thus do we say that the eternal Son, who is a single hypostasis of the Trinity, has two natures, neither of which belongs distinctly to his hypostasis: rather, the divine nature belongs both to him and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, while the human nature belongs both to him and to every other human being.¹⁰⁸ His hypostasis, however, belongs to him alone, not to the Father and the Holy Spirit, while his body and soul belong distinctly to his hypostasis, not to all other human beings.

103. Adding *tōi toi* before *toutōn*, with O. 104. Adding *kai epi tēs gēs politeuomenos* before *pepoiēken*, with MO. 105. The text of the printed edition and M are quite corrupt here. I follow O, which reads *sarka epsuchōmenēn psuchēi logikēi te kai noeri tēn anthrōpinēn sarka kai tēn anthrōpinēn psuchēn* for *epsuchōmenēn . . . psuchēn*. 106. Adding *houtō kai to sōma kai hē psuchē tou aidiou Huiou amphotera tēs heautou hypostaseōs idia ouk allēs tōn anthrōpinōn hypostaseōn* after *hypostaseōn*, with MO. 107. Adding *tautēi eschēkōs amphō tauta pantōs tēn anthrōpinēn echei phusin hētis ouchi tēs hypostaseōs autou monēs all' hekastēs huparchei tōn anthrōpinōn hypostaseōn* before *toutou*, with O. This sentence is lacking in M. 108. Reading *autōi te kai tōi Patri kai tōi hagiōi Pneumatī huparchousēs tēs de anthrōpinēs phuseōs autōi te kai tois kata meros anthrōpōis* for *autou . . . anthrōpōn*, with MO.

Whatever the eternal Son's¹⁰⁹ flesh and human soul endure and suffer, this the eternal Son himself is said to endure and suffer. It occurs to him in truth and to him is attributed, even as whatever a person's flesh and soul suffer occurs to that person in truth and is attributed to that person. Accordingly, in the true confession we say that the eternal Son himself experienced hunger and thirst, that he grew weary, that he knew agony, that his face was slapped and spat upon, that his back was flogged, that the eternal Son's hands and feet were nailed, that he himself hung on a cross, died, and was buried, and on the third day arose. My friends, it was to the eternal Son¹¹⁰ that all this happened. He suffered it, however, according as he was able to suffer, that is, in his human flesh and soul with his divine nature. If we wished to clarify one by one how each of these forms of suffering took place, our treatise would become long¹¹¹ and tedious. If we do not attempt to clarify all this, however, we fear¹¹² lest what we say become in any way unclear to those who are not keen¹¹³ of intellect and endowed with a ready wit. Thus do we single out death, the¹¹⁴ most grievous¹¹⁵ and loathsome of the sufferings attributed to the eternal Son. To make this clear, we shall explain to you how it happened to him and was imputed to him, so that from what is said and discussed¹¹⁶ you might also be led to understand the rest.

My friends, John the Baptist was, as you know, filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb.¹¹⁷ It was to John, however, that his soul and body belonged. Thus,¹¹⁸ even after the Holy Spirit came on him, John's soul and body were John's and not¹¹⁹ the Holy Spirit's. The death of a person is the separation of the soul from the body. Accordingly, when John's soul was separated from his body, it was John that died, not the Holy Spirit that had come on him. The death, then, was John's, and did not touch the Holy Spirit and was not imputed to him. The eternal Son, contrariwise, was not placed inside the hypostasis of another person possessed of a body and a soul. Rather, having assumed and appropriated human flesh and soul, he caused them both to belong to his own hypostasis and not to another,¹²⁰ even as John's body and soul belonged to John and not to another. It is thus that the¹²¹ eternal Son became a human being. Just as, when John's soul was separated from his body, John himself is the one who died, that is, the one to whom the separated soul and body belonged; so also, when the eternal Son's

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109. Adding *Huiou* after *aidiou*, with MO. 110. Adding *Huiōi* after *aidiōi*, with MO. 111. Reading *makron*, with MO. 112. Reading *dedoikamen* for *skopei loipon*, with O. M bears nothing here. 113. Reading *oxeōn* for *ontōn*, with MO. 114. Adding *tōn* before *hosa*, with MO. 115. Reading *epachthesteros*, with MO. 116. Reading *ēchoumenou*, with MO. 117. Luke 1:15. 118. Reading *oun* for *goun*, with MO. 119. Adding *ou* before *tou hagiou Pneumatos*. 120. Emending *allōs* to read *allou*, which seems to be the reading of O as well. 121. Reading *ho* for *kai*, with MO.

human soul was separated from his body, the eternal Son himself is the one who died, since there was no other hypostasis apart from the eternal Son who had a body and soul that could be the subject of the separation, so that the death might be attributed to that hypostasis. When John's soul was separated from his body, he both died and perished, for he did not in any way exist except as a result of the union of soul and body. The situation is otherwise with the Son, who came into being before the ages and like the Father is without beginning¹²² and eternal. When his human soul was separated from his body, he truly died, for the body and the soul that were separated did not belong to another hypostasis, as we just said. He did not perish, however, since he always existed, even before assuming this soul and this flesh. It is thus that the eternal Son truly died for us, while remaining alive as he always had been, and that our salvation was effected, not through the death of some human hypostasis,¹²³ as was the case with John the Baptist, but through the death of the eternal Son, though no damage occurred to him from this. My friends, such was the manner of the eternal Son's¹²⁴ death. The wise can contemplate all of the other human characteristics¹²⁵ that¹²⁶ are predicated of him and understand how they occurred. All of these other human characteristics are less grievous than death.¹²⁷ Thus, if death can be said of the eternal Son, in the manner we explained, with no passion touching his divinity, human characteristics other than death¹²⁸ can even more fittingly be predicated of him, with no passion touching his divinity. Accordingly, these human characteristics, as just said, occurred to the eternal Son (that is, Christ) after he became human: both¹²⁹ death and as many other things as are mentioned in the holy Gospels.

One must not suppose that the eternal Son submitted to any of these human characteristics out of necessity.¹³⁰ No, he freely chose to do so. It was only when he willed to suffer them that they happened to him, in the same physical manner that they happen to us. He did this so that his mission might not be thought a fantasy and so that the sentence against the devil might be justified, from which devil by this mission he rescued the human race. To confirm what has just been said, I shall clarify for you¹³¹ just one¹³² of his human characteristics. Let it be hunger.¹³³ When the

122. Reading *sunanarchos*, with MO. 123. Reading *hypostaseōs*, for *hypostaseōn*, with O. 124. Adding *Huiou* after *aidiou*, with MO. 125. Reading *anthrōpinōis*, with MO. 126. Reading *hosa* for *eis ha*, with O (cf. PG1516C7). 127. Reading *hosa gar esti tou thanatou chōris apo tōn anthrōpinōn hēttō tou thanatou tugxanei*, with O (cf. PG1517C7–8). 128. Adding *tou* before *thanatou*, with O. 129. Emending *hote* to read *ho te*. 130. Reading *anagkēi*, with MO. 131. Adding *humin* before *poiēsomai*, with O. 132. Adding *hen* after *oun*, with MO. 133. A similar description of how the eternal Son came to experience hunger can be found in Theodore's *Letter to David the Monophysite*, at B132.

eternal Son willed to experience hunger, he allowed his flesh to be subject to the effects of the air, with the result that what¹³⁴ was on its surface, in the pores in¹³⁵ the skin, received the impression of the air. Then, the part of the flesh exposed to the air sucked up nourishment from the limbs. (These limbs are¹³⁶ adjacent to the part by which the air was soaked up.) Those limbs, in turn, drew out nourishment from the empty cavities. (To those cavities was continually supplied a fresh¹³⁷ uptake of appropriate nourishment.) These¹³⁸ in turn drew out nourishment from the veins that grow in them from the liver. The veins drew forth nourishment from the liver; the liver, from the two veins that arise from the stomach; and these¹³⁹ two veins, from the stomach. The stomach, now empty, sought an external supply of nourishment. My brothers, it was thus that the eternal Son came to hunger: by a free act of his will, not by some natural necessity. A clear proof of this is that¹⁴⁰ he only grew hungry after he had fasted for forty days. If the air had had power over his flesh in the same way that it has power over our flesh, he could not have gone¹⁴¹ one or two or three days without growing hungry, even as we see it happen in ourselves.¹⁴² Rather, through an act of his will he gave nature the opportunity to do and manifest what is proper to itself. It was in the same way that he willingly submitted to death. And hear what the Truth says about itself:¹⁴³ “I have the power to lay down my soul, and I have the power to take it again. No one takes it from me.”¹⁴⁴

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That you might more clearly understand what I have said, I shall add the following: God formed Adam with a body free from every stain of sin,¹⁴⁵ one that was subject of necessity to none of the natural and blameless passions, both death itself and those before and after death. When by free choice, however, Adam willingly chose to transgress the divine command, when he fell under the power of sin and disgraced himself, he was made to serve and be subject to the natural and blameless passions, both to death itself and to those¹⁴⁶ before and after death. From that time on, Adam was compelled of necessity to hunger and thirst and to die, and after¹⁴⁷ death corruption had authority over his body. (The same holds for other, similar passions.) The eternal Son, however, assumed the Adamic body; that is, he formed for himself, from the undefiled blood of the holy Virgin Mary, one¹⁴⁸ that was untouched

134. Adding *ta* before *kata*, with MO. 135. Adding *en* before *tōi*, with MO. 136. Omitting *an*, with MO. 137. Emending *enulos* to read *enaulos*, with O. 138. Reading *kai tauta* for *hētis ek*, with O. 139. Adding *hoi de* before *duo*, with O. 140. Reading *hoti* for *hote*, with O. 141. Reading *dieleluthēi*, with O. 142. Reading *heautois* for *autōi*, with O. 143. Reading *heautēs*, with O. 144. John 10:18. 145. Adding *hamartias* after *molusmatos*, with O. 146. Reading *tois* for *tēs*, with MO. 147. Adding *meta* before *thanaton*, with MO. 148. Reading *auto*, with O.

by any pollution and free from sin.¹⁴⁹ It was because of this that death had no power over him and that he was subject neither to the¹⁵⁰ passions before death (hunger, for example, and the swarm of the other natural and blameless passions), as we have shown, nor to the corruption of bodies after death. It is as David, the progenitor of God, prophesied, singing, “You will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you let your Holy One see corruption.”¹⁵¹

Conclusions

Why is it necessary¹⁵² for me to add countless other things to what has already been concluded¹⁵³ and not rather speak in sum? The eternal Son’s body, from the time that it was formed and from the time of the unconfused hypostatic union,¹⁵⁴ experienced full divinization, becoming without change that which anointed it, becoming—dare I say—equal to God. Notwithstanding, the eternal Son permitted it to will to live like other human bodies, so that it might escape the notice of the devil while at the same time becoming a confirmation of his saving incarnate¹⁵⁵ mission: experiencing¹⁵⁶ misfortunes, undergoing suffering, and submitting to death for our sakes, in reality, not just in appearance. When he had fulfilled the whole of his mission, he showed in his own flesh, after his resurrection from the dead, the glory of his divinity. As for this glory that was shown in the eternal Son’s flesh after his resurrection from the grave, it¹⁵⁷ must be believed not that it entered from without, but that it was a manifestation of the glory hidden in him from the time of the unconfused hypostatic union. A clear indication of this is that¹⁵⁸ before his saving passion, in the presence of three of his disciples on Mount Tabor,¹⁵⁹ he manifested the divine glory that was in his flesh, the same divine glory that he also revealed after ascending from the dead, for, as was explained, from the time that it was first formed, the eternal Son’s¹⁶⁰ flesh experienced full divinization, notwithstanding that the eternal Son, for the above-mentioned reason, permitted it¹⁶¹ to live like our bodies. This, my friends, is the character of our confession. While we could have gone into greater detail, I would point out that the treatise is already long. In conclusion, those of you who understand what we have

149. Reading *musous pantos kai hamartias* for *kai pantos musous hamartias*, with O.
 150. Adding *tois* before *pro*, with O. 151. Ps 16:10. 152. Reading *dei* for *dē*, with O.
 153. Reading *ta apeira peperasmenois* for *ta peperasmena*, with O. 154. Omitting *tou aidiou Huiou*, with O (cf. PG1521A12–13). 155. Adding *ensarkou* after *sōtēriou*, with O.
 156. Reading *peirathēi*, with O. 157. Omitting *hina*, with O.
 158. Reading *hoti* for *hote*, with O. 159. Matt 17:1–8. 160. Adding *Huiou* after *aidiou*, with MO. 161. Reading *autēi* for *autēn*, with O.

said to you¹⁶² and through the love of Christ accept it, join and unite with us; and let all of us, through the Holy¹⁶³ Spirit, become one in this divinely inspired confession of Peter, the great chief of the apostles. This confession¹⁶⁴ we have compiled so that Christ our God might have mercy on us and repel every hostile attack and grievous assault and transfer us into the truly blessed state, uniting and joining us in his kingdom. May it be possible for all of us¹⁶⁵ to attain this kingdom, through the prayers of our holy lady Mary, the mother of God, and of John the forerunner and Baptist, and of both Peter the chief of the apostles and James the brother of God, and of the choir of all the saints.

162. Reading *hēmōn humin* for *hēmin*, with MO.
with MO. 164. Reading *hēn* for *hēi*, with O.

163. Reading *hagiou* for *aidiou*,
165. Adding *hēmas* after *pantas*,
with MO.

Against the Armenians

This is a selection from the letter Theodore wrote to the Armenians:

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Nevertheless, you should understand that the Son, who was begotten of the Father before time, who became flesh and a human being like one of us, apart from sin—you should understand that although he truly had our nature as a result of his becoming a human being, he did not hunger, thirst, or grow tired of necessity, nor did he experience any human afflictions of necessity. Far be that from him! Rather, he experienced hunger only when he willed to do so. Likewise, he experienced thirst and grew tired only when he willed to do so. All this he did in a manner that he knew to be appropriate for effecting our salvation: through a divine ruse, disguising himself from the devil, so that the devil might audaciously subject him to unpleasant experiences, pains, the cross, and death, with the result that justice might bring an end to the devil's power,¹ to which power we human beings were subject because of our father's entrance into his bondage in paradise.

The Eucharist

After that,² the saint said:

The Armenians say to us: You add the leaven and dilute the wine (that is, the Eucharist) so as to teach that Christ's body was subject to decay.³ We respond: We do not mean by this what you have said. Rather, you remove

1. Reading *sultān* with B. 2. Further on in the treatise here excerpted. 3. The reference here is to the Armenian criticism of the Chalcedonians for their addition of leaven to the Eucharistic bread and of water to the sacred wine. The use of unleavened bread and unmixed wine was condemned in 692 in Canon 32 of Quinisext (Mansi 11:956–57). Cf. also Garitte, *Narratio*, 226–27.

the leaven and the water from the Eucharist so as to teach that Christ's pains and death were imaginary. You should understand that they deny this, saying: God forbid! We do not mean this. Rather, we teach that Christ truly suffered and died in his human nature. To this we reply: If we deny your accusation against us and you deny our accusation against you, come then, let us examine which of the two positions is the more correct.

As for Adam, God created him as one unleavened and placed him in paradise. In him, there was no motion toward sin. No harm arising from any pain or from death befell him by force. When of his own free choice,⁴ however, sin gained power over him, God forsook him, so that pains⁵ might have power over him by force and he might arrive at death, a punishment for him because he had voluntarily inclined toward sin. As a result, aging entered his constitution, which changed from being unleavened to being fermented—and this, because of his sin and God's punishment of him. As for God the Word, when he descended from heaven so as to save Adam, he assumed Adam's unleavened constitution, according as he had created it for him in the beginning, and for the sake of our salvation he voluntarily subjected himself to the pains and the death that⁶ had befallen Adam by force, as a punishment for him from God's justice—and these pains and death are, as it were, a result of the aging and the fermentation in his constitution. If pains and death are both a result of the fermentation and the aging, whoever introduces the leaven so as to indicate by it that sin had power over the flesh of God the Word—such a one is an unbeliever. Contrariwise, whoever introduces the leaven into the Eucharist and by this means that pains and death befell the flesh of God the Word—and these are, as it were, a result of the fermentation and the aging—such a one is precisely correct.⁷ Those who disagree with this deny Christ's pains and death and make them merely imaginary.

We turn now to the mixing.⁸ When Christ our Lord died on the cross, he was pierced by the lance, and there issued from him both blood and water.⁹ Blood comes only from the living, not from the dead; water comes from the dead, not from the living. In that Christ our Lord died in truth and was alive and dead simultaneously, when there issued from him blood and water, those who offer in the chalice only blood say that Christ was alive and did not die, while those who offer water alone say that Christ died and did not remain alive. Both positions are examples of unbelief. Rather, we must offer in the chalice blood and water together so as to make it clear that Christ both died in truth and remained alive in truth.

4. Reading *bi-hurriyatihī*, with BD. 5. Cf. Gen 3:16–19. 6. Reading *allatī*, with B. 7. Reading *muṣīb*, with BD. 8. That is, the mixing of water and wine in the Eucharistic cup. 9. Cf. John 19:34.

Animal Sacrifices in the Church

Every sacrifice offered to God is an evil that shows contempt¹⁰ for Christ's flesh and blood.¹¹ To make such an offering is to be beyond the pale of Christianity and cut off from salvation. This is because sin is forgiven only through Christ's blood.¹² God only accepted animal sacrifices in the first law because of the habit of the ancients. These sacrifices they were offering to devils, and it was difficult for them to cease. Accordingly, God condescended in his mercy to accept them. He only did this, however, in that those sacrifices were an image of the sacrifice of his Son, who was to become flesh and the lamb of God and by his sacrifice take away the sins of the world,¹³ not because they were actually able to forgive sins. Far be that from him! It is as St. Paul says, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to cleanse sins. And thus,¹⁴ when he¹⁵ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifices and offerings you do not desire, you have thus clothed me in a body; burnt offerings for sins you did not want. In that place, I said,¹⁶ "I have come to do¹⁷ your will, O God," as it is written of me in the roll of the book.'¹⁸ First he said, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in offerings, sacrifices, and burnt offerings for sins,' which were offered in the law. Then he said, 'I came to do¹⁹ your will, O God.' In saying this, he abolished the first and established the second. And by this will of his, he sanctifies us through the offering of Jesus Christ."²⁰ It is thus confirmed that one should reject and remove from God's church these *mātāl* (that is, these sacrifices). These the Armenians introduced, thinking that their sins are forgiven by the shedding of the blood of animals and abandoning the sacrifice of Christ our Lord out of their belief that animal sacrifices can substitute for it.

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Perhaps they will say that it is written in the Torah that God commanded the ancients, saying, "Whoever commits a sin, let him offer a sacrifice, a bull or a ram or some other thing, and that person's sin will be forgiven." They should understand that those who accepted the first law, which was an image of Christ and was leading his people to him, when with conviction they did what was in it, as long as they were awaiting the arrival of Christ, their sins were forgiven only through Christ—

10. Reading *fakhir*, with BD. 11. Theodore here turns to the Armenian custom of ritually slaughtering animals in church, a custom condemned in Canon 99 of Quinisext (Mansi 11:985). For this practice (*matalia* in Greek), see Conybeare, *Rituale armenorum*, 54–85; idem, "Sacrifices d'animaux," 108–14; Girard, "Sacrifices arméniens," 410–22. 12. Cf. Heb 9:22. 13. Cf. John 1:29. 14. Reading *wa-li-dhālīka*. 15. That is, Christ. 16. Adding *qultu* after *hunālik*, with B. 17. Reading *aṣna*^c, with BD. 18. The expression *fī ra^cs al-maṣḥaf*, here translated "in the roll of the book," is a calque on the original's *en kephalidi bibliou*. 19. Reading *aṣna*^c, with BD. 20. Heb 10:4–10, citing Ps 40:6–8 LXX.

those sacrifices being an image of him and he being meant²¹ by them. In confirmation of what we are saying are the above-cited words of St. Paul: “It is impossible²² for the blood of bulls and goats to cleanse sins.”²³ They should not be surprised when we say that what those sacrifices accomplished was accomplished through Christ. This is because those sacrifices were Christ to the extent that they were his image. It is as St. Paul says with respect to the rock from which streams flowed for the children of Israel: “That rock was Christ.”²⁴ So too, it is as John the Evangelist said with respect to Christ, when they did not break his legs: “These things happened to him that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’”²⁵ These words were originally said of the lamb that God commanded the prophet Moses to sacrifice on the Passover.²⁶ Know thus that that lamb was he. So too, because John the Baptist understood this mystery, when he saw Christ, he pointed at him and said, “This is the lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world.”²⁷ In that those sacrifices are said to be Christ in this manner that²⁸ we have established²⁹ on the basis of scripture, it was said in their regard at that time that they do not forgive sins—that is to say, that sins are forgiven only through Christ, who was those sacrifices. We could supply similar materials from elsewhere, multiplying³⁰ citations from St. Paul and from other books of the holy scriptures, so as to confirm that sin is forgiven only through Christ’s flesh and blood. Nonetheless, we detest going on at greater length and leave this topic, knowing that the above-cited words of St. Paul fully confirm our point.

That said, if after the coming of Christ the Armenians would prefer to behave according to the first law, then they must also be circumcised on the eighth day,³¹ offer young pigeons and turtledoves for the child on the fortieth day,³² observe the Sabbath and light no fire on it,³³ and whatever else God commanded the ancients. They do not do this, however, and are thus being inconsistent. Furthermore, if they would prefer to observe just the first law, they must offer their sacrifices only in the temple, as God commanded in the law. Is it not a wonder that animal sacrifices came to an end for the Jews when the temple was destroyed and that the Armenians still wish to offer them, even though God destroyed the temple for no other reason than that he hated those sacrifices? St. Paul forbade them from doing this when he taught, “Under the first law everything was purified with blood, and without the

21. Reading *yu‘nā*, with BD. 22. Reading *tastaṭī*^c, with B. 23. Heb 10:4. 24. 1 Cor 10:4. 25. John 19:36. 26. Exod 12:46. 27. John 1:29. 28. Adding *alladhī* after *al-wajh*, with B. 29. Reading *ḥaqqaqnāhu*, with B. 30. Reading *fā-nukaththīruhu*, with B. 31. Cf. Lev 12:3. 32. Cf. Lev 12:6–8. 33. Exod 35:3.

shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,”³⁴ and then added, “Indeed, since those things that were only an image and likeness of heavenly things were purified with this, the heavenly things must be purified with better sacrifices than these.”³⁵ He also said, “There was in the law only a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of those realities.”³⁶ He also said elsewhere, “Just as there was change in the priesthood, so also there was change in the law.”³⁷ Why is it that the Armenians want to revive for us that to which Christ brought an end? It is as St. Paul said, “He brought an end to the law of commandments by his commandments.”³⁸

Let these *māṭāl* (that is, these sacrifices) be abolished from the church of God, as well as whatever else they bring to the altars, whether hearts or the like, on those altars joining with Christ’s flesh what God has said that he hates. Let them cease to burn incense before those beasts. Let them cease with their blood to make the sign of the cross on their faces. Let them cease from whatever else is beyond the pale of Christianity. Should someone³⁹ wish to offer a sacrifice in honor of a saint on his feast day, and from that sacrifice both eat and feed the poor—but without doing what we have mentioned—that is fine. It is also fine if the priests are given some of the sacrifice in the same way they are given some of these *māṭāl*—or even more than that, should one wish. To do this is something spiritual and Christian, something pleasing to Christ our God, our true sacrifice. I finish by citing what St. Paul wrote to the Galatians: “You who want to cling to the law have fallen from grace.”⁴⁰ Accordingly, whoever offers a sacrifice according to the old law is cut off from the forgiveness of Christ’s flesh and blood and through this alone merits destruction.

34. Heb 9:22. 35. Heb 9:23. 36. Heb 10:1. 37. Heb 7:12. 38. Eph 2:15.
39. Reading *aḥad*, with B. 40. Gal 5:4.

Chapter 9

On the Union and the Incarnation

To become incarnate is to become human, and to become human means that the one who becomes human is made into a human being. That the one who becomes human is made¹ into a human being means that² “man” is predicated of the one who becomes human and that the one who becomes human receives both the name and the definition of “man,” in the same way that every other human being has these. The “man” that is predicated is the name of a nature, and thus, what is being predicated of the hypostasis is a nature, not a nature of a nature. If this is how the matter stands,³ it is clear that what became human is⁴ the hypostasis, that is,⁵ the eternal Son. The eternal Son, who is perfect God, became man, apart from every⁶ change. There is thus in the same Son perfect God and perfect man, and predicated of him is the name “God,” even as it is predicated of the Father and of the Spirit, as well as the name “man,” even as it is predicated of all other human beings. It was the same Son who⁷ became incarnate, and, for this reason, the divine nature is not said to have become incarnate, since it is not possible for “man” (that is, human nature) to be predicated of it. It is as we have already said: a nature is never in any way predicated of a nature. To speak by way of analogy, the hypostasis of the eternal Son is like a river that receives two streams: the river is said to receive two streams, but neither of the streams⁸ receives the other. In the same way, the eternal Son receives both the name and the definition of “God” and the name and the definition of

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1. Reading *poiēsasthai*, with XMW. 2. Reading *esti to* for *epi tōi*, with X. It may be noted that both M and W read *epi to*. 3. Reading *ei toinun touto homologoumenōs houtōs echei*, with X. 4. Adding *estin* after *hypostasis*, with XMW. 5. Reading *ēgoun* for *ē*, with XMW. 6. Adding *hapasēs* after *tropēs*, with XMW. 7. Reading *ho* for *kai*, with XMW. 8. Reading *tōn potamōn* for *potamou*, with XMW.

“man,”⁹ but God in no way receives the name or definition of “man,” nor does man receive the name or definition of “God.” Rather, the hypostasis of the eternal Son fully receives the name and the definition of the two natures, that is, of the divinity and of the humanity.

Mistaken Views on the Subject of the Incarnation

One must know this:¹⁰ Even if the man is said to have become God, it is not because the man received the name and the definition of “God” that it is said to have become God. Indeed, if this were the case, it would share the essence of the Father and of the Spirit, in the same way that the eternal Son, by becoming incarnate, came to share our essence. This is not even easy to imagine, however, namely, to say that the man shares the essence of the Father and of the Spirit. Again, if this were the case, the man itself would be the hypostasis and the divine nature would exist in it, the divine nature being moved by it¹¹ and the man moving the divinity.

Know this, too: There is nothing predicated¹² without qualification of the divine nature that is not predicated equally of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For instance, “life,” “light,” “eternal,” “changeless,” and the like, are predicated of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now then, if the incarnation were predicated of the divine nature, it would¹³ be predicated of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, like the above-mentioned attributes. To say that the Father and the Holy Spirit became incarnate, however, is totally absurd. It is, in fact, something that could be imagined, let alone said aloud, only by the simpleminded.

Suppose someone were to say that all things predicated without qualification or absolutely of the hypostasis are referred secondarily also to the nature, and that, since the incarnation is predicated of the eternal Son, who is one of the hypostases of the holy Trinity, it should be referred secondarily from the hypostasis to the nature. The one who says this should know this: Whatever is referred secondarily from the hypostasis to the nature already existed potentially in the nature, from which nature the hypostasis inherited it in actuality.¹⁴ For this reason, one can rightly refer from the hypostasis to the nature only those things that were potentially already present in the nature but actually present in the hypostasis. Here is an example. The division of species, which is

PG1605

9. Adding *kai to tou anthrōpou onoma kai ton horon* after *horon*, with XMW.
 10. Adding *eidenai de chrē* before *hōs*, with XMW. 11. Reading *kinoumenē*, with XMW. 12. Reading *katēgoroumenon*, with XMW. 13. Adding *an* before *katēgoreito*, with XMW. 14. Reading *energeiāi*, with XW. M bears *energeian*, with its final *n* perhaps added by a second hand.

potentially in the genus but actually in the species, is rightly referred secondarily from the species to the genus: for instance, being rational is potentially in the genus living being but actually¹⁵ in the species human being; and thus, the genus living being is called “rational” secondarily, in that the species human being is rational. Again, consider the individuating differences that are characteristic of the hypostasis of each human being. These are understood to be potentially in human nature, but actually in Socrates and Plato, and thus they are referred from the hypostasis to the nature (that is,¹⁶ from Socrates to human nature). For instance, we say that Socrates is “hook-nosed” or “bald.” Secondarily, however, we also say that human nature is “hook-nosed” or “bald,” in that¹⁷ Socrates, as we said, inherited hook-nosedness and baldness from human nature. Now then, of the things that were conveyed on account of the hypostatic union from the human mass¹⁸ to¹⁹ the hypostasis of God the Word, nothing whatsoever, either potentially or actually, was in the uncreated, immaterial, and passionless divine nature. For this reason, while the eternal Son²⁰ is said to have become incarnate and to have been crucified and died, this can in no way be said of the divine nature, even though the Son²¹ was one of its hypostases.

The Divine Nature Did Not Suffer

Suppose someone were to allege himself slow²² to grasp what we have said and suggest that his²³ mind cannot understand how²⁴ the divine nature, which is immutably, inseparably,²⁵ and indivisibly present in the hypostasis of the Son,²⁶ did not suffer²⁷ with that hypostasis when it suffered, and how, when something occurred²⁸ in the hypostasis, it is not also said to have occurred in the divine nature, which is not separate from the hypostasis of the eternal Son. In order to resolve this difficulty, we shall apply to it the swiftest of remedies, making our proof from things that are familiar and, so to speak,²⁹ ready to hand.

My friends, surely you know that each and every person (for instance, Socrates or Plato) is composed of an immaterial soul and a material body

15. Reading *energeiāi*, with XMW. 16. Reading *ēgoun* for *ē*, with XMW.
 17. Reading *dia to ton* for *dia ton*, with X. 18. That is, *phurama*, frequently used in christological discourse as a metaphor for human substance. 19. Adding *epi* before *tēn*, with XMW. 20. Adding *Huios* after *aidios*, with XMW. 21. Reading *ho Huios* for *ousa*, with XMW. 22. Reading *aitiōto bradun*, with XMW. 23. Reading *heautou for hekastou*, with XW. 24. Reading *hopōs* for *hoper*, with XMW. 25. Reading *achōristos*, with MW. It may be noted that X bears *acharistos*. 26. Adding *kai adiairetos* before *ou*, with XMW. 27. Reading *sumpaschei*, with XMW. 28. Reading *prosginomenou* for *apoginomenou*, with XW. M bears *prosginomenē*. 29. Adding *hoionei* after *tōn*, with XMW.

and that the soul is inseparably present in that person, for if³⁰ the soul of Socrates were separated³¹ from him, it would not be possible for Socrates to continue to exist. Socrates is said to grow and³² change from small to big, to be cut or burnt. As everyone knows, however, his soul³³ endured none of these things. It is in precisely the same way that advancing and growing in the flesh,³⁴ as well as other such human characteristics, are predicated of the eternal Son,³⁵ with none of these things touching his divine nature, even as the things in any way peculiar to Socrates' body did not touch his soul. If the things of the body are not predicated of Socrates' soul,³⁶ even more so, surely,³⁷ the things predicated of the eternal Son after his assumption of flesh will not be predicated of the unmixed divine³⁸ nature. Just as when we say that Socrates has been cut, we understand that it was not Socrates' soul³⁹ but his body that was cut, so also when we say that the eternal Son was pierced by a lance, we understand that the piercing did not reach his divine nature,⁴⁰ which is incorruptible and indestructible,⁴¹ but only his flesh, which is able to be pierced and cut.

PG1608

I shall resolve⁴² your difficulty in yet another way. Our mind, though a single entity, while it grasps visible things⁴³ through corporeal eyes, has yet another manner of seeing proper to itself, one that observes⁴⁴ in a way that is different from what takes place through the eyes. This we call "contemplation." If it happens that the corporeal faculty of sight is maimed, we do not say that the mind does not see, because the natural and intellectual faculty of sight is preserved for it uninjured and unharmed.⁴⁵ In the same way, the eternal Son is said to have suffered in the flesh, while his divine nature remained impassible.

But why should⁴⁶ one wonder⁴⁷ at such examples when the same sort of thing can be observed in extended material bodies?⁴⁸ We all know that the mind both⁴⁹ sees with the eyes and hears with the ears and that set in the brain are faculties of sight and hearing, each independent of

30. Adding *hē psuchē mē diazeugnumenē ei gar* before *hē psuchē*, with XMW.

31. Reading *chōristheīē*, with XMW. 32. Adding *kai* after *te*, with XMW.

33. Reading *tēs psuchēs autou* for *tēs autēs psuchēs*, with X. Cf. W, which bears *tēs autou psuchēs*.

34. Cf. Luke 2:52. 35. Reading *tou aidiou Huiou katēgoreito* for *katēgorei*

tou aidiou Huiou, with XMW. 36. Reading *tēi tou Sōkratous psuchēi ta hopoianoun esti*

tou sōmatos autou idia ei de tēs psuchēs ou katēgoreitai ta tou sōmatos for *tou Sōkratous*, with XMW.

37. Reading *ontōs* for *houtōs*, with X. 38. Adding *theias* before *phuseōs*,

with XW. 39. Reading *ou tēn* for *ouk autēn*, with XMW. 40. Reading *eis tēn*

theikēn autou phusin, with XMW. 41. Reading *anōlethron*, with XMW. 42. Reading

epilusin, with XW (cf. parallel at PG1605C7). 43. Reading *horatōn*, with XMW.

44. Reading *diathrousan*, with X. 45. Reading *aparatrōtou kai ablabous*, with XMW.

46. Reading *dei* for *dē*, with XW. 47. Reading *agasthai*, with X. 48. Reading *kai*

en sōmatikais pēlikotēsi kai pachutēsi to toiouton for *en . . . touto*, with X. 49. Adding *kai*

before *dia*, with XMW.

the other, with which also the mind lodges. Notwithstanding that these are joined together and dwell with one another in a single⁵⁰ substrate, it often happens that the corporeal faculty of sight or of hearing or the mind itself is injured, but that the injury of one does not harm the others, in that their natural potential is preserved unharmed. One should not be terribly surprised, then, if, when the body of the eternal Son suffered, his inseparable divine nature remained⁵¹ no less impassible and uninjured, which nature transcends every being and governs all and is completely untouched by suffering, in which nature there is, according to the chief apostle, “neither variation nor shadow of change.”⁵²

We shall provide⁵³ you with yet another example through which you might be able to see how, if⁵⁴ suffering or corruption occurs to a hypostasis, it does not cross over to the nature—even if the hypostasis should happen to have⁵⁵ just a single nature. My friend, if you were to mold and prepare a statue of a man from gold or bronze, and were then to melt it down again, the⁵⁶ human form would be destroyed, but the gold or the bronze, which is the statue’s nature, would remain unharmed and uncorrupted.

Be all this as it may, you should exercise good sense with regard to my examples and be careful not to apply to doctrines of divinity every image⁵⁷ they occasion for you. Instead, reconcile⁵⁸ any crass images by reflecting that they should be taken as mere analogies, cast as far away⁵⁹ as possible everything that is incongruous⁶⁰ and inappropriate for pious and steadfast hearts, distinguishing always like and unlike, even as the winnower who most carefully winnows the grain from the chaff.

Conclusions

The union of the two natures—that is, of the divinity and of the humanity—is thus said to have taken place in the hypostasis of the only begotten eternal Son of God, without change, without confusion, and without mixture. As the Son⁶¹ who like the Father was without beginning and eternal, he did not have in his eternity⁶² a nature predicated of him other than that which is divine and the Father’s, which is uncreated and uncircumscribed. Through his great mercy and ineffable love for humanity, however, for our salvation, in the last days he came down

50. Omitting *tōi*, with XM. 51. Reading *phusis theia dietelesen* for *dietelese phusis*, with XM. 52. Jas 1:17. 53. Reading *tetaxomai*, with XMW. 54. Reading *ei* for *ē*, with XMW. 55. Reading *laxoi mē exousa hē hupostasis*, with X. 56. Reading *men* for *mēden*, with XM. 57. Reading *eikona* for *oikeia*, with XW. It may be noted that M bears *eikonōn*. 58. Reading *harmozousas*, with XMW. 59. Reading *apōtatō*, with XW. 60. Reading *pan apemphainon*, with XMW. 61. Adding *Huios* after *sunaidios*, with XMW. 62. Reading *aidiotēti*, with XMW.

from heaven—from which he was never absent in that his divinity fills all things—and became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of Mary who is completely holy,⁶³ wholly without blemish, and ever virgin. It is thus that he had in himself,⁶⁴ wholly and completely, the created, circumscribed,⁶⁵ and passible human⁶⁶ essence, which was predicated of him in the same way that the divine nature was predicated of him. Since the two natures came together in him and together were predicated of him, along with all their natural properties, for this reason they are said to be united with one another⁶⁷ in him, without change, without mixture, without variation—and this, because the two natures were united in one and the same hypostasis of the eternal Son. Thence also, the same eternal Son is counted, according to the divine nature, with the Father and the Spirit, and with us, according to the human⁶⁸ nature. For this reason, too, the same, after his⁶⁹ incarnation and the ineffable, unconfused,⁷⁰ and unmixed union of the natures that came together in him,⁷¹ is one of the holy Trinity, and the same is a human being,⁷² not something other than a human being.⁷³ It is through him that we were saved and recalled⁷⁴ to our original state of blessedness, through his salvific sufferings, his life-giving death, his three days in the grave, and his resurrection from⁷⁵ the dead; and it is thus that we came to be immortal and uncorrupted. To him be glory, honor, and power, along with his eternal and consubstantial⁷⁶ Father and the all-holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

63. Adding *panagnou kai* before *panamōmou*, with XMW. 64. Reading *heautōi* for *autōi*, with XM. 65. Adding *perigraptēn kai* before *pathētēn*, with X. 66. Omitting *kai* before *anthrōpeion*, with XMW. 67. Omitting *en* before *allēlais*, with XMW. 68. Omitting *hēmeteran* before *anthrōpeian*, with X. 69. Reading *heautou* for *autou*, with XMW. 70. Reading *aphurton*, with XMW. 71. Reading *en autōi* for *tōn heautou*, with XM. 72. Adding *tēs hagian Triados kai ho autos heis esti* after *esti*, with XMW. 73. Reading *allos kai allos*, with XMW. 74. Reading *aneklēthēmen*, with XMW. 75. Adding *ek* after *kai*, with XMW. 76. Adding *kai homoousiōi* before *Patri*, with XMW.

On the Death of Christ

As for the people of truth, they have minds that are alive, with the ability both to accept and reject.¹ That they can both accept and reject is a result of their malleable will. As for their malleable will,² it is moved only by a knowledge that ignorance does not sully, a knowledge in which the mind dwells through the divine light that shines on it and shows it the truth of things—and this, because of the goodness of the mind’s intention. Now then, when it is a question of things that contradict unity in different respects, you will find contradiction in the words of the people of truth and you will find them saying both “Yes” and “No” of a single thing. This is because their minds carefully examine things so as to distinguish their different respects and isolate each for separate examination. Their minds grasp when a thing has an attribute in one respect and use that attribute to describe that thing. At the same time, their minds grasp when the same thing, in another respect, has an attribute at variance with the first. When they do this, however, they are moved to maintain the first attribute and not cast it aside. Instead, they ascribe the second attribute to the variance and unite the two. Their knowledge of the truth of things is broad enough to encompass them and join all their attributes together. When the ignorant hear the words of the people of truth and see that there is contradiction in them, their minds become confused and their hearts do not rejoice. Rather, in derision,³ they turn away from the people of truth, laughing at them and rejoicing in their own insolence. (This only strengthens the bonds placed on them by Satan, who trapped them through his deceit in order to destroy their souls.) As for the people of

1. For the idiom, cf. *B11.10–12*. 2. Reading *mashī’atihā* for *ma’rifatihā*. Cf. *B63.5–6*. 3. Reading *yatahazza’ū*.

B49 falsehood, because of their wicked intention, their minds are dead. There is not one who does not apply himself to things defiantly. When they grasp that a thing has one attribute, it does not occur to them that the same thing might have another attribute in another respect,⁴ an attribute at variance with the first. Lacking as they do the divine light that brings life to the mind, they are not moved to ascribe the second attribute⁵ to the variance. They do not distinguish all that thing's respects and examine them one by one. If they did, they would apply to that thing the attributes that are appropriate to each of its respects, even if they contradict one another. If they did, they would transcend it, through their examination of it and the refinement of their knowledge of it. They do not do this, however. Rather, they are like stones that have been dropped, which fall headlong because of their weight, without the ability to keep themselves from being let go. To illustrate these claims, consider the following.

Orthodoxy and the Middle Way

Orthodoxy⁶ says that God is one in nature and three in person. It can thus say that God is one in one respect and three in another respect. This is what it thinks to be the case. When the ignorant hear that God is both one and three, they think the statement self-contradictory and invalid. In most things, falsehood surrounds the truth on either side, and in contradicting the truth it does not grasp its unity. Rather, from falsehood there arise statements that contradict one another and that together contradict the truth. Accordingly, truth is not multiple and does not contradict itself, while falsehood is multiple and contradicts both itself and the truth. Two statements surround⁷ the orthodox doctrine of God. Each contradicts the other and both contradict orthodoxy's truth. In each, you can discern the defiance of the minds of the people of falsehood, which we mentioned above. One is the statement of Arius, that God is three in person and three in nature. As he thought God three in one respect, he posited him three in the other respect as well. The other is the statement of Sabellius, that God is one in nature and one in person. He treated the two respects as one and was unable to understand the meaning of their difference. He became, thus, exactly like his associate.⁸ So too, the orthodox say that Christ is one hypostasis and two natures, and thus, that he is one in one respect and two in another respect. Their minds approve this doctrine and in it their hearts, which are alive through the Holy Spirit, rejoice.⁹ Surrounding their state-

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4. Reading *naḥw* for *naw*^c (cf. B48.13). 5. Reading *al-ṣifah* for *min ṣifah* (cf. B48.14). 6. The texts of L and Q begin here. 7. Reading *aḥāt*, with LQ. 8. The text of Q breaks off here. 9. Reading *wa-yusarr bihi*, with L.

ment are two others. Each contradicts the other and both contradict the truth. One is the statement of Nestorius, that Christ is two natures and two hypostases. The other is the statement of Jacob, that Christ is one hypostasis and one nature. Each of these statements is defiant and inflexible. As for the statement of orthodoxy, the soundness of its judgment is manifest. Another example is the doing of good and evil. The church says that God created humans with free will and that he gave them the ability to follow their desires and to choose to do either good or evil. God also informed them that they will suffer the consequence of their choice. Surrounding the right statement of the church are two others. Each contradicts the other and both contradict the church's statement.¹⁰ One is the statement of those who say that God coerced and compelled human beings to do good and evil, creating some to be wretched and others to be blessed.¹¹ The other is the statement of the Manicheans. They wanted to remove God from responsibility for evil, but fell into something far worse as a result. They contrived Satan to be another god alongside God, making God the cause of all good and Satan the cause of all evil. In doing this, they ended up astray in every possible insolence and lost in error, concocting old wives' tales and imagining oneiric phantasms. Each of these statements is defiant and falls flat on its face, being unable to rise to the middle course, in which alone is guidance. Something similar holds with regard to the subject at hand, the death of Christ. There are two loathsome and wicked statements that surround the true statement. Each contradicts the other; both contradict the truth. One is the statement of Nestorius. He claims that when he says, "Christ died for us," he means that for us a mere man, like one of us, died in our nature, and that this man is not the eternal Son who became human for our sake. The other is the statement of Jacob. He claims that when he says, "Christ died," he means that the eternal Son died in his divine nature. The statement of orthodoxy falls between these two. It is pure and its light pristine. It claims that when it says, "Christ died for us," it does not mean that a mere man, like one of us, died for us in his human nature or that the eternal Son died for us¹² in his divine nature, but¹³ that Christ (that is,¹⁴ the eternal Son who was begotten of the Father before the ages) died for us, not in his divine nature but in his human nature, which he took from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary.

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10. These same two misguided views on free will are discussed in greater detail at pp. 195–203. 11. Theodore is alluding here, primarily, to Islam. 12. Adding *fī tabi'atihi al-insiyah aw anna al-Ibn al-azali māt 'annā* after *māt 'annā*, as required by the sense. It may be noted that the text of L is also here corrupt. 13. Reading *bal innamā* for *wa-innamā*, with L. 14. Adding *al-Masiḥi ayy* after *anna*, with L.

Refutation of the Nestorians

Now then,¹⁵ if Nestorius is right and the one who died for us was just a man, we have no salvation. As one man he might save himself, but how could one man be a ransom for all? Suppose, on the one hand, that God handed this man over to death in order to preserve his justice, so that he not be one who does things in vain and so that his law not be made void. (God prescribed the law for us but did not receive its claims in full; God does not, however, forgive anyone's sin until he receives the whole punishment required by the dictates of the law.)¹⁶ If this is what God did, this man would not have sufficed. After all, God requires that everyone be put to shame, beaten, crucified, and killed, and that they experience every manner of punishment laid down in the law for sin, an innumerable number of times. In that case, however, all who have faith in Christ's death escape nothing through the fact that Christ suffered for them a single time—and this, because the one who suffered was just a man, and this man would not suffice for all of us, such that his pains might provide the law with a substitute for the punishments God requires from all of us. Suppose, on the other hand, that in handing this man over to death, God was not concerned to preserve his justice; that he made void the law he had prescribed for human beings in that he did not receive its claims from human beings through the pains befalling them through this one man; and that he has a way of forgiving sins apart from such a punishment. If this is what God did, his handing of this man over to death and to such pains was in vain. In either case, then, it would have to be concluded that God does things in vain.¹⁷ May he be exalted above that! Nestorius simply did not¹⁸ understand the mystery of Christ nor why he needed to become incarnate and experience pain and death. Being unable to discern this mystery's true meaning, he ceased to follow the Holy Spirit through faith—with the result that he settled for this instead of knowledge and sent his fleshly mind into exile. It is thus that he said that it was not proper for the eternal Son to be crucified and die. If he were possessed of reason, it would be enough for him that his words have been adjudged to necessitate that God be one who does things in vain and to no end, since he selected a mere man to die for us. Still, what harm is there if we also inform him of the other loathsome consequences of what he says? Besides, it may well be that he will repent when he sees that loathsomeness surrounds his words on every sides.

15. Reading *innahu* for *li-annahu*, with L. 16. This theme is treated in some detail in Theodore's *On Our Salvation*, at pp. 129–35. 17. In the first instance, because he handed Christ over to death even though his death was insufficient; in the second, because he had no need to hand Christ over to death. 18. The text of Q resumes here.

Nestorius, tell me about this man who died for us. Must not he have done so¹⁹ for one of four reasons? Either God commanded him to do this, or asked him, or compelled him, or this man audaciously volunteered to do it without consulting God. If this man was commanded by God²⁰ to die for us, he deserves no praise from us. After all, he only forced himself to die for fear that he would disobey God and be punished by him for his disobedience. One like this could not be a savior for anyone else: his efforts are only for himself, as he seeks to save himself from the punishment he worries will befall him should he disobey²¹ God. If God asked this man to die for us out of his own free will, this entails that God is weak, in that he was unable to save us except through this man, who,²² if he had wished, might have refused to comply with God's request to die for us, and had he done so, God would have been unable to save us. May he be exalted above that! Moreover, in that both this man and God would have saved us, we would be required to give our praise both to him and to God and to make him God's equal. Indeed, Nestorius, if you look at the truth of the matter, your own words would suggest that this man is actually more deserving of praise than God—may he be blessed! This is because God only willed our salvation, whereas this man not only willed it, as did God, but also suffered pains and trials that God did not suffer. All this is quite loathsome, however, as it requires that we make a man more gracious than God or that we make this man God's equal. May he be exalted above that! Suppose that God compelled this man to die for us. One forced to die for us cannot redeem us from sins we committed of our own free will and for which we merit death, and thus cannot be our savior. If God were content that an unwilling death be a ransom for our sins, he could have forgiven us through the bulls and lambs sacrificed for sins in the Old Testament, the practice ordained before the coming of Christ, through whom²³ sins would truly be forgiven. Indeed, such animal sacrifices would have been more appropriate than the sacrifice of this man. The reason: if he had been compelled to die, he would surely be grieved and angry at God who had exercised such compulsion on him. One in that situation, however, could not be a sacrifice for God, but would rather be someone God considers unclean, hateful, and fit to be rejected. If this man had volunteered to die for us without God having ordered him to do so, he would have been disobedient to God, in that he, with regard to God's creation, had the audacity to do something that he did not know to be in accord with God's good will or pleasure. This alone would have placed him beyond the pale of salvation!

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19. Adding *‘alā* after *huwa*, with LQ. 20. Adding *min Allāh* after *ma’ mūran*, with LQ. 21. Reading *‘aṣā*, with LQ. 22. Adding *alladhī innahu* after *al-insān*, with LQ. 23. Adding *bihī* after *alladhī*, with LQ.

We have heard Christ say, “Authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”²⁴ Nestorius, you claim that the one to whom this authority was given was a man, in that it would not have been proper for such authority to have been given to the eternal Son. If it is as you say, this man was given such authority²⁵ for one of two reasons. It may be that God stipulated this as his reward for the pains and death he would suffer²⁶ for us, asking him to sacrifice himself for us for the sake of that authority. Alternatively, it may be that after God saw that this man obediently did what he wanted him to do, he considered him worthy to be given authority in heaven and on earth. If God had stipulated such authority as this man’s reward for dying, this amounts to compulsion and it would not be proper for him to be our savior. After all, he did not die for us, but for himself, in order that he might obtain such authority for himself, in accordance with the hope by which God had enticed him. If this is so, however, there is no benefit that we can hope to receive from him. If this man was given such authority in that God thought him worthy of it because he obeyed to the point of death, God having asked him to become incarnate for us [. . .]²⁷ or²⁸ it was given to him in the manner of the stipulation, neither we nor the angels should pray²⁹ to God or ask³⁰ him for anything, as he gave the whole of his authority to this man—and God does not regret his gifts³¹ or go back on them, nor does he deceive in his stipulation. Indeed, those of us who would pray to God must cause him
 B55 to be angry, for God says to those of us who pray, “Depart from me and lift your request to the one to whom I have given all my authority.” This would be required if God is to make perfect his giving of authority to this man. After all, if God had given this man authority in heaven and on earth but continued to exercise his authority as before, then his giving of his authority would not have been real, nor, it seems to us, would this man have benefited in the least from God’s having given his authority to him.

Nestorius, if you are compelled to refuse God your worship and service and give it to this man instead, you have failed in your endeavor. While it is clear that you began with a desire to honor God by keeping him from death,³² you have ended up depriving him³³ of all his authority and causing him to be weak, making him unable to save his creation except by hiring this man; and if this man had decided not to concede to God’s request, he could have done so, and³⁴ God would have been unable to save

24. Matt 28:18. Theodore treats this same topic at pp. 243–44. 25. Adding *mā qad u’ī* after *u’ī*, with LQ. 26. Reading *yalqā*. 27. There would seem to be a lacuna in the text. 28. Reading *aw kân* for *wa-kân*, with LQ. 29. Reading *nusallī*, with LQ. 30. Reading *naṭlub*, with LQ. 31. Cf. Rom 11:29. 32. It may be noted that Theodore posits deeper motivations for the Nestorians in their refusal to attribute death to the second person of the Trinity. 33. Reading *salabtahu*, with LQ. 34. Reading *min dhālika la-yaf’al wa-qad* for *qad*, with LQ.

us. I cannot help but be amazed! You have heard God say through the prophet, “I give not my glory to anyone.”³⁵ You are aware that Christ says, “The Son of Man comes in the glory of the Father.”³⁶ Nevertheless, your soul is pleased to say that this Son of Man is not the eternal Son begotten of the Father before the ages, who, for a little while,³⁷ abandoned his glory for our sakes, taking on the form of a servant,³⁸ but after fulfilling his mission for us—having disguised himself from Satan our enemy and having justly overcome him³⁹—took back the glory he had abandoned and restored it to its place. The worship and service owed to him by us and by the angels was not transferred from the one who merited it because of his divine essence; rather, he only abandoned his glory for the sake of those who were separated from him, that he might draw them back to what they had abandoned, namely, to the worship and service of himself, which he did not cease to merit and in which there is life and exceeding victory for those who practice it. It is as⁴⁰ the gospel says with regard to the one sheep that had gone lost from the hundred: the good shepherd left the other ninety-nine and went forth to seek out and return the one that was lost.⁴¹ I simply do not understand how you can think it right to deprive God of his glory and adorn a man with it—continually saying that it is not right for the eternal Son to die. You know, after all, that the church says that he did not die in his divine nature but only in the human nature he took from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary. As the prophet says, “You have conceived a fear where there is no fear.”⁴² If you accept my arguments, you will recognize that it is not right for the one who died for us to be just⁴³ a man, as you claim. This should be enough to refute what you say on this subject. Indeed, for those not intentionally hypocrites, less than this would suffice to convince them that the truth is to be found in what orthodoxy says. B56

Refutation of the Jacobites

As for you, Jacobite, haughty brute that you are, I want you to know that you have surpassed the beasts in coarseness and Satan and his armies in insolence toward God. This is because you say, “God died in his divine nature.” You wretch, do you not know that the divine nature is simple⁴⁴ and that, if it were to die—may it be exalted above that!—this would mean that it be extinguished and pass away into nothing? If his divine nature were to be extinguished and pass away into nothing, it would

35. Isa 42:8. 36. Matt 16:27. 37. Reading *zumaynan*, with LQ. 38. Cf. Phil 2:7. 39. Reading *wa-ghalabahu bi-l-ʿadl* for *wa-ʿadalahu ʿalayhi*, with LQ. 40. Omitting *fi*, with LQ. 41. Luke 15:4–7. 42. Ps 14:5 LXX. 43. Adding *širfan* after *insānan*, with LQ. 44. Reading *bašīṭah*, with LQ.

not be eternal; and being thus, it would at one time have been transferred from a state of non-being into a state of being.⁴⁵ If that were so, however, there would have to be one to effect such a transferral, and this would be its creator. And in that case, you have ended up producing for us a creator other than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—after all, nothing is said of the Son⁴⁶ with regard to his divine nature unless it is also said of the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ It is clear that you began with a desire to exult in the fact that your salvation was wrought by the death of this eternal Son.⁴⁸ You have ended up, however, being wholly deprived of divinity and coming to be without a god. You have deprived the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of their divinity and eternity and made them equal to yourself. I am disgusted at your ignorance! How crude! No, it is not your ignorance that disgusts me, but the hideousness of your monstrous devilry! I swear, it would be better for you to be possessed and thrown to the ground in a fit than that Satan seize your tongue and make you treat God with such contempt and lie about him in this way. Furthermore, as for this salvation in which you exult by saying that God died, you gain nothing from it, if you say that death befell him in his divine nature. Let me explain. If what you say were true, the eternal Son would have been destroyed and would have perished, passing away into nothingness, as we just said. As for his human soul, it would be imprisoned in hell and held captive in dark dungeons, being detained there for eternity. As for his body, it would have experienced decay and corruption, dissolution into nothingness, without ever experiencing the resurrection. This is what would have happened to his soul and body, if God were to die for us in his divine nature, if he were to be destroyed and pass away into nothingness. Far be that from him! I cannot help but be amazed! The eternal Son descended from heaven and became human because he wanted to save us. According to what you say, however, he was destroyed, and saved neither his own soul nor his own body, nor us. After all, if Christ's soul remained in hell and his body experienced corruption, we shall never have hope in the resurrection. Jacobite, you have brought failure on the mission of the eternal Son! And would that you had left the matter there! But no, you caused him to experience the greatest of ruin! May God destroy you! How great is your blindness! How hideous is your proposal!

45. Reading *lam takun ilā an kānat* for *kānat ilā an lam takun*, with LQ. Theodore presupposes that whatever has an end must also have a beginning. 46. Omitting *innahu lahu ṭabīʿīyan*, with LQ. 47. That is, if the Son's divine nature had a creator, the same would have to be said of the divine nature of the Father and the Spirit, and thus, all three persons of the Trinity would stand in need of a creator. 48. Note that Theodore posits a more basic, underlying reason for the distinctive character of Monophysite christology.

Jacobite, suppose you suggest: To say “Christ died” is not to imply that the eternal Son died in his divine nature, but only that the composite nature of divinity and humanity died. (This composite nature, which you call “Christ,” your heart contrived as an idol to worship.) Woe to you, and again woe! You have gone from one error to another no less bad! You have come forth from darkness only to reenter it! Do you not know the following? If, as you claim, it was this composite nature of divinity and humanity that died, its death would have amounted to the dissolution of its composition. The dissolution of its composition is the separation of the divinity and the humanity, the two parts from which it was composed. The separation of the divinity and the humanity is not the death of God, however. How so? Human nature is a composite of soul and body. When a human being dies, death is nothing other than the separation of the soul and the body.⁴⁹ The separation of the soul from the body is not referred to as the death of either of the two parts from which the nature was composed,⁵⁰ but the death of the human being composed of the soul and the body. So also, when, as you claim, this composite nature of divinity and humanity died, the divinity parted from the humanity. This was not the death of God, however, but only the death of the composite nature. (This composite nature Severus contrived for you, calling it “Christ.” He made this Christ something other than the eternal Son, introducing it as a fourth thing to worship alongside the Trinity, a fourth thing that is neither God nor man.) While you clearly began by striving for human beings to say that God died, you have ended up being cut off from the death of God through your ignorance. Furthermore, to say that the divinity was separated from the humanity bears the same implications as your claim that God died in his divine nature.⁵¹ That is, his human soul would have remained in hell (this must be what happened, if, in fact, as you say, the divinity was so far removed from it), while his body experienced decay and was dissolved into its elements; there was⁵² no resurrection; the pains of Christ and his death were of no avail; and we are still subject to the power of death and hell.⁵³

The View of Orthodoxy

What we have just said should be enough to overturn the two teachings that deviate from the correct understanding of the death of Christ.

49. Adding *wa-mufāraqat al-lāhūt al-nāsūt laysa huwa mawt Allāh li-annahū kamā anna ṭabīʿat al-insān al-murakkabah min naḥs wa-ḥasad idhā mā innamā huwa mawtuḥā iftirāq al-naḥs wa-l-ḥasad* before *wa-mufāraqat*, with LQ. 50. Reading *innahu mawt juzʿay al-ṭabīʿah allatī minhumā rukkibat* for *la-hā mawt al-naḥs*, with LQ. 51. As was explained in the preceding paragraph. 52. Reading *takun*, with LQ. 53. The text of Q ends here.

B59 It remains for us to explain orthodoxy's correct understanding of this subject, to show how beautiful it is and to confirm its position, which is also surely that of the Holy Spirit. When orthodoxy says, "Christ died for us,"⁵⁴ it means only that the eternal Son begotten of the Father before the ages died for us, not in his divine nature but in his human nature. Let me explain. By "Christ" orthodoxy understands the eternal Son begotten of the Father before the ages, although he is properly called "Christ" only after he became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. It further states that after his incarnation this eternal Son has two natures, one divine, the other human: he was God by nature and became man by nature, without change, such that he was still God. Now then, he, that is, the eternal Son, is both perfect God and perfect man, one individual, not two. Because of this, everything predicated of God can be predicated of him in his divine nature, while everything predicated of human beings can be predicated of him in his human nature. Because God by nature cannot die, it is truly said of this eternal Son that in his divine nature he did not die. Because human beings by nature die, it is truly said of this eternal Son that he died in his human nature.⁵⁵

Possible Objections

The Jacobites say: If you claim that the eternal Son died in his human nature but not in his divine nature, you have said, "He died" and "He did not die." The latter statement nullifies the former. You thus end up saying, "The eternal Son did not die." They say something similar concerning his birth from the Virgin Mary. When we, the community of the orthodox, say, "The eternal Son was born of the Virgin Mary, not in his divine nature but in his human nature," they suggest that we have said, "The eternal Son was born of Mary," and "He was not born of her," that the latter statement nullifies the former, and that we end up saying, "The eternal Son was not born of the Virgin Mary." They then loudly proclaim, "The Chalcedonians claim that the eternal Son was not born of the Virgin Mary and that he did not die. See, they're Nestorians!" Here is our answer to you Jacobites. How coarse are the minds you inherited from your blind fathers! How like they are to the beasts! Answer me this, my friend. If I tell you that someone sees with the eyes but not with the ears, will you say⁵⁶ that I have told you that this person both sees and does not see, that the latter statement nullifies the former, and that I end up saying that this person is blind? I don't think so! Even children whose senses are

54. Adding *annā* after *māt*, with L. 55. The text of L breaks off here. 56. Reading *taqīl*.

untrained in the way of knowledge are aware that it is not as the Jacobites say. If the Jacobites refuse to concede our point, they will have to say that a human being sees with the ears, eats with the eyes, and hears with the feet. This is not so, however. Rather, as everyone knows, human beings see with the eyes and not the ears, and they say that human beings speak with the tongue and not the feet; but they do not say, because of this, that human beings do not speak. Similarly, we know that the eternal Son was born of the Virgin Mary in his human nature but not in his divine nature, but are not compelled, because of this, to say that the eternal Son did not die. We have spoken at length in exposition of this doctrine, providing images and analogies for understanding it and distinguishing its different respects. We have also shown, both in the preceding and in what follows, that a correct and proper understanding of it is to be found in the teaching of orthodoxy. For each image and analogy we have here employed, we have provided something similar to it from the words of the holy fathers in thirty discourses we composed in Syriac, in praise of the position of orthodoxy and the words of the holy St. Leo, the bishop of Rome.⁵⁷ This, then, is what needs to be said about Severus, who in his own day was rightly called the “scholastic ass” because of his crude and coarse manner of understanding this topic. B61

What⁵⁸ we have said will not persuade Nestorius, who behaved like a snake creeping along on the ground, with dirt for its food. This was because he refused to accept nonearthly things and did not wish to raise his mind to heaven, even a little, that he might implant spiritual things in his heart.⁵⁹ Instead, he says to us: My mind cannot grasp this death you predicate of the eternal Son, for the eternal Son is God from God, equal to the Father, and of his essence. It is simply not right to predicate death of him in any way. Here is our reply: Nestorius, we accept the books of the Old and New Testaments through our faith in the innumerable and countless wonders done in the name of Christ by the disciples who brought us those books.⁶⁰ It is enough for us to say to you that the gospel says, “The Word became flesh,”⁶¹ that is, a human being. We believe that this Word, who was eternal, became human⁶² (in a manner that

57. That is, Leo the Great (d. 461), whose Tome was accepted by the council of Chalcedon as a standard of christological orthodoxy. On this passage and the thirty discourses Theodore composed in Syriac, see Samir, “Traité,” 469–72, who argues—rightly, I think—that it is a question of a single work in thirty chapters rather than thirty separate works. Regardless, as is clear from Theodore’s description, this Syriac work must have been primarily a florilegium. 58. The excerpt preserved in BD begins here. 59. Reading *qalbīhi* for *qawl*, with BD. 60. A topic treated at greater length in the works translated in the first part of the present volume. 61. John 1:14. 62. After *insānan*, adding with BD: *fa-naḥnu nu’min anna hādhihi al-kalimah allati hiya lā tazūl šarat insānan*.

surpasses⁶³ our understanding), and we thus say of this Word everything said of human beings. Because human beings die, we say that the eternal Son died, in that he was a human being. Just as we know that when he became a human being he did not change and that he did not experience any harm, so also we are confident that when he died he did not change⁶⁴ and that no defect befell him. I know that this⁶⁵ will not persuade⁶⁶ you, even though it is necessary for you to be persuaded by it in that you profess faith in these holy books. We⁶⁷ thus make the following, additional
 B62 argument. The eternal Son became human by taking a human soul and a human body from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary. He made these his own in the same way that our own souls and bodies are our own. I do not suppose that even you will deny that the eternal Son was able to do this. We say further: When the soul of one of us leaves the body, it is said that that person, the one with that soul and that body, has died. In the same way, when the soul of the eternal Son was separated from his body, it was said that the eternal Son died—because he was human—in the same way that one of us dies. The eternal Son, however, suffered no harm because of this. Rather, he was still alive in his divine nature and was with his soul in hell and his body in the grave. It was he who joined the two separated elements on the third day and reestablished their composition, so that he returned to what he was before death. When the soul of one of us returns to the body,⁶⁸ it is said that the one with the soul and the body has arisen. So also, we say that the eternal Son rose from the dead on the third day, when his soul returned to his body and was rejoined with it, even as one of us arises. What we have said should be enough to persuade all but those who reject everything. It should also suffice to prevent Nestorius from denying what orthodoxy says about the death of the eternal Son in his human nature.

How the Eternal Son Became Human and Died

Having now brought the subject up, we ought also through a detailed analysis to offer persuasive reasons⁶⁹ for the orthodox, gathering together the many things about which they ask questions because they are obscure to the mind of the common folk. The only way to understand this eternal Son's death is to understand how he was human. If one can understand this, it will be clear how he died. How⁷⁰ are we led to an un-

63. Reading *ya^cdū*. It may be noted, however, that both B and D bear *yu^caddī*, with the *tashdīd* clearly marked. 64. Reading *yataghayyar*, with BD. 65. Reading *wa-hādhā qad* for *wa-qad*, with BD. 66. Reading *yuqni^cuka*, with BD. 67. The text of L resumes here. 68. Adding *ilā jasadīhi* after *nafsuhi*, with BDL. 69. Reading *nuqni^c*, with BD. 70. Reading *wa-lākin kayfa bi-ma^crīfat* for *wa-bi-ma^crīfat*, with BDL.

derstanding of his death through an understanding of how he was alive? We say: The eternal Son became human by willing—with the good pleasure of the Father and the Spirit—to hold back his infinite power, to place it within the limit and measure of a human being's power, which he truly possessed by nature, and not in any way to overstep it. It is clear, however, that⁷¹ this does not entail that the eternal Son was subject to change.⁷² An analogy: If there were a man who could shoot an arrow from one end of the earth to the other but who desired to shoot just a single mile, this would not subject his power to either change or harm. No, it is a mighty power that is able to exercise its power according to a malleable will.⁷³ As for power that does not exercise its power according to⁷⁴ a malleable will, it is recalcitrance, which is to say, a weak power. Such a power resembles water, which once it begins to flow, cannot of its own accord restrain itself; or like fire, which once kindled,⁷⁵ cannot of its own accord keep itself from burning; or like careless and heedless words, which cannot but entice. The eternal Son, being fully God, has a powerful power that he is able to exercise as he wills. As we just stated, however, he willed to proceed according to a malleable will, that is⁷⁶—with the good pleasure of the Father and the Holy Spirit—to restrain his infinite power, so as to place it within the limit of a human being's natural power: and this is his taking up residence⁷⁷ in the womb of the Virgin Mary at the time of the angel Gabriel's annunciation and his taking of human flesh, apart from the Father and the Spirit. From an ontological perspective, he was always in Mary's womb, both before Gabriel's annunciation and since the time that she came to exist; or rather, he, along with the Father and the Spirit, is in every place. The Father and the Spirit, too, from an ontological perspective, were together with him in the womb—though neither of the two held back his power within the limit of a human being's power, intending to become human even as the Son. For this reason, it is rightly said that the Son resided in the womb of the pure Virgin Mary at the time of the angel Gabriel's annunciation,⁷⁸

B63

71. Reading *annahu* for *idh*, with BDL. 72. Reading *minhu ghayr* for *ghayran*, with L. 73. Reading *taqdar 'alā nahwa 'amd al-mashī'ah*, for *taqdar . . . al-mashī'ah*, with BD. For the expression, cf. B48.7. 74. Adding *nahwa* after *'alā*, with BDL. 75. Reading *tashabbabat*. It should be noted, however, that both B and D bear *intoshabat* and that L omits the phrase. 76. After *dhakarnā* adding *an yajriya 'alā nahwa 'amd al-mashī'ah wa-dhālika*, with BD. 77. Reading *hulūluhu*, with BDL. 78. Both B and D (and L with a few minor variants) add the following after *ma'a bishārat Jibrīl al-mal'ak* at B63.12: *wa-tajassadihi dūna al-Ab wa-l-Rūh fa-ammā fi al-wujūd fa-innahu lam yazul fi raḥim Maryam min qabl bishārat Jibrīl wa-mundhu kānat Maryam bal huwa fi kull mawḍi' ma'a al-Ab wa-l-Rūh wa-l-Ab bi-l-Rūh qad kānā jamī'an ma'ahu fi al-raḥim fi ḥāl al-wujūd illā annahu [lam] yaḥsir kull wāḥid minhumā qūwatahu ilā ḥadd qūwat al-insān muta'ammidan an yakūn insānan*

and that he became human, apart from the Father and the Spirit. It is thus that the evangelist says, “The Word became flesh.”⁷⁹

You should know that the eternal Son was in the Virgin’s womb in the same way that the power of a man’s seed is in a woman’s womb—with one difference: unlike the power of the seed, the Son did not have a body by essence. That said, the Son and the seed of the pure lady met one another in her womb, even as the seed of a man and a woman meet one another in the woman’s womb,⁸⁰ and the Virgin Mary conceived the eternal Son and gave birth to him, even as a woman conceives a man’s seed and gives birth to it. (It is thus that Mary is truly the Mother of God,⁸¹ even as the church proclaims her.) It belongs to the natural
 B64 power of the man’s seed, when it meets in the womb with the woman’s seed, to differentiate⁸² for itself members, to form for itself this human form from the matter that comes forth with it from the seed of the man and the woman, and to distribute itself in each member, in the measure that it is proper for it to be in each member. In the same way, the Word differentiated for itself members from the seed of the pure Mary, formed for itself from it this human form, and entered into each of those members and into the soul, even as it is right for the power of human nature to be in each of them. When the eternal Son⁸³ created living entities in the beginning, he⁸⁴ gave them the ability to propagate via reproduction,⁸⁵ and he put the Holy Spirit in charge of that for them, that he might make it continue⁸⁶ for them, through the Holy Spirit’s influence and strength. In the same way, through the Holy Spirit’s influence and strength,⁸⁷ the Son made for himself that human body from the seed that the pure lady gave him, through the Holy Spirit’s kindling⁸⁸ of her,⁸⁹ even as the power of the human seed made for itself members, through the Holy Spirit’s granting of strength. The Son did not in any way transgress in this the limit of the power of the seed. The Holy Spirit was responsible⁹⁰ with regard to the Son for everything for which he is

kamā šana^c al-Ibn fa-li-dhālīka yuḥaqq an yuqāl inna al-Ibn ḥall fi raḥim Maryam al-‘udhrā al-ṭāhirah ma^c a bishārāt Jibrīl al-mal‘ak. Notwithstanding the length of the passage, its omission is likely an instance of *saut du même au même*. 79. John 1:14.

80. In hellenic medicine, both men and women were believed to contribute the seed required for conception. See, e.g., Hippocrates, *On the Generating Seed and the Nature of the Child* 6–7. 81. That is, Theotokos. 82. Reading *tu‘addi*, with BDL. 83. Adding *ḥīna* before *khalāq*, with BDL. 84. Omitting *thumma*, with BDL. 85. For the idiom, cf. B77.3–4. 86. Reading *an yudīmahu* and omitting *idh*, with BDL. 87. Adding *wa-kadhālīka [bi]-tahyī² at Rūḥ al-quḍus wa-taqwīyatīhi* before *šana^c*, with BD. 88. Reading *bi-ish‘āl*, with BDL. 89. It may be that Theodore is referring to the notion in hellenic medicine that the heating of their bodies in intercourse causes women to emit their seed. See, e.g., Hippocrates, *On the Generating Seed and the Nature of the Child* 4. 90. Reading *walīy*, with BDL.

responsible with regard to⁹¹ the power of the human seed.⁹² For the sake of our salvation, the eternal Son descended to all this through an act of his will—with the good pleasure of the Father and the Spirit—so as to act within human limits and so as to require the strength of the Holy Spirit, his equal in essence and power.

Because of what we have just explained, the holy fathers of Nicea said that the eternal Son became flesh from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary and that he became a human being. As for what we have just mentioned, namely, that the eternal Son held back his power and placed it within the limit⁹³ of a human being's natural power, St. Paul confirms this when he says of Christ, "All the fullness of the divinity dwelt in him bodily."⁹⁴ This means that the one in the body was a complete hypostasis of the divinity, except that he was in him as a man, although all of him was fully in him. He also said that Jesus Christ was "in the form of God"⁹⁵ and that "he did not regard equality with God⁹⁶ a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself and took the form of a slave."⁹⁷ This signifies what we have just said, namely, that the Son held back his power and placed it within the limit of a human being's natural power. So also, I can assure you, we understand⁹⁸ by his emptying and his limiting⁹⁸ of himself that during the time he was flesh (that is,⁹⁹ when he was engaged in that for the sake of which he became a human being), he¹⁰⁰ did not act like God but like a slave and he did not overstep the measure of a slave, that the beloved Son who was in his essence worthy of worship and obedience on the part of humans became a slave, one obedient for our sakes, one who "obeyed unto death,"¹⁰¹ as St. Paul said, and that he remained God by nature, like the Father and the Holy Spirit, as he always had been. Thus¹⁰² was the manner of the Word's becoming human, to the extent that our minds can grasp it. What we can understand of this subject, however, does not equal a beam of light that enters a dark house through a hole the size of a needle when compared to the light of the whole sun.

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If this is how the Word became human, his death is nothing other than the separation of his soul and his body. It should be noted, though, that the Son was in the body to the same extent as the body has the power of nature when the soul has been separated from it and that the Son, also, was in the soul to the same extent as the human soul has power in its nature when it has been separated from the body. Accordingly, the eternal Son himself was inseparably separated when his soul and his body

91. Adding *min* before *qūwat*, with L. 92. Reading *qūwat al-zar^c*, for *al-zar^c al-qūwah*, with BDL. 93. Reading *bi-ḥadd*, with BDL. 94. Col 2:9. 95. Reading *li-llāh^c adīlan*, with BD. 96. Phil 2:6–7. 97. Reading *na^cqil*, with BD. 98. Reading *tawqīfahu*, with BD. 99. Reading *ayy* for *atā*, with BDL. 100. Omitting *idh* with BDL. 101. Phil 2:8. 102. Reading *ḥakadhā*, with BD.

were separated. This means that the Son, in terms of activity, was in the soul more than he was in the body, even as the soul has¹⁰³ more power in its nature when it has left the body than does the body when the soul has left it. The separation of the eternal Son with the separation¹⁰⁴ of his soul and his body in the manner we have explained confirms his death. We do not think, however, that the separation of the Son resulted from the separation of his soul and body but that the separation of his soul and body resulted from the separation of the Son, for the Son was the hypostasis of his soul and body, and their movements resulted from his movement. This is how it was with the eternal Son during the time that he was a human being. As for his divine nature, however, he was in his soul and his body and in everything, equally, for he is not contained and in his divine nature he has no limit, and there is no place that is separated from the fullness of his presence.¹⁰⁵ My Christian brother, you should not be troubled that we have said both that the Son was in the soul more than he was in the body during the time that he was a human being and that in his divine nature he was in everything equally. Generally speaking, this is like our statement that the Son was equally in every place in his divine nature and that he was in the body taken from the pure Virgin as he was not in anything else.¹⁰⁶ This is not something that occasions harm for his nature. Rather, it confirms the death of the eternal Son during the time that he was a human being, while at the same time occasioning no defect for his divinity, in the manner we have just explained. And thus, orthodoxy has been crowned with victory¹⁰⁷ and the light of its doctrine has shown forth, namely, that the eternal Son died for us in his human nature but not in his divine nature.

Let no one deny that the eternal Son, along with the Father and the Spirit, is in every place and at the same time that he, apart from the Father and the Spirit, differentiated his activity in various measures according to the different capacities of the soul and the body and every other human member. This is because the divinity measures out its nature in such a way as to be in every place equally and at the same time to show its activity, when it desires, in the measure and fashion that it desires through its wisdom. An indication of this is that everyone who lays claim to faith¹⁰⁸ says that God is in every place and at the same time that he shows himself to the angels on the throne and does not show himself to the angels from any other heavenly place except from the throne. Indeed, one might almost think that the throne is his dwelling place and that he is found nowhere

103. Omitting *mā*, with BD. 104. Adding *iftirāq* after *ma^ca*, with BDL. 105. Reading *min kullihī* for *minhu*, with BDL. 106. See above at p. 121. 107. For the idiom, cf. B37.8. 108. Theodore probably means to include Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

else. Again, when he appeared to Moses in the bush,¹⁰⁹ he was not seen in any other place as he was seen by Moses in the bush.¹¹⁰ Yet, we all know that he was both in the bush and equally in other places during the time that he was enclosed in the bush. Again, when he revealed himself to Moses in the cloud between the cherubim above the ark in the tabernacle,¹¹¹ it was not because he was in that tabernacle and in no other place¹¹² that he revealed himself from there to Moses. Rather, he wanted to delimit a place for Moses, to be a focus for him in prayer and in his offering to God of incense, bread, and the like. In the same way, he delimited for the angels his throne in heaven, to be a focus for them, that they might pray toward it to God, that they might not go astray by seeking him in every place—with the result that their worship be at variance and their affairs be scattered—and that he might give them instructions and commands from that place.¹¹³ Similar examples can be found in the scriptures. They are too extensive to cite,¹¹⁴ however. There is thus no need to go on at greater length.

Why the Eternal Son Needed to Die

What summoned the eternal Son to limit his power in the measure of a human being's natural power and not overstep it while he was a human being and to assume a real human nature from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary? In Adam, he¹¹⁵ had created human nature in his image and likeness, as scripture says.¹¹⁶ Satan, however, attacked Adam and tempted¹¹⁷ him, causing him to slip, inducing both him and his seed to death, corruption, and decay, and soiling them with sin. (The ignorant think that this happened to Adam because of some defect in his nature and not because of the laxity of his free will. They thus brazenly lay the fault on God, for his having created a nature unable to keep itself from such misfortunes. These wretches mock the image of God and treat it with disdain. Indeed, they just about make God himself the one whose nature is defective, in that it was his own image that was defective.) It is for this reason that the eternal Son held back his power in the measure¹¹⁸ of a human being's nature—for the sake of justice—and assumed its reality from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary. He then came forth from the Virgin and walked about in the world, exposing himself to Satan, who

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109. Exod 3:2. 110. Before *wa-kullunā*, adding *lam yakun yurā fi ghayr al-ʿullayqah kamā kān yurā fi al-ʿullayqah li-Mūsā*, with BD. Only the first part of this addition (to *ghayr al-ʿullayqah*) is present in L. 111. Exod 40:34–38; Num 9:15–23. 112. Reading *fi tilka al-qubbah wa-fi ghayr dhālika al-mawḍiʿ* for *fi . . . al-qubbah*, with BD, and L with some variants. 113. For a similar discussion of the role of God's throne, see pp. 135–39. 114. Reading *tabi ʿnāhā*, with BD. For the idiom, cf. B46.4; 186.10. 115. Omitting *wa* before *innahu*, with BDL. 116. Gen 1:27. 117. Reading *fa-waswas*, with BD. 118. Adding *qūwat* after *qadr*, with BDL (cf. B67.10).

made bold to attack him with every manner of attack he had used against Adam—as we read in the gospel concerning how Satan treated him in the desert.¹¹⁹ Moreover, he came against him with the pains¹²⁰ mentioned in the gospel. He was unable to bring him down or make him slip, however. During all this, while Satan was attacking him,¹²¹ the eternal Son did not overstep the limit of human nature, not in the least. It was thus that he purified human nature and removed its shame, while at the same time disgracing Satan, who held human nature in reproach, and overcoming his presumptuousness toward it. He made manifest¹²² to the angels and to all human beings Satan’s ignorance, where once he had boasted of his wisdom and wickedness, saying, “I’ve enslaved the image of God; through it, the whole of creation is subject to me.” Through what he did, the Son revealed himself to the angels as an example for them¹²³ and taught them that his creation was good, even as scripture testified,¹²⁴ and that human nature had been overcome not because of some defect in the way it was created but because of the laxity of Adam’s free will, for which he alone was responsible. In this way, he lifted doubt from their minds, that they might be at ease in the worship of him and that they might never again, after that, fear for themselves that they might turn away. As for us human beings,¹²⁵ he purchased us from the curse of the law through his pains, crucifixion, and death. All that he endured fulfilled what the law required, for all who believe in him—he being able to fulfill this for us all in that he is an eternal Son and incomparably better than us all.

As for Nestorius, who says that it was¹²⁶ a man who suffered for us these pains, crucifixion, and death, he has cut himself off from salvation, and the curse of the law remains on him. Because of his sin, he must be handed over to eternal punishment, for, as we have said,¹²⁷ what a man suffers is not sufficient to fulfill¹²⁸ the law’s requirements for all of us. Jacob, on the other hand, says that Christ’s human deeds and the pains, crucifixion, and death he suffered—that these did not come from¹²⁹ his human nature. His tongue is a tool of Satan. All that his words do is vindicate Satan, confirming his boast against human nature. It is he who, together with Satan, ascribes fault to God for having created human nature. In effect, the Jacobite proclaims that human nature was overcome¹³⁰ and that it must remain in its fallen state forever, and that, when God created it, he was unable to give it¹³¹ the ability

119. Matt 4:1–11. 120. Reading *bi-l-awjā*^c, with BL. 121. Adding *iyyāhu* after *al-Shayṭān*, with BDL. 122. Reading *mashhūran*, with BDL. 123. Adding *la-hum* after *nāzaran*, with BDL. 124. Gen 1:31. 125. Omitting *ba^c da dhālīka*, with BDL. 126. Reading *innamā*, with L. 127. See p. 112. 128. Adding *qaḍā^a* before *an*, with BDL. 129. Reading *min* for *fi*, with BD. 130. Reading *maṣrū^ah*, with BDL. 131. Reading *fihā* for *minhā*, with BDL.

to protect itself, and that Satan tramples it through his power. All this¹³² is entailed by the Jacobite's words. Such words cut him off from Christ's salvation, confirm against him the curse of the law, and hand him over, because of his sin, to eternal punishment, like Nestorius his associate, indeed, even more; nor need we repeat what we said earlier in this discourse,¹³³ about how he surpasses the beasts in coarseness and the devils in insolence toward God—and this, because he says that God died in his divine nature—and about how he is cut off from the eternal¹³⁴ Son's death because of his contrivance of the single nature he called "Christ" and because of his taking it as an idol to be worshipped.

You should know that the eternal Son, when he fought with Satan in his human nature, did not in the least¹³⁵ transgress the measure of human nature, so as to treat Satan justly and so as to vindicate human nature. As for what did not concern the limit imposed by his fight for human nature, he acted as he willed,¹³⁶ according to the power of his divine nature. This was because the whole of his hypostasis was joined with his human nature. It was thus that he had two perfect¹³⁷ natures through which¹³⁸ he acted—a divine nature and a human nature. One might compare him to an eagle that assumed the nature of a horse. When he competed with horses, he in no way transgressed the power of a horse. When he wished to do something not in accord with that competition, however, he acted as the eagle acts in its nature. There is no way that this can be considered unfair to the horses who competed with him. The same holds for what took place between the eternal Son and Satan. Because this was so, he both did and suffered human things in his human nature, without transgressing the measure of human nature, while at the same time performing wonders such as God does through the power he had in his divine nature. He also gave his disciples the power to perform wonders in his name, so as to confirm his divinity. He did this in a manner that was at the time hidden from Satan, however, disguising himself from him so as to trick him into audaciously killing him. At the same time, he revealed this to those of his followers who had received the Holy Spirit through the purity of their faith.

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Conclusions

This is what we have to say on Christ's death. If it is right, this is because the Holy Spirit is wont to be present¹³⁹ with those who with good

132. Reading *hādhā*, with BDL. 133. See p. 115. 134. Reading *al-azālī*, with BDL. 135. Reading *shaʿratan* for *bi-naṣrihi*, with BDL. 136. Omitting *bi-qudratihi*, with BDL. 137. Reading *bi-tamāmihimā* for *bayna mā minhimā*, with BD. 138. Reading *bi-himā*, with BDL. 139. Adding *mawjūdan huwa* after *al-quḍus*, with BDL.

intention seek a true understanding of the faith, so as to make them successful in finding the truth, even though they do not merit this through their deeds. If there is in our words a flaw, again, praise be to the Holy Spirit, who sometimes also withholds his gifts from sinners, so as to chastise them, that they might turn from the darkness of sin and seek the light of his wisdom through repentance and righteousness. As for us, through the grace of the Holy Spirit,¹⁴⁰ our sole goal is to build ourselves on the foundation of St. Peter, he who directed the six holy councils. These councils were gathered by command of the bishop of Rome, the city of the world.¹⁴¹ Whoever sits on that city's throne is authorized by Christ to have compassion on the people of the church, by summoning the ecumenical council, and to strengthen them,¹⁴² even as we have demonstrated in other places.¹⁴³ We ask Christ to confirm us in this forever, that we might inherit through it his kingdom, in that we have joined with it the doing of his commandments. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

140. Reading *wa-naḥnu bi-niʿmat Rūḥ al-qudus* for *ghayr . . . ḥāl*, with BD.

141. The text of L breaks off here. One wonders if the scribe left off his labors because of the ecclesiological views that follow. 142. Theodore here alludes to Luke 22:31–32, where (in his version) Christ commands Peter to have compassion on his brethren and to strengthen them. See the discussion of this theme at pp. 68–69. 143. The allusion here is to Theodore's *On the Councils*, translated above, and perhaps to other treatises, now lost.

On Our Salvation

God revealed the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, in it establishing B83
precepts for human beings and laying down penalties for those who
transgress those precepts.¹ One such precept was that human beings are
to love God with *all* their hearts, with *all* their might, with *all* their souls,
and with *all* their wills.² By saying this, he taught them that³ he would
not allow them to neglect anything he had granted them the ability to
do and that he would not be pleased with them if they were to omit any
of it, whether much or little, and not do it⁴ out of love for him. Since God
required humanity to expend *all* their might in obedience to him and
to strive to serve him with *all* their effort, the wise must recognize that
there is no way of making amends for those who fall short—even for a
moment—of the maximum of their ability in obeying God. This being
so, the penalty God imposed for any sort of disobedience is hanging
over the heads of those who have fallen into that disobedience: those
who have been disobedient are not in any way able to pay for themselves
the required penalty and they have absolutely no escape from it. Per-
haps someone will nevertheless say: Through penance, I can escape the
penalty for my disobedience. We reply: Tell us this. When you do your
penance, can⁵ you exceed the maximum of your ability in loving and B84
obeying God? We do not doubt that this person will say that this can-
not be done. To this person we thus say: Since you cannot, when you do
penance, exceed the maximum of your ability in obeying God, and since
the law requires you always to strive to the maximum of your ability in

1. As explained in the introduction, I have included under the title *On Our Salvation* the sixth, seventh, and tenth of the treatises in Bāshā's edition. 2. Cf. Deut 6:5. 3. Reading *annahu*. 4. Reading *wa-lā yasta^cmilūhu*. 5. I have tentatively emended *ahlan wa-* to read *a-hal*.

obeying God—since this is so, it follows that when you do your penance, the most you can do is what is required of you at that particular moment. Even if you were wholly obedient—because of how deeply rooted in you is the habit of sin, to the blandishments of which you willingly submitted, this would be extremely difficult and I do not think that it would even be possible—nonetheless, even if you were wholly obedient, you would have no way to get rid of even a speck of your earlier sins. Accordingly, there is no doubt that the penalty you owe for your earlier sins is still required⁶ of you: you have no ability at all to annul it. I simply cannot understand the opinion of a certain fellow, one not reckoned among the wise,⁷ namely, that God does not require people to strive to the maximum of their ability in obeying him. If this were so, he would also have to say that God is pleased with human beings if they expend part of their effort obeying the devil and their own corrupt desires. Far be it from God to be pleased if anyone⁸ does this! Indeed, if God were pleased with this, he would have both to deliver his creatures to damnation and allow the devil to share with him in receiving human devotion. He would never allow this, however. May he be blessed and exalted! Accordingly, sin remains and the penalty for it is inescapable.

Given what we have said, we human beings might expect one of two things from God: either he will forgive our sins freely and mercifully remit the penalty we owe for them, or he will demand—and justly so—that we give him full payment, in which case we go to eternal damnation. Suppose someone says that God mercifully remits from human beings the consequences of the law, but does so without having a just cause. This person makes God's law void and God himself one who does things in vain, in that he imposes a law but does not demand full payment of its claims. Far be it from God that he be one who does things in vain or that he make something that is void! The only way for human beings to escape their sins is for there to be some just cause, through which the law might be upheld. Further, the one who says this, if he were to allow that it is possible,⁹ he would have to conclude that there is no one who will not share with him in forgiveness through God's mercy, which is not so sparing that it does not encompass both the believer and the unbeliever—if in fact it abounds apart from some just cause. Both the Magian and those even more wicked will have the same blessed state as he. If this is so, however, it is in vain that the people of faith suffer, those who [. . .]¹⁰ in obeying God and are poured out¹¹ in serving him. It makes no difference if any of us clings defiantly to our desires and sets them up

6. Reading *wājibah* (cf. B83.14). 7. The identity of this person is unknown.

8. Reading *li-aḥad*. 9. That is, that God does things in vain? 10. There seems to be a word missing from the text. 11. Cf. Phil 2:17 and 2 Tim 4:6.

as gods to be worshipped, yielding to every temporal good fortune and enjoying with those who are of the world the [. . .]¹² of the world. Far be it from God to neglect his servants in this manner! Far be it from him to put them into such a situation! There could be nothing worse than that, and nothing could please God less. Accordingly, there is a need for some just cause through which we might be able to please God, notwithstanding our sins, and find pardon from their consequences. Would that I knew the nature of this just cause, so that those who desire eternal life might hasten to it! By it, such as these will enjoy the blessed life, while those who turn their backs on it and put their trust in penance, in that it offers no help when there befalls them that painful and everlasting punishment, will merit the fire,¹³ both because of their past sins and because they were less than perfect in the obedience and love of God enjoined on them in his law.

The eternal Son, who was begotten of the Father before the ages, who shares the Father's essence and is his equal, in his mercy came down from heaven to Adam's seed and took up residence in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who had been purified through the Holy Spirit. He took from her a body that he fashioned for himself, along with a mind and a soul, and became a human being from the Holy Spirit and from the pure Virgin. He went forth into the world and allowed himself to experience the punishment that each of us merited because of our sins, namely, being beaten, being humiliated, being crucified, and experiencing death. If he had not become incarnate, there would have been no way for him to experience such pains, for in his divine essence he is neither seen nor touched, nor is he affected by suffering, pain, or harm. By becoming incarnate, however, he made it possible for himself to experience such suffering by exposing his body to it. His back he allowed to be beaten by whips, his head to be struck, his face to be spat upon, his hands and his feet to be nailed, his side to be pierced by a lance. He truly underwent these sufferings in his body, although none of them reached through to his divine nature. It is thus that he accomplished our salvation. It is as the prophet Isaiah said, speaking in the person of Christ, "I did not disobey or doubt. I gave my back to the whips and my cheek to the slap. I did not turn my face from the humiliation of spittle."¹⁴ Isaiah also said of him, "He had not appearance or glory that we should look at him. He had not appearance or beauty, but his appearance was lowly, not even that of a man. He was a wounded man, who knows that he bears sicknesses. He was lowly and of no account. He bore our sicknesses and for our sakes he suffered. We accounted him in illness wounded by God,

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12. The reading of the ms. (*bi-ḥaqq wa-bāṭil*) is unlikely to be correct. I am unable to suggest a suitable emendation, however. 13. Reading *al-nār*. 14. Isa 50:5–6.

afflicted. He was only wounded for the sake of our iniquities, and there befell him illnesses for the sake of our sins. The punishment for our peace was upon him, and by his wounds we were healed. Like sheep we have gone astray; each of us has erred from the path. The Lord handed him over for the sake of our sins. He did not open his mouth when he was afflicted; like a sheep that is led to slaughter and like a lamb before the butcher, so he was silent and did not open his mouth out of his humility.”¹⁵ This is what Isaiah said of him when he saw how he became incarnate and how he hid the glory of his divinity so that Satan might make bold with him and so that the Jews, a people who obey Satan, might be so audacious as to crucify him. So too, the prophet David said of him, as if speaking of himself, “They nailed my hands and my feet and counted all my bones. They looked at me and vilified me. They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”¹⁶ The prophet Zechariah, too, said about the fact that the Jews would pierce him, “That day, they will look on the one whom they pierced.”¹⁷ Each and every one of the prophets made mention¹⁸ of his pains, through which the salvation of the world was accomplished. It is through this eternal Son alone, who endured and underwent for us these pains in his body, which he subjected to them, that we have forgiveness of sins. It is through his pains alone that we are delivered from the punishment we merit because of our sins. There is no way for anyone to have their sins forgiven or to be delivered from punishment for sin except through these pains that befell this Son. How so?

Let those who are listening hear and understand that when the Father saw that Adam and his children had fallen into sin and were being jostled about in it as if by waves and that through it destruction had overwhelmed them, he said to his Son, “I see that Adam, who is in our image and likeness, as well as his offspring, have come under sin’s dominion. The just claim of sin that stands against them has excluded them from the state¹⁹ of blessedness for which they were created.”²⁰ The law cannot be made void, however; it must receive its claims in full, from every single human being. Come, take a body. Through it, manifest yourself in the world and expose yourself²¹ to the punishments that human beings merit because of their sins. Let those punishments befall you, for when this happens there will be forgiveness of sins for those who, for their sins, offer to me your pains. For them there will be an escape from every punishment they merit because of my law. In this way, you will²² have nullified the just claims of sin and the devil its sponsor and fulfilled the claims of my law

15. Isa 53:2–7. 16. Ps 22:16–18. 17. Zech 12:10; cf. John 19:37. 18. Reading *qad*. 19. Reading *hāl*. 20. Translation tentative. 21. Reading *wa-tata‘arrad* (cf. B88.9 and B180.14). 22. Reading *wa-takūn*.

without its becoming null and void. At the same time, you will have opened the door for all of Adam's offspring who wish deliverance for themselves, preparing for them a forgiveness that they will be able to obtain without trouble, by faith in you and by the offering of your pains. You, my pure²³ Son, are my equal and share my essence. Not even the whole of humanity could be your equal or could be compared to you in any way because of the incomparable glory of your divinity. Thus, when you have suffered for their sakes just once the punishment merited by them an innumerable number of times, you will have caused the law to receive in full its claims on them and infinitely more as well." Because he is merciful like the Father and because their wills are one, the Son did as the Father said. He came to Mary and took flesh from her, when through the Holy Spirit he had purified her of all stains of sin. He came forth from her into the world and dwelt among human beings, even as the prophets had said that he would. He exposed himself to the aforementioned calamities, that they might befall him, and thus effected our salvation. Blessed be his name! He "delivered us from the curse of the law,"²⁴ as St. Paul said. He "bore our sins," as John the Baptist said, when he saw him and pointed his finger at him, saying, "This is the lamb of God who bears the sins of the world."²⁵ The law of Moses, too, says, "Sins are forgiven through the sacrifice."²⁶ This refers to the sacrifice of the true lamb, not just to the animal sacrifices that were an image of the true lamb. For that reason, when the blood of animals was shed in the temple for the forgiveness of human sins, the ritual was not complete until the priest was ordered to make a cross with their blood on the altar of the Lord God, before sacrificing for their sin an animal—an image of Christ's cross, through which alone their sin would be forgiven.²⁷ After all, a person cannot be redeemed from the death necessitated by sin through the sacrifice of a mere animal, which is of lesser worth than a person. Otherwise, the law would not be receiving its claims in full, in that the death of a person is required and it is being satisfied with the death of a mere animal. If the law were deprived of its claims, however, it would become void, and God, who established it, would become one who does things in vain. May he be exalted above that! In that the Son is incomparably better than the whole world, however, it was he who was sacrificed for the whole world. He was sufficient to give the law its claims in full; indeed, he was immeasurably more than sufficient. This is why in the book of Acts the apostle Peter said of Jesus Christ, "There is

23. Reading *al-tāhir*. 24. Gal 3:13. 25. John 1:29. 26. Cf. Lev 4:20, 26, 31. 27. Theodore seems to be alluding to the rituals described in the fourth chapter of Leviticus, where the priests are enjoined to put blood on each of the four horns of the altar (symbolically, a cross) before burning the sacrificial victims required by the various types of sin offerings.

salvation in nothing else, for there is no other name under heaven given to human beings by which they might be saved.”²⁸ The apostle Paul, too, said of him, “God put him forward as forgiveness, through faith in his blood, so that God might be just and justly purify everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.”²⁹ Do you not see that forgiveness is through Christ’s blood and that those whom God purified from sin through this blood were justly purified, for, as we have said, this Son’s death fulfilled each of the law’s claims against us? If in the divine scriptures of the Old and New Testaments you hear of forgiveness or mercy or penance, know that it took place only through Christ’s cross and the shedding of his blood. If this were not so, the law would be void and God would be one who does things in vain. Far be this from him! The fulfilment of the law’s claims took place through this blood alone, which was shed for the living and for the dead. For this reason, Christ descended to hell to preach to those who had died before his crucifixion and taught them about how he shed his blood for them, so that those who believed in him might have forgiveness of sins through his blood, even as the living had it.

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Now then, as for us, the Christian community, when we offer for our sins the pains of this Son, our sins³⁰ are surely forgiven and we are delivered from the punishment prepared for those who, after the coming of Christ, depart from the world before their sins are forgiven through his blood. As for those who are not Christians, those who do not offer for their sins the pains of Christ, they will die in their sins, even as Christ said to the Jews, “Truly, I say to you that if you do not believe, you will die in your sins.”³¹ As for those who die in their sin, the punishment for that sin is both necessary and everlasting. The words of the gospel thus stand confirmed: “Those who believe in the Son have eternal life; those who do not believe in him will not taste life, but the wrath of God remains on them.”³² All this, my friends, Christ accomplished for us through what he undertook to suffer for us, through his crucifixion and through the pains experienced in the body that he assumed from the pure Mary. It is thus that his summons is called the “gospel,” that is, the “good news,” for it proclaims to humanity the good news about how Christ saved them from that from which they were unable to save themselves. We give praise to Christ for his immeasurable grace. We ask him to infuse our hearts with the Holy Spirit that we might not be ashamed of the pains he suffered for us. We ask him to help us abandon sin and forsake worldly pleasures, as well as the counsels of Satan, our enemy, through whose deception we were first cast into the abyss of sin. We beseech Christ to purify our

28. Acts 4:12.
32. John 3:36.

29. Rom 3:25–26.

30. Reading *khaṭāyānā*.

31. John 8:24.

intention, that we might love him more fully and more truly and keep our baptismal covenant with him, lest in exchange for sin we cast away³³ what we received through his pains and eat his flesh and drink his blood in an unworthy manner and thus singe our souls and experience a punishment worse than what we merited through our sins alone.³⁴ We beg him not to turn away from us, according to his promise in his gospel,³⁵ and to help us live in accordance with his precepts for moral conduct, which are life for our souls, that we might share with him in his kingdom even as now he makes us share in his pains, as also the apostle Paul said.³⁶ We ask him not to allow us to give in to our lusts so that we sink into sin and end up in destruction. Rather, may he guide and direct us, that we might live in his felicity and joy. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

The Son's Residing in a Body

[Perhaps you will say]:³⁷ My friend, you have established³⁸ that there is no way for [our sins to be forgiven except] through the pains that this [Son] experienced [and] allowed himself to suffer as [a ransom from³⁹ the punishment] each of us merited [through sin]. It remains for you to explain [how this] Son, who is God and equal [to God], [was able⁴⁰ to] be contained by a body, so as to be touched⁴¹ [by pains that would not otherwise have found]⁴² a way to befall him. To this, [we respond]: Notwithstanding that [God] is uncontained, uncircumscribed, and without limit, [he willed]—may he be blessed!—to appear to his creatures, by [manifesting his deeds and words to them] from a place appropriate for them. It was his kindness and beneficence that led him to do this for them. Indeed, if he had not done so, their minds would have been distracted [. . .]⁴³ as they seek him, and they would have had neither peace nor repose from [. . .],⁴⁴ and in vain they would be [. . .],⁴⁵ and their being agitated will not lead them [. . .]⁴⁶ to grasp the one [through whom alone] they have rest.

33. Reading *nulqī*. 34. Cf. 1 Cor 11:27–30. 35. Cf. Matt 28:20. 36. Cf. Phil 3:10; Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Col 1:24. 37. It will be recalled from the introduction that Bāshā's exemplar for this treatise was damaged and that the materials in brackets represent conjectural supplements. 38. Reading *athbatta* (cf. B91.8). 39. Reading *fidā' min*. 40. Reading *yumkinuhu*. 41. Reading *tašil*. 42. Reading *tajid* (cf. B86.4 and B28.2 for the idiom). 43. Bāshā notes that roughly four words are illegible. His supplement seems unlikely to be correct, however. 44. Bāshā's supplement (one word) does not accord with the sense. 45. I am unable to understand the text as it now stands. Surely *mudāwinīn* is corrupt. 46. Bāshā's two-word supplement does not accord with the sense of Theodore's argument.

This is [why] he made himself a throne and sat on it in heaven, from the time that he first created them:⁴⁷ not because he needed a throne on which to sit but because they needed [to understand] the place of his dwelling, that they might worship [him in it] and that he might give them commands from it.⁴⁸ It is as [the prophet Micaiah said], “[I saw] the Lord, the God of Israel, sitting [on his throne], [and all] the host of angels standing in formation [on his right and on] his left; and the Lord said, ‘Who [will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead]?’ And one said one thing, and another said another thing. Then the Spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, ‘I shall deceive him.’ And the Lord [said to him], ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘By such and such means.’ And the Lord said, ‘Go forth and do so, for you will be able to accomplish this.’”⁴⁹ Do you not see that the Lord has a throne, from which he appears to his angels and gives them commands, even as we have said? Again, the prophet [Isaiah] said, “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the Seraphim; each]⁵⁰ had six wings: with two [they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet], and with two they flew].⁵¹ And each called to [the other], saying, ‘[Holy, holy, holy]⁵² is the Lord Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of his glory.’”⁵³ Do you not see that the angels’ glorification of [God] takes place in front of the throne on which [the Lord God] sits? B182 [Again, the prophet Daniel] said, “As I looked, [thrones were placed and the ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him]; a thousand thousands stood in front of him, and ten thousand times ten thousand attended him.”⁵⁴ Again, the three youths said to God while in the fiery furnace in Babylon, “Blessed are you who look into the depths while sitting on the Cherubim; blessed are you on the throne of the glory of your dominion.”⁵⁵ Again, the prophet David said, “His throne is in heaven.”⁵⁶ All the prophets thus agree that God sits on a throne. I do not [suppose that the people] of faith will disagree with the prophets about God’s sitting on a throne. At the same time, none [of them] can say that because of his sitting [on a throne he is not everywhere in heaven]. Rather, all of us know that [God is in every place] and that he [fills the whole of heaven], notwithstanding that he shows himself to his angels [in

47. Presumably, Theodore originally made mention of angels somewhere in the preceding. 48. A similar discussion of God’s throne and the angels can be found at p. 125. 49. 1 Kg 22:19–22 LXX. 50. Bāshā neglected to note where this supplement began. 51. Again, Bāshā neglected to note where this supplement began. 52. Adding a third *qaddūs* to the two supplied by Bāshā. 53. Isa 6:1–3. 54. Dan 7:9–10. 55. Sg Three 32–33. 56. Ps 103:19.

heaven] only from the throne, as well as that it is to that place that the angels lift praise [to God] because of his residing there—and they do not do this in ignorance.

Similarly, we know that the eternal Son is in every place, that he is limited by nothing, that nothing contains him, and that he need not reside [in any particular] place. That said, the eternal Son—may he be blessed!—out of mercy, because of our need [for a savior], [took up residence in] the body he took from the pure Virgin Mary and [was subjected to] suffering and pain, which, when they befell him, ransomed us from the curse of the law. [. . .]⁵⁷ He resided in it out of mercy, and this [body] became for us analogous to the throne in heaven, [for] the body, through the action of the divinity [which was joined to it through the purest and most exalted manner of union], [allowed] itself to suffer calamities as a ransom for human beings. How do those who disagree with us deny that [God resides] in the body that he took from [the pure Virgin Mary], [while they say] that God sits on the throne [in heaven]? It is incumbent on them either not to find fault with such as those who say this or not to speak like those who find fault. Nevertheless, perhaps you will say that the throne is wide while the body taken from Mary is narrow, and for that reason it is not to be denied that God resides on the throne, but it is to be denied that he resides in the body. We answer you, my friends: The throne and heaven and earth—even if there were an infinite number of such things—are themselves too narrow to be wide enough for God. May he be blessed and exalted! As far as God is concerned, the narrow and the wide are one and the same. His residing in this body is thus no different from his residing on the throne. Perhaps you will say that the throne is pure while the human body is not its equal in this regard. We respond: In terms of its creation, the throne is not more pure than humanity. Indeed, both you and we say that God did not create anything more honorable than the human being. God did not abhor residing in the most honorable part of his creation. Rather, because of its precedence,⁵⁸ this human creation was a fitter place for God to reside than the whole of creation: the impurity God abhors is sin alone.

As for the body that he took from Mary, no motion toward sin ever entered it. It is as St. Paul said, “He was like us in everything except for sin.”⁵⁹ Again, the prophet Isaiah said of him, speaking in the voice of the Father, “My sinful people led him to death. I shall requite the wicked for his burial and the rich for his death, for he had done no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth.”⁶⁰ Again he said of him, “He will devote himself

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57. Rejecting Bāshā’s supplement of two words. 58. Alternatively, perhaps one should read *kamā* and translate “as already mentioned.” 59. Cf. Heb 4:15. 60. Isa 53:8–9 LXX.

to the service of many and will bear their sins, because of that inheriting many. And he will divide the spoils with the mighty, for he delivered himself to death. And he was numbered with the transgressors, while extirpating the sins of many and being delivered for the disobedient.”⁶¹ All this Isaiah said. Again he said, “There shall come forth a staff from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall arise from his root.”⁶² And the Spirit of God shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of understanding and might, the spirit of judgment⁶³ and piety.”⁶⁴ Again he said, “With equity he will judge the poor and decide with righteousness for the nobles.”⁶⁵ Again he said, “The Lord will girdle his waist with justice, and truth will surround his sides.”⁶⁶ Again, God said of him through one of the twelve⁶⁷ prophets, “I shall send to you a sun of righteousness, and your medicine is on his wings,”⁶⁸ meaning “his cross.”

Christ’s body is “the sun of righteousness,” even as the prophets said. Similarly, Christ’s body is to the divinity⁶⁹ as the sun’s body is to the light. Even as God created the light on the first day and then created the body of the sun on the fourth day and made that light he had created on the first day to take up residence in it, so also this body taken from Mary became the dwelling place of the divinity: from it, its light shone forth, and it manifested its deeds and words to the angels and to the whole of creation. This body was not taken from the Virgin Mary until the Holy Spirit had purified her of all stains of sin. The eternal Son took it from her as something immaculate, pure, and cleansed, ready for the divinity to reside in it. After the divinity took up residence in it, it became a fount, from which there flowed all the exalted features of the divinity, such as righteousness, wisdom, and might. Nonetheless, the eternal Son held back the glory of his divinity and did not manifest it in his body, since he was dwelling among human beings. He let human actions such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and so on, be manifested in it, so that⁷⁰ Satan might not recognize him and might make bold with him, so that through the people who obey him⁷¹ there might befall him those pains, the befalling of which was salvation from our sin and the nullification of Satan’s just claim, which was against Adam, through his willingly entering into obedience to him. When he had completed his mission in this regard and had handed over his humanity for our sakes, he raised it on the third day and made flow from it all his glory. In it, he then ascended in glory to heaven, where with it he sat⁷² on the throne on

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61. Isa 53:11–12 LXX. 62. Reading *jidhrihi*. 63. Reading *al-ḥukm*. 64. Isa 11:1–2 LXX. 65. Isa 11:4 LXX. 66. Isa 11:5. 67. Reading *aḥad al-ithnay* (cf. B101.8). 68. Mal 4:2. 69. Reading *jasad al-masiḥ li-l-lāhūt* for *al-lāhūt*. 70. Reading *li-kay*. 71. That is, the Jews (cf. p. 132). 72. Reading *jalas*.

which he had been before becoming incarnate. From there, those who love him await his coming in that body, on the clouds, with his angelic hosts, that he might judge the living and the dead and reward everyone for what they have done.

I cannot help but wonder at those who deny the residing of God in this human body, which is, as we have just said, truly the most noble part of his creation, while they do not deny his residing in the bush from which he spoke to Moses,⁷³ or his residing in the pillar of cloud, in which he used to descend on the tabernacle of Moses and from it speak,⁷⁴ the children of Israel worshipping toward that pillar, each one of them from where his tent was located.⁷⁵ How can they deny us the right to worship God in this human body, even as the children of Israel worshipped him in the pillar of cloud? Indeed, the human body is surely as much nobler than the cloud as the sun is nobler than the earth. When at the command of God Moses made the golden cover, which he called the “mercy seat,” God said to him, “Tell Aaron your brother that he and his sons are not to come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy seat, lest he die; for I shall appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.”⁷⁶ Since God was seen in the cloud upon the mercy seat, even as he said, let no one deny the Christians the right to say that human beings saw God in a human body. When Moses set up the tabernacle, as he had been commanded by God, and anointed and sanctified it with holy oil, Moses would enter it to speak with God and would “hear the voice of God speaking to him from above the mercy seat, which was above the ark of the covenant, between the Cherubim.”⁷⁷ Even as God was in that spacious tabernacle (or rather, in every place) but wanted to speak with Moses only from the mercy seat between the Cherubim, so also the eternal Son, who is God and Son of God, was in heaven and on earth and in every place but wanted to speak to human beings from this human body that he took from the pure Virgin Mary.

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We do not desire to cite further from the holy scriptures, extracting from them their many passages applicable to what we are saying about the eternal Son’s residing in the body and about how, while in it, he spoke to human beings from it and manifested to them his deeds and divine power, his wisdom and his righteousness. What we have introduced is sufficient for the wise and for those who are honestly seeking the truth. To the Son, who accomplished our salvation by taking flesh from the pure Virgin Mary, belongs praise and glory and blessings, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever!

73. Exod 3:2. 74. Exod 40:34–38; Num 9:15–23. 75. Exod 33:10. 76. Lev 16:2. 77. Num 7:89.

That God Has a Son

B91 Perhaps someone will say: My friend, you have established that sins are forgiven only through the pains experienced by the Son. You have also shown that it cannot be denied that God is able to reside at will in any part of his creation and from there manifest deeds and words. You must now explain how to establish your claim that God has a Son who is his equal and shares his essence. To the one who says this, we reply: If you deny that God has a Son, you attribute defect to God, nullify the glory of his divinity, and reduce the honor of his dominion. Listen, if you would understand this.

Tell me this: Do you say that God has dominion or do you deny this in the same way that you deny his being a father, being ignorant of the loathsome consequences that such a denial entails?⁷⁸ I cannot imagine that you would so disdain God as to say that he does not have dominion. If you attribute dominion to God, tell me over what he exercises it. I rather suspect that you will say that his dominion is over all creatures. We ask you then: Before there were creatures, was he possessed of dominion? If you say that he did not have dominion before there were creatures, you have caused him to derive honor from creatures, for dominion is surely an honor for the one who possesses it. Further, if it was creatures that gave God his honor—far be that from him!—it would not have been out of his graciousness that he created them. No! It would rather have been his need to be honored by having someone to dominate that caused him to create them. This, however, does away with his generosity, nullifies his goodness, and denies his graciousness. Furthermore, if you maintain that God's dominion was only over creatures, you make his dominion to be of the most inferior and mean sort and limit him to a dominion that even the lowliest person would avoid and not desire. How so? No person would desire to dominate ants or asses, or other beasts,⁷⁹ birds, or lesser entities, whether smaller or bigger than these. A person would much prefer dominating another person to dominating everything in creation that is not human. If this is how people are, surely God is too exalted to dominate creatures alone. Why? When compared to us, ants, asses, and lesser entities, however base, are not more base than the whole of creation compared to God's exalted nature and essence. If we compare ants and lesser entities to ourselves, we find that we are related to one another; we see in their nature features comparable with those we find in our own nature. As for God—may he be blessed and exalted!—not one creature is his equal in any regard. May he be exalted

78. For the argument that follows, see the parallel at pp. 225ff. 79. Adding *min* before *ashbāh*.

above that! Even if it were the most exalted of creatures, it would still be more distant from God's nature than is a person's picture from the person whose picture it is, or the shadow of a body from the body⁸⁰ itself, or the reflection of a person in a mirror from the person reflected in it,⁸¹ or anything else, however unimaginably distant it is from its cognate. My friend, how can you think it right to make God dominate creatures alone, when in comparison to God they are as base as we have argued? B93
 This can only be a result of how greatly you have misunderstood and disregarded God's exalted⁸² nature and essence. If you were king and someone came to you, saying, "Peace be upon you, ruler of the asses," I suppose that you would inflict a mortal punishment. How then do you figure that you will not deserve even worse punishment from God, for making him dominate the creation alone, notwithstanding that you know that your nature is unimaginably more like that of an ass than the most exalted creature is like God's nature? There is no escape. You must attribute to God a dominion that precedes creation and is eternal. You are compelled to this conclusion by the facts.

God's dominion must be over one equal, one lesser, or one greater. Suppose you say that it is over one lesser. In that everything less than God is a creature, you are back where you started and have "returned to your vomit,"⁸³ once again making God dominate creation alone. Accordingly, his dominion cannot be over one lesser. What about one greater? There is, quite simply, no such thing. May he be exalted and blessed! His dominion must then be over one equal. Come then, let us examine who is equal to God, or rather, who is from God, that we might treat him with proper respect and render him his due.

There are three ways to dominate: by force, by will, or by nature. If you say that God's dominion is by force, you attribute weakness to God. We have already agreed that God's dominion must be over one equal. If God's equal is overcome with force, God's equal is weak. If God's equal is weak, God himself is weak. Far be that from him! Accordingly, we cannot say that God's dominion is by force. If you say that God's dominion is by will, you attribute to God a dominion that is borrowed, one whose permanence is not guaranteed, since there occurs in it a role for the one who wills to be dominated by him. This is extremely loathsome, however, in that you cause God's honor to be something extraneous, borrowed, and impermanent. May he be exalted above that! It remains that his dominion be by nature. Dominion by nature is the type of dominion that the Father has over the Son. It never ceases. It is not brought about B94

80. Reading *al-jasad*. 81. Theodore uses this same analogy at p. 160. 82. Reading *ʿuzm* for *hāl* (cf. B92.13). 83. Cf. Prov 26:11 and 2 Pet 2:22.

by force. In it, there is neither discomfort nor misgiving. It is instead full of joy and love. It is indeed the case that the Father takes joy in the Son and loves him, even as he testified when during the incarnation the Son was baptized in the Jordan, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I take joy”⁸⁴—uniting in this one sentence both love and joy. So too, the Son takes joy in the Father and loves him, as often he said in the gospel.⁸⁵

Notwithstanding what we have just argued, you will surely object: How could God beget, when we see that one who begets experiences inescapable necessities such as sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and its consequences, none of which can properly be said of God? We respond: How can you inquire about something that transcends the heavenly minds and all the angelic hosts, who humble themselves before it and refrain⁸⁶ from inquiring about it? If, because you do not understand how it occurs, you find that you must reject the sonship even after it has been proven to be the case, it is time for you to deny everything you attribute to God, in that you do not understand how it occurs. If you refuse to do so, then tell me how God is alive when life among us is accompanied by necessities of which you are not ignorant, things like eating, drinking, B95 nourishment, clothing, and transience. You are unable to say how God is alive notwithstanding these necessities. Accordingly, you should deny life to God because you do not understand how it occurs and because it is contrary to the type of life you see with your own eyes, even as you deny the sonship because you do not understand how it occurs and because it is contrary to the type of sonship your own senses can perceive. If you will not deny life to God because you do not understand how it occurs and because it is contrary to our type of life, do not deny sonship to God because of your ignorance of how it occurs and because it is contrary to our type of sonship. There is no escape: valid and rational arguments compel you to accept the sonship.

A similar argument can be made with regard to other of God’s attributes: hearing, seeing, knowing, making, and so on. If you deny sonship of God, tell us, since you say that God hears, do you think that he hears like we do through nerve fibers?⁸⁷ Do you think that his hearing, like ours, has limits? Do you suppose that his hearing can be damaged, whether by loud noises or by deafness, blockage, hemorrhage,⁸⁸ or any other aural disease? I know that you do not think that anything like this

84. Matt 3:17. 85. See, e.g., John 14:31 and 15:10. 86. Reading *hādi’ah*. 87. Reading *bi-lif*. 88. The meaning of *al-khawā’* here is far from certain. This word normally means “emptiness” or “hunger” and does not appear to be a technical term for any sort of disease of the ear. In that it can also mean “nosebleed,” perhaps by extension the sense here has to do with some sort of bleeding in or from the ears.

can happen to God. Rather, you say, and we agree: God hears. At the same time, together we say that he transcends the types of damage that can happen to our own ears. In the same way, we must think purely of his begetting and exalt him above the defects of our own begetting in a way that befits his noble essence. Similarly, when we say that God is wise, do you think that he, like us, became wise through schooling, that he had to progress in an orderly fashion through the different grades of knowledge before arriving at his goal, or that he, like us, had to take care to memorize what he learned so as not to forget it? I do not suppose that you, or any other rational person, would say such things. Rather, we agree that God is wise but we think purely of his being wise, in a way that befits⁸⁹ his noble essence, exalting him above the weakness of our own wisdom. So also, we must⁹⁰ think purely of God's begetting, in a way that befits⁹¹ his noble and exalted essence, removing from it the defects of our own begetting. Similarly, when we say that God is the maker of the firmament, do you suppose that he, like us, could not have done this apart from some preexisting material? Or⁹² that the most he could do with what he made was unite its elements, arrange them, separate them, and change⁹³ one into the other? Or that all he could hope to do is refine them, by moving them one by one toward some end—knowing that he could attain for them no other, even if he were to desire for them something more than that? Or that when he was making, he, like us, needed a tool to amplify his strength? Or that he, like us, had to be careful not to damage with that tool any of the materials that slip?⁹⁴ Or that he, like us, prepares materials and labors to shape them, that they might free him from the need to seek out other materials, intending thereby to free himself from the trouble of carrying out the task?⁹⁵ Or perhaps that he wanted to make something that he was able to imagine, but found that he did not have the required skills? Or that he was beset by vexation from bending over, when his strength flagged? Notwithstanding that we find all this in ourselves, we know that such things in no way touch God, who makes what he wills from nothing. Rather, we think purely⁹⁶ of his making,⁹⁷ as befits his exalted essence, and remove⁹⁸ from him the base things that are in us. In the same way, we must think purely of God's begetting, as befits his essence, and avoid all the loathsome aspects of our own begetting. If you will not do so, why do you continue to affirm of God such terms as "hearing," "wisdom," "making," and so on? You

89. Reading *yushākīl*. 90. Reading *alaynā* (cf. B96.18). 91. Reading *yushākīl*. 92. Reading *aw* for *idh*. 93. Reading *wa-taḡyīr*. 94. Lit. "any of the things that escape." The edition's *yaflit* is dubious, however. 95. Translation tentative. 96. Reading *wa-nuḡadhdhib* (cf. B95.13 and B96.3–4, 18). 97. Reading *al-ṣan'ah*. 98. Reading *wa-na'zil*.

recognize that such terms entail both virtues and defects. You happily take away their defects, however, and apply to God their virtues alone. Why will you not affirm “begetting” of God, recognizing that it too entails both virtues and defects? You should treat the term “begetting” in the same way that you treat those other terms and apply it to God in the same way that you apply those other terms. You are not being fair.⁹⁹

Or perhaps you hold God in such disdain as to say that he is unable to beget one like himself. If so, in your ignorance you deprive him of a power greater than his power to create things from nothing. While it is clear that you began with a desire to exalt him by choosing from everything all that is honorable and attributing it to him,¹⁰⁰ when you come to the most honorable aspect of our natures, however, you refuse to attribute it to him.¹⁰¹ You recognize that the honorable aspects of our natures can be predicated of him purely, apart from the defects that accompany each when present in our nature, but you reject his dominion, to which sound reasoning has of necessity led you. You are pleased to diminish God and willfully do away with the nobility of his dominion and the exaltedness of his power, all because you are averse to the name “begetter,” which your soul obstinately suggests that you should hate. Notwithstanding that reason is more truthful than the eyes and has compelled you to confess the eternal Son, you find it acceptable to declare it a liar, defiant in fleeing that apart from which you have no life, that which suffices to save you from destruction and shame on the day of judgment, this Son who will judge the living and the dead, when you are enveloped in shame and handed over to excruciating punishment that does not cease and has no end. Wake up, my friend, whoever you may be, and believe in the eternal Son begotten of the Father before all eternity, he who by taking flesh from the pure Virgin Mary saved you from your sins, if you accept his salvation, believe in his divinity, and offer his pains for your sins. Be not quarrelsome, for then he will deliver you to destruction and to the loss of your intellect.

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You should know that the eternal Son is confirmed in many other ways, not only the one we have just employed, though it should suffice you if you possess intelligence and desire eternal life. Nonetheless, better even than the method we just used: he was prophesied by the prophets whose books are in the possession of both the Christians and the Jews.¹⁰² They spoke of his eternal birth from the Father and his second birth from the Virgin Mary, his pains, crucifixion, and burial, and the whole of his mission, as well as¹⁰³ other things which the holy gospel and all the books of

99. For the argument here, cf. pp. 12, 162, and 233.

101. For the idiom, cf. B55.7–8 and B56.19–20.

103. Reading *wa-ghayr*.

100. Reading *wa-waṣaftahu bi-*

102. A parallel list of prophecies can be found at pp. 179ff.

the New Testament proclaim. The books of the Old and New Testament are available for all who wish to understand this matter. They themselves ought to search it out in them and not require us to add it to what we have already undertaken for them through the rational method—and this, because of the weakness of our mind and will, through which, when they are sound, we receive the light of knowledge from the Holy Spirit, whom Christ generously gave to us through his crucifixion. Nonetheless, rather than neglect the matter of the eternal Son, we shall cite from the revealed scriptures a few passages that lay close to hand.

Through the prophet David, God said, “I begot you from the womb, before the light.”¹⁰⁴ This one who was begotten from God before the light is surely the eternal Son. He also said, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.”¹⁰⁵ Who is this God whose throne is forever and ever? This can only be the eternal Son, who is God of God. When he became incarnate of Mary, it was proper for him to call his Father the “God of gods.”¹⁰⁶ Solomon, the son of David, made mention of this Son, calling him the “Wisdom of God,” both so as to teach us that he was always with God and to inform the ignorant that whoever denies the eternity of this Son deprives God of his wisdom. He said, speaking in the voice of Wisdom, “The Lord created me at the beginning of his ways for his deeds. Before the ages, he established me in the beginning. Before the earth was made, before he poured out the founts of water, before he shaped the mountains and hills, before all, he begot me. When he was creating the heavens, I was with him. When he was marking off¹⁰⁷ his throne on the winds, when he was making firm and preparing the founts below the heavens, when he established for the sea the limit of its extent, that the waters might not transgress its edge, when he was making strong the foundations of the earth, I was acting with him. I was daily his delight, and I was rejoicing in him always.”¹⁰⁸ What sun is more luminous than this proof of the eternity of the Son and of his being begotten from God before all eternity, as well as that through him God created the world, that he delights in God and God delights in him, even as we said above,¹⁰⁹ and that he became incarnate? Because of all this, it was proper for him to say, “God created me at the beginning of his ways for his deeds.”

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The holy church testifies that Christ is perfect God and perfect man and that he truly has two natures, one divine, one human. All the scriptures thus mention both his divinity and his humanity. As for

104. Ps 110:3 LXX. 105. Ps 45:6–7. 106. Ps 84:7 LXX. 107. Reading *yahudd*.
108. Prov 8:22–30. 109. See p. 142.

those who claim that Christ is God but that he did not become man, they are unbelievers. As for those who claim that he is man but do not confess that he is God, they are infidels and excluded from the realm of the truth. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "Hearken to me,¹¹⁰ O Jacob, nay, Israel, whom I called. I am the first and I am forever. My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand propped up the heavens; I shall call them and they will stand together, and all of them will assemble and hear. Who declared this to them? Because

B100 he loved you, the Lord fulfilled his intention from Babylon, to uproot the seed of the Chaldeans. I spoke, I called, I am the one who brought this one and prospered her way. Draw near to me and hear: I have not spoken in secret. From the time it came to be, I have been there; and the Lord has sent me and his Spirit."¹¹¹ Who is this one who was the first and forever, who laid the foundation of the earth and propped up the heavens and called Babylon and established her way; and now the Lord sent him and his Spirit? This can only be the eternal Son, who was sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit, when he became incarnate and was born of the Virgin Mary. It is as Isaiah also said, "The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he will be called 'Emmanuel,'"¹¹² which in translation means "our God is with us." Indeed, during his incarnation, the Son was God "with us" and was counted among us. Isaiah also said of him, "To us a child was born and to us a son was given; and he was called the messenger of great counsel, wonderful counselor, mighty God, father of the new world."¹¹³ Who is this son and child who was given to us and was called "mighty God"? This can only be the eternal Son. Why was he called "the messenger of great counsel"? This was only because the Lord sent him, even as St. Paul said, "God sent his Son and he was born of a woman."¹¹⁴ Why is he "the father of the new world"? This was only because he was the first to manifest the life of the new world in his body, when God raised him from the dead; and we then became his followers in this, even as we became followers of Adam, who was our

B101 original father in death. The prophet Jeremiah said of this eternal Son, "This is our God; no other can be counted with him. He found the way of knowledge and gave it to Jacob his beloved and to Israel his friend. And after that he appeared on earth and lived among human beings."¹¹⁵ Who is this one who is God, whom people saw when he lived among them? This can only be the eternal Son, when he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, even as John the evangelist said in his letter, "We proclaim to you him who was in the beginning, whom we saw with our

110. Reading *isma'ni* for *yā sha'bi*. 111. Isa 48:12–16. 112. Isa 7:14. 113. Isa 9:6. 114. Gal 4:4. 115. Bar 3:35–37.

eyes and touched with our hands,”¹¹⁶ and even as David said that “the God of gods was seen in Zion.”¹¹⁷ One of the twelve prophets said of the eternal Son’s descent to earth, “Hear, all you Gentiles, and listen, all you peoples; and let the Lord testify to you, for the Lord will go forth from his place and descend to tread on the earth. All this is for the sake of the sin of Jacob and because of the transgressions of Israel.”¹¹⁸ Who is this Lord who came forth from his place and descended to earth to do away with sin? This can only be this Son who said to his disciples, “I did not come to be served but to serve and to give myself as a ransom for human beings.”¹¹⁹ He also said, “I have come down from heaven to do the will of my Father.”¹²⁰ What is the will of the Father except to save Adam and his seed from their sins? God said through the prophet Hosea, “I shall not have mercy on the house of Israel. As for the house of Judah, I shall have mercy on them and save them. Not by horses or chariots, not by swords, lances, or bows, shall I save them, but by the Lord their God shall I save them.”¹²¹ Who is this Lord God by whom God will save the house of Judah? This can only be the eternal Son who is God like the Father and by whom he saved human beings, when he sent him to become incarnate of the Virgin Mary, that he might be a ransom for them through the pains he experienced for them.

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God said in the Torah, “Let us create human beings in our image and likeness.”¹²² Tell me to whom God said this. Someone may say that God said this to the angels. We respond: How is it right for God to have the angels participate with him in creating human beings? How is it right that God alone created fish, birds, and beasts, but, when he wanted to create human beings, the most noble part of his creation, he had to ask the angels for help and had to have them participate with him in creating them? Far be it from God to allow the angels or any other part of his creation to participate with him in creating human beings or any other aspect of his creation! Were he to do this, he would resemble a craftsman who had some beasts and who wanted to fashion a noble and exalted object, and thus said to the beasts, “Come, let us form this object.”¹²³ Let no one wonder at this example. After all, angels have less ability to create with God than do beasts to fashion an object¹²⁴ with a craftsman.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the scripture does not mention the creation of the angels during the six days, lest by doing so it offer the ignorant a reason to imagine that they participated with God in the creation of human beings. God did not say these words to the angels. May he be exalted above that! Rather, he spoke them to his Son, who is called his

116. 1 John 1:1. 117. Ps 84:7 LXX. 118. Mic 1:2–3, 5. 119. Matt 20:28.
 120. John 6:38. 121. Hos 1:6–7. 122. Gen 1:26. 123. Reading *al-ṣanʿah*.
 124. Reading *al-ṣanʿah*. 125. Reading *al-ṣāniʿ*.

“Word,” for he was begotten of him without pain, as well as to his Spirit, both of whom are eternal. It is as the prophet David said, “By the Word of the Lord the earth was created, and all its hosts by the Spirit of his mouth.”¹²⁶ In the gospel, John the evangelist affirmed the same thing of the eternal Son, who is God of God, saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not made anything.”¹²⁷ Do you not see that he calls him “Word” and says that he is God? As for this Word by whom all things were created, St. Paul calls him “Son” and says that “by him God made the world,” referring also to this Son as “the light of God’s glory.”¹²⁸ This was to teach us that he is always with God even as the light of the sun is always with the sun. Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, said to his wives in the Torah, “The angel of God came to me and said to me, ‘Return to your land and to the house of your father, for I have seen how wickedly your father-in-law has treated you, but I did not permit him to harm you. I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel; and you built for me there an altar and vowed to me a vow.’”¹²⁹ Who is this one who is both the angel of God and said of himself that he is the God who appeared to Jacob and that it was for him that Jacob built an altar and vowed a vow? This can only be the eternal Son, who is called the “angel¹³⁰ of great counsel,”¹³¹ as Isaiah said. God said in the Torah, “Adam has become like one of us.”¹³² It was to his Son and his Spirit that he said this, for each of them is from him and equal to him. Again, he said of the people who built the tower in Babel, “Human beings have a single language. Come, let us go down, and there divide their languages.”¹³³ Whom did God tell to come down with him to divide the languages of human beings? This can only be the Son and the Spirit, each of whom was always with the Father. Human beings remained divided in their languages, and there was no one who could perform with God the great wonder of teaching them these diverse languages and of inspiring them with this wisdom—excepting his Son and his Spirit. When Christ the eternal Son sent his disciples to all the nations, he sent to them the Holy Spirit after his ascent into heaven, and the Spirit taught them the languages of all nations. It was only then that he sent his disciples to the ends of the earth, to lead all nations to the worship of him.

Among the testimonies of the holy scriptures that lay close to hand, it seemed good to us to cite these alone in order to confirm the eternal Son,

126. Ps 33:6. 127. John 1:1–3. 128. Heb 1:2–3. 129. Gen 31:3, 11, 13. 130. Adding *mal’ak* before *al-mashi’ah*. 131. Isa 9:6. 132. Gen 3:22. 133. Gen 11:6–7.

for fear that our discourse grow long and tax its readers. We have cited these particular testimonies because we do not have access to the majority of the books of the Old Testament.

As for those who happen on this book of ours, we ask them to give thanks for us to Christ our Lord for anything in it that is correct and to forgive us for any errors it contains. We ask them also to beseech the Holy Spirit for us, that he might both enlighten our minds and guide those who read our book to a firm understanding of the lordship of Christ, to the confession of which no one's heart can humble itself unless guided by him, even as St. Paul says,¹³⁴ so that he might make us share with those who are thus in the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, which is prepared for those who believe in Christ, who is God and the Son of God. To him be praise, glory, and exaltation, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

134. 1 Cor 12:3.

Theodore's Confession of Faith

The Trinity

I believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three hypostases, one nature. They are not one hypostasis, as Sabellius claims. They are not three natures, as was claimed by Arius, who used to say that the Son and the Spirit are created entities that are in their nature different from the Father. I do not claim that the Son is of¹ the essence of the Father but that the Holy Spirit is not of the essence of the Father and the Son. This is the claim of Macedonius. Rather, I say that all three are one essence. M56

Among them, I recognize the Father as ruler and the Son and the Spirit as subject to his rule. I do not claim that there are three rulers, as do those who are completely beyond the pale of orthodoxy.

I recognize the Father as he who begets, the son as he who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit as he who proceeds.

All three agree in essence and might, and there is among them absolutely no difference, as opposed to what Apollinaris claims.

Each of them has an essential property, one that is eternal and cannot be transferred to another person of the Trinity: for the Father, it is being unbegotten; for the Son, being begotten; for the Holy Spirit, procession. It is thus that the Father is always Father and is not Son or Spirit, the Son is always Son and is not Father or Spirit, and that the Spirit is always Spirit and is not Father or Son.

All three are eternal, and not one is prior to the others. Even though the Son and the Spirit are from the Father, the Father is not prior to them, not even for a moment.

1. Adding *min* before *jawhar*.

M57 I recognize each one of them as being fully God in and of himself and that all three are one God and not three, as opposed to what the wretched Philoponus claims.² This is because their essence is one and the Son and the Spirit are related to the Father in a manner that does not entail that there is either composition or mixture in his hypostasis.

The Incarnation

As for the eternal Son, who was begotten of the Father before time, who is God from God, I believe that in the last days he came down from heaven for us and for our salvation. He took flesh of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became a human being when he formed for his hypostasis a body endowed with a logical and rational soul. He became fully human like each one of us—apart from sin—and he remained fully God as he had always been. This is because his becoming human did not introduce any change into him.

After he had become human, the eternal Son was one hypostasis possessed of two natures. One of these was divine, which like the Father and the Spirit he had always had. One of these was human, which he came to possess through his incarnation, even as each of us possesses such a nature. He is thus equal to the Father and the Spirit in his divine nature and the same is equal to us in his human nature.

He is one hypostasis of the Trinity, though this does not mean that the Trinity came to be augmented in some way.³

This one hypostasis of the Trinity was begotten of the Father before time and was born of the Virgin Mary at the end of time, through his becoming a human being. This is why Mary is truly the Theotokos.⁴

The Subject of the Incarnation

As for his dwelling among human beings, his eating and drinking, his suffering hunger, his experiencing sleep and fatigue, his being crucified and dying, and his rising on the third day—all this happened to him in his human nature, not in his divine nature.

M58 Unlike Nestorius, I do not claim that he who was born of Mary is a hypostasis that is different from the eternal hypostasis begotten of the Father before time. So too, I do not claim⁵ that the aforementioned human characteristics only happened to his human hypostasis, not to his divine hypostasis. Rather, I say that both the divine characteristics (for instance,

2. That is, John Philoponus (d. ca. 570), an Alexandrian Christian philosopher accused of holding tritheistic views. 3. Through the addition of the eternal Son's human nature. 4. That is, the "Mother of God." 5. Reading *wa-lā aqūl*.

the raising of the dead through his word of power) and the human characteristics together belong to the eternal hypostasis that became human.

Unlike Eutyches, Dioscurus, and Severus, I do not claim that Christ has just a single nature: whether just a divine nature (for that would be to deny the incarnation and make Christ's mission a mere phantasm) or a composite nature of divinity and humanity (for that would be to make him neither God nor a human being, because a composite nature of divinity and humanity is neither the nature of the Father and the Spirit nor the nature of human beings, and thus he would be neither God nor a human being).

Properties, Wills, and Energies

I say that the eternal Son who became human has two natural properties, two natural wills, and two natural energies.

Unlike the Maronites, I do not divest his human nature of a natural will and a natural energy. Rather, two natural wills and two natural energies together belong to the eternal Son, the Word of God, he who is one hypostasis of the Trinity.

I do not make his divine will and his divine energy belong to this eternal hypostasis and his human will and his human energy belong to some human hypostasis. Rather, I recognize that his divine will and energy and his human will and energy together belong to the eternal hypostasis, the Word of God, he who became a human being in truth while remaining fully God as he had always been, in the manner we explained above. M59

Unlike Severus the scholastic ass, I do not deny that he has two natural properties. To do so would force me to predicate change, pain, death, and circumscription of his divine nature, to muddle his two natures together, and to treat them in a manner that does not accord with their definitions. Rather, I say that while the Word was incarnate, the divinity remained uncircumscribed and that it experienced neither suffering nor death. This and the like are properties of his human nature. Instead, I recognize that the two properties, his divine property and his human property, together belong to the Word of God, who is one hypostasis of the Trinity.

Because I say that circumscription and the like belong to his human nature and not to his divine nature, I am not also forced to say that circumscription and the like belong to some human hypostasis and not to the eternal hypostasis. This is not the case. Rather, circumscription and its consequences together belong to the eternal hypostasis, the Word of God who became human, who is Christ. In the same way, sight is said to belong to the eye and not to the ear, and hearing to the ear and not to

the eye, while sight and hearing together belong to the single hypostasis that has the eye and the ear—for instance, St. Peter or St. Paul.

Conclusions

This is what I believe. In it I shall live and in it I shall die, and be gathered unto Christ my God when he comes to judge the living and the dead. It is through it that I hope to be saved from eternal punishment and await the everlasting and exalted blessed state, which will most certainly be obtained only through it.

PART III

TOPICS IN CONTROVERSIAL THEOLOGY



On the Method of the Knowledge of God

Everything that can be known is known in one of four ways: through B75
being seen, through its effects, through something resembling it, or
through something contrary to it.¹ God cannot be known by being seen,
for he is not subject to the faculty of sight.² Indeed, it is only apart
from sight³ that one arrives at a knowledge of him—and this, through
“the method of knowledge” that we mentioned.⁴ With regard to the
remaining three methods, inferences about God can be classified in
accord with what is appropriate and suitable⁵ for each and with how
each leads the mind to the knowledge of God. It is necessary for us to
employ each method in turn and see what leads us to the knowledge of
God. When we have done this, we shall collect everything sound that B76
we have acquired from each. On this, we shall rely. On this, our hearts
will depend.⁶ With this, we shall be content. This is especially so if the
knowledge of God we acquire is confirmed for us by the holy gospel,
which we ourselves once⁷ confirmed,⁸ as well as by the holy law of Moses
and the prophets, which the gospel confirms⁹ and which the disciples
of Christ our God conveyed to us along with their proclamation of the
gospel. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we begin with the first method
that follows sight, that is, effect.

1. Cf. Theodore’s discussion of the five types of knowledge at p. 231. 2. Reading *tanjudh*, with B. 3. Reading *al-mu‘āyanah*, with BD. 4. To what is reference being made? Perhaps this treatise was once part of a larger work. Or perhaps this is a reference to the treatise’s title. 5. Reading *wa-yastahaqquhu*, with BD. 6. Reading *wa-tarkun*, with BD. 7. Adding *qadiman* after *athbatnāhu*, with BD. 8. Theodore seems to have in mind the subjects of the treatises translated in the first part of the present volume. 9. For the gospel as the confirmation of the law, cf. pp. 36–39 and 178.

The Knowledge of God through Effect

As for effect, my friends, it is the first method to lead us to the knowledge of God. Here's how. If we see anything in a state that is not in accord with its nature, we infer that there is something that caused it to be in that state. We know that the earth by nature is characterized by weight and heaviness and that it sinks¹⁰ and falls. Nonetheless, when we examine it, we find that it is established firmly in its place, neither falling nor going down. This suggests that one of two things must be keeping it from descending: either some body more solid than it or some immaterial power. If someone says that there is a body below it, one which is heavier than it and on which it rests, this person must posit another body on which that second body stands.¹¹ Then, one will need to keep introducing body after body, without end. It is not possible, however, that there be among bodies an infinite regress,¹² especially when we see that the side closest to us is limited.¹³ Accordingly, there must be an immaterial power that upholds the earth. It may be that someone will object: Perhaps the earth is falling and is right now in a state of descent; it's just that we can't perceive this, because of how far we are¹⁴ from its perimeter. The one who says this should know that if¹⁵ the earth were in fact falling because of its great weight and you were to shoot a light arrow into the sky, it would go up into the air and not¹⁶ return to earth nor ever even begin to come down,¹⁷ for a heavy body falls faster than a light one. Therefore, the earth is kept from falling by an immaterial¹⁸ power, which we call "God." This is one proof from effect.¹⁹

Here is another argument from effect. If we consider human beings or any²⁰ individuals that transmit their individuality via²¹ reproduction, we know that their primogenitors must have been produced in a way that did not involve begetting. We shall cite a single example to defend this conclusion we have drawn. Let us assume, for instance, that there are a total of one hundred human beings. Let us further assume that

10. Reading *rāsibah*. 11. Reading *yaqūm*, with BD. 12. Adding *an yakūn fi al-ajsād mā lā nihāyah lahu* after *lā yakūn*, with BD. 13. Theodore's argument is perhaps best explained from the parallel at p. 230: "After all, what is limited above cannot be without limit below, for what is limited in one part must surely have a limit in the other part. Imagine, for instance, a rope that stretches from this part of the earth to the other. If I take hold of the visible end of the rope and pull it up two or three cubits, is it not necessary that the end of the rope pull away from the other part, the unseen part, and that it be pulled away in the same measure? From this we know that the earth has a limit below." 14. Reading *li-bu'dinā 'an*, with BD. 15. Reading *law* for *wa-law*, with BD. 16. Reading *mā* for *la-mā*, with BD. 17. Reading *lahiq bi-hā inhidār*, with BD. 18. Reading *ghayr*, with D. 19. For a similar argument, cf. pp. 168–69 and 230. 20. Reading *min* for *fi*, with BD. 21. Omitting *baqiy*, with BD.

this one was begotten from that one, this one in turn from that one, and this one in turn from that one. As for the last of them, he must be unbegotten. Further, there must have been some maker who fashioned this one who was unbegotten. When, after all, have we ever seen the earth give rise²² to a human being? Or to a horse or a bull? Or to any other of those beings that are skillfully composed and possessed of diverse members and multiple faculties, as well as of actions that are done according to kind and proceed according to an innate tendency, not varying from their courses until the end of their lives? As for the maker who fashioned these individuals and disposed them so well, this is God.²³ B78

We could have introduced further proofs of God's existence, from anything that²⁴ is observed to have different aspects.²⁵ We did not want²⁶ to lengthen the present treatise, however. What we have introduced should be enough.

The Knowledge of God through Resemblance

Having established that God exists, let us determine whether there is anything that resembles him in any way. If there is, we shall be able infer things about God from what resembles him and know that we can employ resemblance as a method for the knowledge of God. It may be, however, that there is nothing that resembles him. If so, we shall cast aside resemblance as a method for making inferences about God. I do not suppose, however, that there is anyone who would suggest that no created being resembles God in any way, especially when it is recognized that all of us, in describing God, rely on those things that among us are considered to be excellent and honorable.²⁷ Indeed, everyone says that God is living, hearing, seeing, wise, powerful, just, generous, and so on. Each of these attributes is something we find in ourselves. If no created being resembled God in any way, it would be impossible to apply both to him and to us a single attribute. And yet, we find that everybody agrees that it is appropriate to apply to God the things that among us are considered honorable. At the same time, they flee the loathsome²⁸ prospect of applying²⁹ to him anything that among us is considered a defect.

Again, those who say that nothing resembles God must agree that there are only two ways for us to know God: either through his

22. Reading *abraza*t for *lafaza*t, with BD. 23. Another version of this argument can be found at p. 229. 24. Adding *mimmā* after *shay*'², with BD. 25. By "objects with different aspects," Theodore seems to mean those that can change from one state to another. 26. Reading *nuḥibb*, with BD. 27. Cf. the similar, fuller discussion of this theme at pp. 11ff., as well as the parallel at pp. 232–33. 28. Reading *wa-yastasmijān*, with BD. 29. Omitting *lā*, with BD.

self-description or through the guidance we receive when³⁰ our minds reflect on his creation. In either case, it must be that the creation resembles God in some way. In the first case, if God were to describe himself to us with something that did not resemble anything with which we were familiar, our minds would not be able to grasp his description, nor would we even be able to imagine it. The logical result of our suggesting³¹ this of God would be to make him speak and express himself in a manner that contravenes rationality. Whoever suggests of God [. . .]³² in the same way, it would be better³³ for him to be a mute idol, speaking with his tongue what is not proper; and this is something that³⁴ God does not want for his servants, namely, that he make them mute idols. In the second case, if we were to know God from the guidance we receive when our minds reflect on his creation but there were no created beings that resemble him in any way, we would be unable³⁵ to select some attributes of created beings and think it right to apply them to God, while excluding from him their contraries. In both instances, there is no escape: created beings resemble God in what is rightly transferred³⁶ from them to him. Accordingly, resemblance is one of the methods of inference about God, as we have said.

When we say that created beings resemble God, those who hear should not flee. With regard to what resembles him, we mean to suggest only that it resembles him³⁷ in the manner that an image in a mirror resembles the person who appears in it: the person being a solid body; the image in the mirror, a transient specter. It is as St. Paul, the pinnacle of spiritual philosophy, said: “Now³⁸ we see dimly as in a mirror.”³⁹ Among the different types of resemblance, there is none more distant from what it resembles than an image in a mirror with respect to the person who appears in it.⁴⁰ If there were, St. Paul would have used it as an analogy instead. Because of what he taught us, we liken God to the creation only in the manner described above.⁴¹ Lest we be destitute⁴² of images with

30. Reading *haythu* for *allatī*, with BD (cf. B79.2–3). 31. Translation tentative. 32. Grammar and sense suggest that a lacuna should be posited. It will be noted, too, that B leaves a substantial gap (roughly a quarter of a line) after *Allāh* in his copy of this treatise, while D inserts a sign indicating a break in the train of thought. Even if it is correct that there is here a lacuna, what follows is still far from clear. 33. Reading *ahṛā*, with BD. 34. Reading *mā lā* for *lam*, with BD. 35. Reading *la-mā kān* for *la-kān*, with BD. 36. Reading *yunqal* for *an yuqāl*, with BD. 37. Reading *li-annā innamā naqūl fi anna mā ashbahahu minhā innamā yushbihuhu*, for *li-annā . . . minhā*, with BD. 38. Reading *al-ān* for *lā*, with BD. 39. 1 Cor 13:12. 40. Theodore uses this same analogy at p. 141. 41. For the whole of this sentence, I follow BD, which reads: *wa-naḥnu min taʿlimihī mā nushbih al-khalāʾiq bi-Allāh illā fi al-ḥāl allatī nushbihuhu fhā*. 42. Reading *naʿtal*, with BD.

which to describe God and he be enveloped by confusion,⁴³ the mind must depend on resemblance; in that God is transcendent, however, St. Paul employed the most subtle and distant type of resemblance, using that for his analogy.

The Knowledge of God through What Is Contrary

It remains for us now to understand how what is contrary can lead us to the knowledge of God. If we can understand this, it will help to make clear what we discussed above with regard to resemblance. From it, we shall bring healing and teach the mind about the limits of resemblance, so that we might acquire⁴⁴ knowledge from it but not fall into error and go astray. Those who desire the light of knowledge should know this: Whenever we say that a created being resembles God, even as we say this we take it back, and as soon as we note the resemblance we deny it,⁴⁵ lest the minds of those who hear stop there and fall into error. How so? We say that God is living and that human beings are living, and that human beings resemble God in that he is living. If we go on to examine the matter, however, we learn that a human being's life has a beginning and that it is continually being changed from one state to another, until it arrives⁴⁶ at decay and destruction. We know that God is alive in a manner that is wholly contrary to this, that he has neither beginning nor end, that he does not change, that neither harm nor injury befall him. For that reason, we say that human beings resemble God in that he is alive, but then we immediately say that they do not resemble him but are contrary to him, even in that very matter in which we said that he resembles them;⁴⁷ we speak similarly of hearing, sight, and wisdom, and of every other way of likening the creation to the creator. Our claim has thus been established, namely, that what is contrary is a method of inference about God—and this, in the above-mentioned sense.

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That God Has a Son

Having established that we can attain knowledge of God in one of these three ways, let us now see⁴⁸ if the mind can guide us to the

43. The translation of the latter phrase is tentative. I have followed the printed edition, notwithstanding that both B and D seem to read *fa-nukhalliluhu al-khibrah*. 44. Reading *fa-najtalib*, with B. 45. For *wa-innahu 'alā ḥāfir al-tashbih*, reading *wa-innanā 'alā ḥāfir* (mss. *aḥāqir*) *al-tashbih nanfi al-tashbih*, with BD. 46. Reading *taṣīr*, with BD. 47. Adding *naqūl innahu lā yushbihuhu wa-innahu khilāfuḥu wa-fi al-amr alladhī shabbahnāhu fihi wa-kadhālika* before *naqūl*, with BD. 48. Reading *nanzur* for *na'lam*, with BD.

knowledge⁴⁹ that God has a Son, one of his own essence, one equal to him, one like that to which the gospel, the law, and the prophets testify. (Remember, too, that we have agreed that it is not right to attribute to God anything that among us is considered a defect.) You who deny the Son, do you say that God is or is not able to beget one like himself? If you suggest that God is not able to beget one like himself, you have introduced in him the greatest of defects. Here is why. Notwithstanding that you recognize that one of us can beget one like himself, you suggest that God is unable to do something excellent that we are able to do—and everyone knows that begetting is one of the things that among us are considered honorable and excellent. There is no escape: You must concede that God is able to beget one like himself. If you agree with this conclusion, we continue, then God would only refrain from begetting one like himself—since he is able to do so—for one of three reasons. It may be that he is too lazy or too weak to endure the discomfort that would befall him in the act of giving birth. It may be that it is out of envy that he does not want to see one like himself. It may be that he has the ability to beget but does not know this, and that he thus refrains from making use of it out of ignorance. Each of these options is simply too loathsome to be said of God and must be rejected: God is not overcome by laziness, nor is he touched by envy, nor is he subject to ignorance. Accordingly, he who is blessed and exalted begot a child, one who is his equal. Of this there is no doubt. It is not possible for us to deny that God has a Son. If we do, we attribute to God defect, fault, and something quite loathsome.⁵⁰

You who deny the Son, it may be that you will say: If God were to beget a child, God would have to be prior to his Son. You must remember that about which we earlier agreed: Of necessity, we describe God with the things that among us are considered honorable and we exclude from him our defects, on account of their being contrary to his essence, which essence is nothing other than honorable. The priority⁵¹ of a father with respect to a son arises⁵² solely from a defect in our own nature as begetters. Allow me to explain. A human father is begotten in a state that is incomplete, in that he has yet to attain the point where he is able to beget. During the time that separates his being begotten from his attaining the ability to beget, of necessity he is prior to his son. Furthermore, even after he has attained the ability to beget, even if he is extremely eager to beget, he still cannot do so apart from sexual intercourse,⁵³ and still more time passes for him⁵⁴ before he is able to

49. Adding *an na'lam* after *ilā*, with BD. 50. For the arguments here, cf. pp. 12, 143, 233. 51. Reading *wa-qudmah*, with BD. 52. Reading *takūn*, with BD. 53. Reading *bi-l-jimā'*, with BD. 54. Reading *wa-yamḍī 'alayhi zamān āḥar*, with BD.

have sexual intercourse,⁵⁵ during which⁵⁶ time he is prior to his son. (Sometimes, too, there is sexual intercourse⁵⁷ but no child, on account of certain diseases that can occur to him.)⁵⁸ Even if God⁵⁹ had created the father fully formed, even as he created Adam, of necessity time would still pass before he had a son and this time would make him prior to his child. As for God most high, however, there was never a time when he was unable to beget one like himself. There was never a time when he did not know that he was able to beget one like himself. There was never a time when he did not will to make one like himself. Otherwise, he would be subject to the faults mentioned above. So too, he had no need for sexual intercourse before⁶⁰ begetting, and between his act of the will and what he wanted, there was not even a fraction of a second. If there had been, this would mean that he is weak and essentially incapable of something. In sum, there can be no doubt that God has begotten and that he was not prior to what was begotten from him. B82

You who deny the Son of God, it may be that you will say: Why is it that God begot only a single Son? We respond: Since God was able to beget one like himself, one of two things must have been the case: either he begot one Son and no more or he begot more than one Son. If you suggest that he must have begotten more than one Son, the one Son must have been deficient, for he was insufficient to please the Father. If the Son was deficient and the Son is equal to the Father and of his essence, the Father, then, was lacking. If, by saying this, you declare that God is characterized by defect, there is no one worse than you in the forging of lies against God. Accordingly, in that this Son is his equal and perfect as he is perfect, you must say that God begot one Son and no more.⁶¹

Conclusions

Rational and valid method has compelled you to affirm the words that the holy church uses in the creed that her children say every day: “We believe in one God, Father, governor of all, maker of heaven and earth, of what is seen and what is unseen; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father before all the ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the essence of the Father, through whom he created all things.”⁶² This is the faith of

55. Reading *al-mujāma‘ah* for *zamān al-zawāj*, with BD. 56. Reading *fīhi*, with BD. 57. Reading *kānat mujāma‘ah*, with BD. 58. Adding *lahu* after *ta‘riḍ*, with BD. 59. Adding *Allāh* before *al-insān*, with BD. 60. Reading *mujāma‘ah qabla an yalid* for *ghayr hādihā li-yalid*, with BD. 61. For the argument here, cf. p. 233. 62. These are, of course, the opening words of the decree of Nicea-Constantinople (381).

the church. This faith the gospel proclaims and the holy law confirms, as do the prophets, who were sent by this Son who appeared to us from the holy Virgin Mary, that they might prophesy his coming into the world. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

On Natural Theology

We have inner minds and five outer senses: we see with our eyes, we D173
hear with our ears, we smell with our nose, we taste with our mouth,
we touch with our hands and with the other parts of our body.¹ It is
through these senses that the mind acquires a knowledge of the parts
of the natures of the world, which are first seen and sensed.² Imagine,
for instance, that I had never seen the sea. I travel to it and see it with
my eyes, hear it with my ears, smell it with my nose, taste it with my
mouth, and touch it with my hands, and then leave it. As for what I saw,
heard, and touched, it is now clear in my mind, on the inside, fixed and D174
set in it. It is evident, however, that my senses brought to my mind a
knowledge of only part of the sea: my sight did not bring me a view of
the whole of it; nor my hearing, the sound of all of it; and the same holds
for smell, touch, and taste. Even as through the senses my mind ac-
quires a knowledge of the parts of the sea, so also³ I know that through
them it acquires a knowledge of the parts of all other visible entities:
heaven, earth, and what is in between (air, clouds, rain, snow, and the
like); mountains; the various types of birds and animals; the creeping
things that live on the ground, in trees, and on plants, as well as the
creatures⁴ of the sea; and all other perceptible entities. So too, accord-
ing to this way of knowing, imagine that one day I see an oak tree with
two branches,⁵ one resting on the other. The wind moves the branches
and rubs them against each other. As they rub against each other, fire D175
comes out and they are set ablaze. Even as I saw fire come out, I then

1. It will be recalled that the present treatise comprises the first section of Theodore's *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*. For section 2, see pp. 1ff.; for section 3, pp. 41ff. 2. Reading *wa-yuhass*. 3. Reading *kadhālīka*. 4. Reading *wadawābb*; cf. D177.9, 178.7, and 186.2. 5. Reading *ghusnān*.

notice water and steam come out. Eventually they are consumed by fire and become ashes and earth. From what I saw, my mind knows that in those branches there were fire, water, air, and earth; I know, too, that they were compounded and composed of these. Or again, imagine that I see a piece of iron being rubbed with a stone, and between them fire emerging. I wish to test them, so I put them both into the fire, and I see each exuding water and steam, and eventually perishing, becoming ash and earth. I then know that these, like the branches,⁶ were composed and compounded of these four things.

According to this way of knowing, the inner mind first knows the parts⁷ of the natures through its external senses, as in the above examples; from the indication of their parts, however, which it acquired by knowing them initially through its senses, [the mind acquires a knowledge of the whole of those natures].⁸ Imagine, for instance, that one day I am thirsty and take a mouthful of seawater to drink. When I taste it and it does not agree with me, I throw it away and it falls to the earth. Because I am unable to drink it, because I can put it in my mouth and contain it, because, when I throw it away, it falls to the ground and rests on it—because of all this, I know that, like this particular mouthful, I am unable to drink seawater as a whole, both that which I have and that
 D176 which I have not seen, and that all seawater is limited and contained, and that it does not stop until it finds something to bear it up, on which to rest. So too, imagine that I am hungry and take some earth for food, not knowing whether it is good to eat, and put it in my mouth. When it does not agree with me, I throw it away, and it falls to the earth and rests on it. From this handful, I know that earth as a whole is not good to eat and that all of it is limited and contained and that it, by nature, tends downward until it finds something to bear it up, on which to rest. Thus, my mind infers knowledge of the whole of large things, which the senses do not encompass fully, from their parts.

To continue, the mind acquires a knowledge of the whole of every species of animal from one part of the species; so also, from one species, a knowledge⁹ of all of them. Imagine, for instance, that I had never seen a corpse. I see some people and a corpse, and I ask them what this is. They reply that it is a corpse. When I see that they all resemble it in nature, and that it has died, my mind infers from this one corpse that death befalls all people. I did not learn this from something I saw, for I did not see all
 D177 people dead, but from a single corpse, from which I made this inference. So too, I make inferences about all crows if I see just one dead, or about

6. Reading *al-ghusnān*.

7. Reading with the ms.; cf. D173.4 and D178.11.

8. The text is lacunose. Something like the bracketed materials must be lacking.

9. Reading *maʿrifat* for *kull*; cf. D178.12–13.

all eagles if I see just one. So too, in the case of animals like horses, bulls, and dogs, I make inferences about all horses, cattle, and dogs. Again, from these species (human being, eagle, crow, horse, bull, dog), my mind knows that all birds, all animals, all sea creatures, and the totality of living beings that I do not see with my eye, are mortal. According to this way of knowing, I also know that all species, whether animate or inanimate (for instance, all trees and plants, as well as metals and stones that do not grow), are composed of four elements, for when my mind sees a single oak and knows that it is compounded of fire, air, water, and earth, it infers from it that all trees of the species oak are compounded of these four. From this species, again, it makes inferences about trees of the species cedar, willow, almond, and palm, and about all trees and animate species,¹⁰ that they are composed of these four elements. So too, it infers from one piece of iron to the whole of the species iron, and from the species iron to all species of metal; and from one stone, to all stones of that species, and from that species, to all species of stones. According to this way of knowing, from the bodies of trees, which are animate, and from the bodies of all metals and stones, which are inanimate, I infer and know with regard to all the bodies of the diverse kinds and¹¹ types of birds and animals and sea creatures and the bodies of human beings and every composite body, that they are compounded and composed of four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. D178

Thus far, I have described how through the senses my mind acquires a knowledge of the parts of the sensible¹² natures; how it acquires from a part of every species¹³ of the nature a knowledge¹⁴ of the whole of it; and how it acquires from one nature a knowledge of all of them. Having come to understand this, I then realized that my mind can also know inner things, whose essences are in no way subject to the senses, whether in part or in any other way; rather, it makes inferences about them from their effects and knows their attributes from their action. Imagine, for instance, that one day I am walking along the shores of the Nile and that I see a lot of wood that has been cut from where it grew, transported there, and placed by the shore. Having never before seen wood cut from the place in which it grows, my mind says: This has been placed here in a manner contrary to its nature, for it is not its nature to cut itself down and be transferred from place to place. In that I have seen it in a manner contrary to its nature, I know that there must be something more powerful than it, which through its power cut it down and transferred it to that place, even though I do not see that thing. After a few days, I again pass by D179

10. Reading *wa-l-anwāʿ*. 11. Reading with the ms. 12. Reading *yuhass*.
13. Reading *min anwāʿ* for *min nawʿ*; cf. D176.11. 14. Reading *maʿrifat*.

and see that it has been hewn¹⁵ and that a boat has been made from it. I thus also know that the powerful one who dragged it to that place, in that he fashioned a boat, must be wise. Later, on another day, I pass by again and see the boat in the water, loaded with food. I thus also know that its powerful and wise owner stands in need of food and that to serve the life of human beings he produces it at a distance. Thus, I saw that my mind can know from things their makers, even when they are not perceived by any of the senses—and this, from their effects and their action.

What Natural Theology Can Discover about God

When I realized that we can know something not subject to the senses from its effects and its action,¹⁶ as just explained, I realized that the mind can come to know the creator by combining this way of know-
 D180 ing with what it understands about all visible entities.¹⁷ For instance,¹⁸
 D181 I know that the whole earth, which is bounded on all sides, which is contained, which by nature descends to the lowest point,¹⁹ does not drop and is not moved.²⁰ One of two things must be the case: either the earth is standing on a body that bears it up in a manner that befits its nature [or there is no such body].²¹ If it is standing on a body, that body, like the earth, must be standing²² on another, and that in turn on another, and
 D182 that in turn on another, and so on, a million or more times. Eventually, however, the earth must reach a body under which there is nothing bearing it up; and in that case, both the earth and what bears it up are behaving in a manner contrary to their nature. If, on the other hand, there is nothing under it bearing it up, it is now standing in a manner contrary to its nature. In whichever way its state was changed, that is, whether there was under it something or there was not, it is standing in a manner contrary to its nature. Now then, whenever there is something in a state contrary to its nature, there must be something stronger than it to compel it through its power to be in that state contrary to its nature. We thus know for certain that there is something stronger than the earth, which by its power bears it up. We also realize that the power of this thing bearing up the earth is beyond description, for its power is able to bear up both the whole of the earth and what is on it (seas, mountains, and so on), and this without flagging.²³ Also, since the earth

15. Reading *nujirat*. 16. Reading *min āthārihi wa-fi'lihi*. 17. I have reverted to the reading of the ms., which I have emended by adding *wa-min* before *ma'rifat mā*. 18. Reading with the ms. 19. Dick's emendation is unnecessary. 20. Other versions of the following argument can be found at pp. 158 and 230. 21. The text is lacunose. Something like the bracketed materials must be missing (cf. D182.6). 22. Reading *qā'iman* for *wa-ayyumā*. 23. Reading *tad'uf*.

has existed for countless and innumerable ages, this thing must not be subject to limits in any way.²⁴

In a similar manner, by way of another argument we can know that the power of this powerful one is still greater. We know that everything on land and sea, all species whatsoever, for instance, trees, plants, all animals, mountains, and other composite beings—we know, I say, that all these are compounded and composed of four elements: air, fire, water, and earth. (In the case of everything that is composite, its parts precede it by nature; and sometimes, too, in time. Take as an example the composition of a house, which is a compound of stone, mud, wood, nails, and so on, which precede it both in nature and in time.) We know that earth and water, according as their nature compels²⁵ them before composition, descend to the depths and do not rise, while fire and air are just the opposite,²⁶ their nature compelling them to rise to the heights and not descend, with the result that the latter and the former do not meet one another. [And yet, we see that fire and air have descended to the middle and become intertwined and that earth and water] have risen to the middle and become intertwined.²⁷ Because the upper two came down from their heights and the lower two rose from their depths, in a manner contrary to their natures, we know that this powerful one, whose power is not to be described, reached into the heights in his power and compelled the higher ones to come down and also compelled the lower ones to ascend, intertwining the two in the middle. If someone objects: They have always been in the middle. With this we shall agree and say: If the matter is as you say, it must still be conceded that they are restrained by this powerful one to be in the middle, in a manner contrary to their natures, the two not ascending and the other two not descending. However²⁸ you interpret the matter, it is still a question of one and the same power, that is, what keeps the two groups in the middle, bringing down that one from above and bringing up the other from below. Accordingly, the power of this powerful one, via this argument, is even greater than was established via the first argument.

Again, in a similar manner, by way of yet another argument, we can come to know the power of this powerful one, as well as its magnitude and its might.²⁹ It is clear that fire, air, water, and earth are by nature contraries and that they consume one another. And yet, we see these

24. Rejecting Dick's emendations for the whole of this sentence, and emending *tafnā* to read *tu'add*. 25. Reading *tulzimuhumā*. 26. Reading with ms. 27. Grammar and sense require the positing of a lacuna. Something like the bracketed materials must be missing. 28. Reading *fa-'alā*. 29. Reading *wa-'izzatahā* for *wa-'iddatahā*, in that Theodore explicitly denies (pp. 173–74) that natural theology can determine whether the creator is one or many.

elements united with one another in composite natures, in a manner that is contrary to their nature, in harmony with one another, with no sign of their mutual enmity. Because we see them in this state, we know that this powerful one must be controlling them by its power and exercising compulsion on them in everything in which they are found, whether mountains, trees or plants, birds or animals, creeping things or sea creatures, or human beings. We also recognize that, if he were to release them³⁰ for just the blink of an eye, they would return to being contrary to one another, two ascending to the heights, two descending to the depths, such that the world would be destroyed (as we just said) in the blink³¹ of an eye.

To recapitulate, from the stability of the earth, from the concord of the four elements in individual entities, and from the descent of the upper elements and the ascent of the lower ones and their staying intertwined in the middle—from these three things, which are all contrary to nature, we have come to know that this powerful one, whose power cannot be fathomed, whose strength cannot be described, is responsible for the control of the universe. Again, when we see how this powerful one compounded and composed from these four elements, above the earth [the heavenly bodies and so on, and on the earth]³² an innumerable and countless multitude of different kinds of trees and plants, mountains and metals, birds and beasts, and the things that creep on the earth and in the sea—when we see all this, I say, we know that he is wise, his wisdom being unfathomable like his power. Again, when we see that all these entities, as well as heaven and earth, the air, the sun, moon, and stars, the waters, the sea, rivers, and springs, and all that is seen—when we see that they³³ serve the life of human beings, we know that this powerful and wise one is also overflowing with goodness, his goodness being unfathomable like his wisdom and his power. Again, when we see that nine-tenths of human beings are wicked, but that he does not destroy them or punish them, but rather showers his goodness on them in the same way that he showers it on the righteous, we know that he is infinitely generous. So too, when we see how he does not immediately destroy the wicked, but bears patiently with them, we know that he is merciful and magnanimous, and that this arises³⁴ from his hope that they will turn and repent. So too, when we see among them unbelievers who forge lies against him and that he does not punish them, we know

30. Reading *yusarriḥahā*. 31. Reading *ṭarfāt*. 32. The text seems to be lacunose; perhaps something like the bracketed materials has fallen out. 33. Notwithstanding the grammatical infelicity, I take it that *huwa* refers not to God but to the different physical objects of use to human beings. 34. Rejecting Dick's emendation.

that he is long-suffering, patient, and gentle, for he continues to hold out hopes for them. When we see him upbraiding³⁵ those who do much evil and blotting out their memory from the earth, we know that he is just and that he punishes everyone for their evil deeds. When we see many who are wicked leaving³⁶ the world in much comfort, without there having befallen them evil in it or any requital³⁷ through a merited punishment, while we also see the righteous leaving³⁸ the world in sadness, not having seen any good in it, and without receiving recompense for their good deeds—and we know that he is just and not unfair—we know that he will resurrect all people from the dead and reward the righteous for the good they have done and punish the wicked as they deserve. In sum, from his effects and his actions, we have made these inferences about this maker and these attributes of his. D189

To continue, this maker did not make these things from something that was already in his possession, something that was always with him. He did not make them like the carpenter, who cannot exhibit his craft without having wood; or the ironworker, who requires a piece of iron. No, it was from nothing that he produced and crafted them. For this reason, he is not just a maker, but also a creator. This can be proved by comparing and contrasting eternal and temporal entities. Eternal entities are not subject to change, corruption, or passing away; and hence, they always exist. Temporal entities are just the opposite: characterized by change and corruption at their beginning, middle, and end. Let me explain. They were not, but then were: this is change at their beginning. When they already exist, they are subject to change and corruption in that they are transferred from one state to another. At their end, they are subject to change and passing away, as they revert to their initial state of nonexistence. From this, we know that what is not at all subject to change and corruption is eternal, while what is subject to change is temporal. Because we see that all visible entities change from one thing to another and are corrupted, we know that they are temporal and crafted: they were not, but then were.³⁹ Again, another thing we can see with our eyes is that some of them perish and pass away: we can especially know this from the joining of fire and water, for when a little water is thrown into a big fire, it is consumed by flames, perishes, and passes away. From its passing away, we know that it was produced from nothing. Because water is thus, fire, air, and earth are thus, and everything is susceptible to change.⁴⁰ In sum, D190
D191
D192

35. Reading *‘ayyar*. 36. Reading *intaqalū*. 37. Reading *mujāzāt*. 38. Reading *intaqalū*. 39. That is, because one can now observe change in their middle and at their end, it can be inferred that they also had change at their beginning. 40. Reading with the ms., but emending *man* to read *shay*’.

this powerful and wise maker is also a creator, who devised and produced things from nothing.

- D193 When the mind has finished contemplating the creation, recognizing that it was produced, and from it has come to know its creator, it then, as if lifting itself to its creator, says: I know now that he is creator, but perhaps, despite being creator, he was himself created. The mind thus desires to know whether he is created or uncreated. It then says: If he was created, he was created by another. Doubt then arises about that other creator, that he in turn was created by someone else, and he in turn by someone else, and so on and so on, a million or more times. Eventually, however, we must reach an uncreated creator.⁴¹ After this uncreated creator has been found, the mind wishes to know whether it was this one who created us or someone else whom this one created.⁴²
- D194 The mind then says: If after the creator, who is at the top, there were created creators, it would not be proper for these to give rise to⁴³ created beings that do not create, such as, for instance, human beings.⁴⁴ The mind then sees that, through our knowing the uncreated creator, who is at the top, it has also acquired sure and indubitable knowledge of the created being that does not create, who is at the bottom; and it desires to know whether the created creators, which doubt placed in the middle,⁴⁵ exist or do not exist. It then recognizes that they do not exist, for there is nothing that is both created and creator. This is because, if such were to exist, each of them would create its like (that is, each of them would be both created and creating); and because there is absolutely nothing that creates its like, these do not exist. Proof that there is nothing that creates its like can be taken from created human beings, who are unable to create their likes, and from God, who is able to do everything, but for whom it is not proper to create his like. If human beings and God, who are the two we know, and of the two God is able to do everything, do not create their likes, then there is nothing that is able to create its like; and if there were, it would be something more powerful than God.
- D195 Since there is nothing able to create its like, created beings that create their likes, which doubt has placed in the middle, do not exist. Accordingly, there are only an uncreated creator and created beings that do not create: between these, there is nothing else. Of the two, the creator is he who created the world and us, his creation; and we know that he

41. Because of the impossibility of an infinite regress. 42. This seems to be Theodore's meaning, though the text reads, literally, "or someone else, the creator of him." 43. Lit. "to end at." 44. Because they would be obliged, instead, to create their likes (i.e., created beings that do create)? Alternatively, it may be that the text is corrupt. 45. That is, between the uncreated creator, at the top, and created beings that do not create, at the bottom.

is God, eternal and uncreated, the creator of everything from nothing, other than whom there is no creator, infinitely powerful, wise, bountiful, generous, kind, merciful, magnanimous, patient, forbearing, knowing, just, who raises the dead, gives life, requites the righteous for their good deeds and the wicked for their wicked deeds. Suppose that someone objects: You have said that there is nothing that produces its like; we see, however, that human beings produce their like. To this we respond: We do not say that there is nothing that produces its like; rather, we say that there is nothing that creates its like. As for human beings, we know that they produce their like, via begetting, if they so wish. With regard to the act of creation, however, we know that this is not proper for them. If we now cease discussing this matter, it is only because this is not the proper place, for it is our desire simply to establish that God exists—and this, from the things that he created. Thus far, natures have led our minds to this God and to his attributes, from his effects and his actions. D196

The Limits of Natural Theology

When I had come to understand these things from God's effects and actions, I desired also to know whether he is one person or more than one person, or whether there is in these natures any indication touching this question. I sought to discover this from his effects and his actions, but found no clue, for they give no indication. Imagine, for instance, that we are traveling along a road and come to a vineyard where we see a single man eagerly gathering stones and building a fence around it. We move on a bit and see another vineyard where we see two men eagerly working together to build a fence around it, one gathering the stones and giving them to his companion, the other doing the building. We move on a bit and find yet another vineyard in which there are ten men eagerly working together to build a fence: some bringing the stones, others passing them along, and others doing the building. We go a bit further and find a deserted vineyard that already has a fence. One of us then asks the others, "How many men do you suppose were responsible for building this fence?" One of us, an elder, answered him wisely,⁴⁶ "You can most surely know that this fence⁴⁷ had a maker⁴⁸ and that this maker was responsible for building it around this vineyard—and this, because his act of building indicates it. In it, however, there is no hint or indication as to how many men were responsible for building it: it could have been built by one person, or by two or ten working together, even as we saw with regard to the vineyards we just passed." In precisely the same way, our minds can D197

46. Emending *fa-ajābūhu* to read *fa-ajābahu* and *ajābahu* to read *ijābat* and abandoning Dick's suggested emendation. 47. Reading *al-siyāj*. 48. Reading *ṣāni*^c.

learn from this creation that it has a creator and something about the aforementioned attributes of that creator. This is because there are in it hints about this subject, as we have just shown. Was this creator one, two, or even more? On this subject, we learn nothing by applying the method of effects and actions to the creation. The situation is analogous to that of the vineyard's fence. In sum, the application of this method to the creation offers no indication whether its creator is a single person.

On the Trinity

Faith is being as certain about what is beyond our understanding B23
as we are about what is comprehended by our understanding. Such faith
is acquired only through a message,¹ even as St. Paul says, “faith comes
from the hearing of the ear.”² There are three types of people when it
comes to faith in what is from God. Some reject faith altogether, being
too arrogant to submit their minds to a message their understanding
does not comprehend. Others humble³ their minds to receive a message
from God, even though their understanding does not comprehend it, but
are negligent with faith in that message by not requiring their minds
to examine⁴ and verify it. Others humble their intellects to believe a
message, regardless of whether it should be attributed to God, but do
not leave their faith in need,⁵ like a boat without a captain and sailors;⁶
rather, they require their minds to verify it and are only then satisfied⁷
with all that comes from that source, a source which the mind has truly
determined to be worthy of belief with regard to the words it attributes
to God.

Those who reject faith in what is from God are too proud⁸ to believe
a message that their understanding does not comprehend. Or rather, to
speak more properly, they are ignorant and deluded as to the shortcom-
ings of their nature, not recognizing⁹ that they are always compelled
to faith. In that they cannot embrace everything with knowledge, they must
trust someone other than themselves with regard to necessities that their
own knowledge does not comprehend. Suppose, for instance, that they are B24

1. Reading *bi-khabar*. 2. Rom 10:17. 3. Reading *yudhill* (cf. B25.7).
4. Reading *bihi* for *lahu*. 5. Reading *ya'üz*. 6. Reading *nūtiyah*. 7. Reading
yardī. 8. Reading *yasmū 'alā* (cf. B25.2). 9. Reading *ya'lam*.

sick and that a doctor comes to them and tells them things about their sickness that they do not understand. Their need to be cured compels them to believe what the doctor says, to allow him to treat their body, and to drink any medicine he gives. While they hope¹⁰ to be cured by this medicine, they do not know whether it will in fact kill them. Again, suppose that they board a ship piloted by someone else and that they themselves know nothing about piloting a ship. Their need to travel by sea, however, compels them to place their lives in the hands of the ship's pilot, even though they do not know whether he is friend or foe or whether he really understands how to manage a ship. Again, they can observe how judges, on the basis of a message they hear from witnesses, throw people into prison, fine them, beat them, and execute them. The understanding of these judges does not comprehend whether things are as the witnesses testify. Their own minds participate in the passing of judgment only to the extent that they examine the witnesses in order to determine, as best they can, whether their testimony merits acceptance. If they were able, judges would be happy not to execute¹¹ a judgment except with a sure and certain knowledge of the subjects at hand; the shortcomings of human nature, however, compel them to be content with what is within the scope of their abilities. Indeed, if they were too proud to do this, even as those who reject faith in the messages that come from God are too proud, the governance and order of the world would be brought to an end. Again, if there came to those who reject faith a message about an army raiding their country, that message would terrify them, and notwithstanding that they do not know for certain whether that message is true, their hearts would not rest until they had made all possible preparations to escape what they fear. In short, in all aspects of their lives, if you look closely, you will find that they confidently believe things that their understanding does not comprehend. When it comes to the source that most merits belief, however, that for the sake of which the natural human faculty of faith was made, their minds are too proud to believe. How great is the evidence against them! When this act of theirs is judged by their other acts, they stand convicted of not giving trust to the messengers of God in the same way that they give it to others, notwithstanding that it is such messengers who most merit their trust. Their unfair and wicked way of looking at things is established. So too, one can see that they are biased in favor of what accords with their souls' desires; indeed, that they willfully abandoned belief in God's message for fear that it would sully their desires.¹²

10. Reading *yajū*. 11. Reading *yunfidhū*. 12. For the effect of desire on one's choice of religion, a major theme in Theodore's writings, cf. above at pp. 20, 35, 41, and 49.

What of those who humble their minds to believe in a message from God but neglect their faith, giving it to a person even though their minds do not know for sure whether that person was sent to them by God? Such as these can be compared to those who close their eyes and give their hands to others, that they might lead them down the road, without knowing whether their guides are friend or foe, whether they will lead them down the right path or take them astray. Or perhaps they have intentionally just feigned ignorance and set themselves to follow a guide who will lead them not on the road that leads to where they want to go, regardless of whether it is a road that is rough and travels through wild and waterless regions, but on the road that is smooth and travels through populated regions well supplied with water, but which will not lead them to their goal; they are happy, however, to miss their destination for the sake of immediate comfort on the journey. Such people stand convicted of the same thing as those who neglect faith: it is their bias in favor of their desires that causes them to choose the one they follow, out of all those who claim to be prophets sent by God.

As for those who humble their minds to believe that a message is from God but justly direct their faith by verifying it, they resemble those who desire some goal and take counsel with themselves so as to know¹³ whether their guide to that goal has true knowledge. They go everywhere their guide wants them to go. They are not concerned with whether the road is rough, wild, and deserted or quite the opposite. Rather, their only concern is to arrive at their goal, however that might be. They resemble just judges, who do not carry out a judgment based on the testimony of eyewitnesses until they examine those witnesses assiduously and determine whether their testimony merits acceptance, regardless of whether that testimony is to their own liking. In another respect, however, they far surpass such judges in that they have acquired for their minds a method that will lead them in truth to a knowledge of which messengers are from God and thus merit having their testimony accepted.

B26

Among human beings, the only ones whose minds can say after deliberation and with a certainty like that of eyewitness testimony¹⁴ that they became believers through the action of their minds are those who profess Christianity. After all, when the mind examines all other religions and what originally induced people to accept those religions, it recognizes that they were accepted because of either deception or desire—excepting Christianity. There is in Christianity, however, nothing to accuse those who first accepted it of having done so in a manner that was anything other than extremely deliberate and prudent. In it, there was nothing to

13. Reading *ya^crif*. 14. For the expression, cf. B47.4.

deceive people into accepting it, nor did desire induce them to accept it from those who were summoning them to it. Indeed, it did not allow those who accepted it to yield to any of their desires, whether internal or external, nor did it entice them by the deception such desires cause; rather, it induced them to the most abject form of humility. In the accepting of it, there was also no tribal zeal for a relative, such that they might acquire nobility through an increase of their power. In it, there was none of that watered-down doctrine to which the vulgar mind hastens; rather, it was completely free of that. All other religions have one or all of these characteristics. The right-directed¹⁵ intellect submits itself¹⁶ to Christianity¹⁷ alone and confesses it alone, nor does it doubt that it was accepted for any other reason than divine wonders, the performers of which deserve to be believed and followed. It is as its scriptures record. (In order more clearly and explicitly¹⁸ to confirm the truth of what we have just said, we wrote a whole treatise on this subject.¹⁹ Any who desire healing for their souls can read it and by it be persuaded of the truth of our claims. It would not be proper to repeat what we wrote in that other context and include it in the present discourse.) Saying this does not require us to reject the Torah,²⁰ however, as long, that is, as the gospel confirms it. Indeed, Christianity would be incomplete if the gospel did not confirm the Torah, for Christianity is nothing other than faith in the gospel and its supplements²¹ and in the law of Moses and the intervening²² books of the prophets. The wise are required to put their trust in what such scriptures say, to believe it and to rely on it, regardless of whether they can understand it.

The Subject of This Treatise

What I have said thus far is a prelude to persuading those whose minds are confused when Christians speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three hypostases and one God and when they say that each of these hypostases is in itself fully God. Those who are confused about this doctrine say that it cannot be so, but that rather it must be either that not one of these hypostases be called God in that there is just one God or that each of these hypostases be God, in which case it would be said that there are three gods. Our response to those who say this: We have already shown you, in this treatise in brief, elsewhere in detail,²³ that everyone must

15. Reading *sadid* (cf. B33.1 and B37.10). 16. Reading *yatadhalla*. 17. Reading *li-l-Naṣṛānīyah*. 18. Reading *wa-talḥīsihi*. 19. The reference here may be to one of the treatises translated in the first part of the present volume, or to a similar work now lost. 20. That is, because Judaism is said to have been propagated for all the wrong reasons. Cf. the fuller form of this argument at pp. 23ff. 21. Meaning, it seems, the rest of the New Testament. 22. Reading *baynahumā* (cf. B27.19 and B46.15). 23. Reading *bi-talḥiṣ*.

believe in the gospel, the law of Moses, and the intervening books of the prophets.²⁴ As for these scriptures, we find that they mention the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Holy Spirit as God.²⁵ They do not speak of three gods, however, but warn us sternly to speak of just one God. Through faith we would accept what these scriptures have to say, even if our minds had not found a way to confirm it, for we have defined faith as being “as certain about what is beyond our understanding as we are about what is comprehended by our understanding.”²⁶ We shall establish²⁷ briefly that all the scriptures confess for you multiple persons and that they speak²⁸ of each of these persons as fully God. (Both we and you already recognize that all revealed books forbid us to speak of anything other than one God.)²⁹ When we have finished doing this, we shall say that you accept³⁰ it in faith as we do, in which case we have accomplished what we set out to accomplish.³¹ If you do not do this, however, we would have you know that the Holy Spirit, by shedding his light on the minds of the Christians, has provided them with persuasive arguments both with regard to this doctrine and with regard to others that they accept from him through faith. As for the Christians to whom he gave such persuasive arguments, it was not because those of us who understand the definition of faith needed³² rational persuasion, but³³ so that the Holy Spirit might strengthen through them the weak whose faith is imperfect without some rational and valid proof to support it and so that he, through what they say,³⁴ might stone you with a valid argument, as if with a rock, so as to keep you from disturbing the church’s children, even as God ordered³⁵ the stoning of all beasts who would approach Mount Sinai when he descended on it.³⁶

B28

The Testimony of Scripture

We begin with the words of the prophet David. “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, till I place your enemies under your feet.’”³⁷ He called both the one who speaks “Lord” and the one addressed “Lord,” but did not count two lords. He also says that the Lord who speaks said to the Lord who was addressed,³⁸ “I begot you from

B29

24. Once again, the reference would seem to be to one of the works translated in the first part of the present volume, or perhaps, to another, similar work now lost. 25. Omitting *wāhid*. 26. Cf. p. 175. 27. Reading *wa-nuḥaqqiq*. 28. Reading *wa-taqūl*. 29. And thus, this is a subject that we do not need to treat. 30. Reading *qabaltumūhu*. 31. Lit. “we have reached the desired matter.” 32. Reading *li-ḥājat*. 33. Adding *bal* after *al-‘aql*. 34. Reading *alsinati-him*. 35. Exod 19:13. 36. If I understand correctly, Theodore has in this paragraph outlined his aims for the rest of the treatise: he will first treat the scriptural statements on the Trinity and then turn to rational arguments (both to help those whose faith is weak and to refute those who criticize the doctrine of the Trinity). 37. Ps 110:1. 38. Reading *al-maqūl*.

the womb, before the light.³⁹ This was to teach us that he is an eternal Son. Again, David said, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.”⁴⁰ Do you not see that he mentions a God whose throne is forever and ever and says that this God has another God who anointed him? As for this anointed one, there can be no doubt for the wise that this is Christ, who is a God who became incarnate and was anointed during the time that he was incarnate.⁴¹ God said through the prophet Hosea, “I shall not have mercy on the house of Israel. As for the house of Judah, I shall have mercy on them and save them. Not with horses nor by weapons shall I save them, but by the Lord their God shall I save them.”⁴² Do you not see that the one who saves is Lord and God and the one by whom salvation is wrought is Lord and God? He said in the Torah that Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, said to his wives, “The angel of God⁴³ came to me and said, ‘Return to your land and to the house of your father, for I have seen the evil that your father-in-law has done to you. I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel and you built for me there an altar and vowed to me a vow.’”⁴⁴ Do you not see that he called him⁴⁵ an “angel of God” and said that this angel is the God for whom Jacob built an altar and vowed a vow? Thus, the angel
 B30 is God and the one whose angel this is is God. God said to Noah, “In the image of God I created Adam.”⁴⁶ Thus, the one who spoke to Noah is God and the one in whose image⁴⁷ he created Adam is God, but they are not counted as two gods.⁴⁸ Again, he said in the Torah, “God created man; in the image of God, he created him.”⁴⁹ This bears the same implication as the preceding example. Again, he said, “The Lord rained from the hands of the Lord fire and sulphur on Sodom.”⁵⁰ Thus, the one who rained fire is Lord and the one from whose hands it was rained is Lord, but they are not counted as two lords. When God sent Moses to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel, the Torah says of him, “The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush; and he saw that the bush was burning and yet was not consumed. And Moses said, ‘I shall turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed.’ The Lord saw that Moses had turned aside to see it, and God called to him out of the midst of the bush, saying, ‘Moses, do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place in which

39. Ps 110:3 LXX. 40. Ps 45:6–7. 41. Cf. Acts 4:25–26; 10:38. 42. Hos 1:6–7. 43. Reading *Allāh* for *al-Rabb*, as required by the sense of the argument and the parallel at B103.8. 44. Gen 31:3, 11, 13. 45. Reading *sammāhu*. 46. Gen 9:6. 47. Adding *bi-ṣūratihī* after *ādam*. 48. Reading *yuʿaddān ilāhayn* (cf. B31.4, 11, 17, etc.) 49. Gen 1:27. 50. Gen 19:24.

you are standing is holy ground.’ And he said, ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.’”⁵¹ Do you not see that he said that the one who appeared to him from the bush was the angel of the Lord, and he said that this angel of the Lord also said that⁵² he is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? Thus, the angel is God and the one whose angel this is is God. Of this there can be no doubt. When Joseph brought his sons to his father Jacob, that he might pray for them, Jacob said, “The God whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac served, the God who has fed me from my youth to this day, the angel who delivered me from all tribulations, bless these lads; and in them let my name be exalted, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into an innumerable multitude on the earth.”⁵³ Do you not see that he said that the God whom his fathers Abraham and Isaac served and the God who fed him from his youth is the angel who delivered him from tribulations and that he prayed for him to bless the lads and to turn them into a multitude? Thus, the angel is God, even as Jacob said, and the one whose angel this is is God, but they are not counted as two gods. When Hagar fled from her mistress Sarah, it says in the Torah, “The angel of the Lord found her by a spring in the desert. And the angel of the Lord said to her, ‘I shall so greatly multiply your seed that it will not be counted for multitude.’”⁵⁴ The scripture also says that “Hagar called the Lord who spoke with her ‘the God who is seen.’”⁵⁵ Do you not see that it says that the one who appeared to Hagar was an angel and that he is Lord and God; and this angel is he who indicated of himself that he is God, when he said to her, “With power, I shall so greatly multiply your seed that it will not be counted for multitude”? Thus, this angel is God, and the one whose angel this is is God, but they are not counted as two gods. When Abraham put Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice to God, the scripture says, “The angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, ‘Abraham, do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; now I know that you fear God, seeing that for me you did not spare your beloved son.’”⁵⁶ Accordingly, this angel for whom Abraham did not spare his son is the God to whom Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Thus, the angel is God and the one whose angel this is is God, but they are not counted as two gods. It also says in the Torah that when Jacob had left Mesopotamia and his sons destroyed Shechem, the city in which they had wronged his daughter, God said, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled

B31

51. Exod 3:2–6. 52. Reading *wa-qāl innahu* for *wa-qāl innahu qāl innahu*. 53. Gen 48:15–16. 54. Gen 16:7, 10. 55. Gen 16:13. 56. Gen 22:11–12.

B32 from Esau your brother.”⁵⁷ Do you not see that the one who spoke to Jacob is God, and this God told Jacob to make an altar to the God who appeared to him when he fled from his brother? Thus, this one is God and that one is God, but they are not counted as two gods. It also says in the Torah that when God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, Moses said to God, “Show me your glory.” To Moses God responded, “I shall pass before you with my glory and I shall call upon the name of the Lord in your presence.”⁵⁸ Do you not see that God called upon the name of the Lord? Thus, God is God and the Lord whose name God called upon is God, but they are not counted as two gods. It also says in the gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”⁵⁹ Do you not see that it says that the Word is God and with God, but they are not counted as two gods? St. Paul also says of the Jews, “From them, according to the flesh, Christ appeared, he who is God over all, who has praises and blessings forever.”⁶⁰ Thus, Christ is God and the one Christ praises is God. Job said, “The Spirit of God is⁶¹ the one who created me.”⁶² He thus made the Spirit God.⁶³ Christ our God also said to his disciples, “Go teach all the nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁴ This confirms that both the Son and the Spirit are God even as the Father is; indeed, human beings would not have been renewed through baptism in theirs and the Father’s name if both of them were not as the Father is.

We have no need of additional testimony from the holy scriptures in order to confirm that both the Son and the Holy Spirit are God.⁶⁵ This is not, after all, what we want to accomplish in this treatise. Whoever
B33 directs their faith rightly and governs it with reason must believe the testimony of the scriptures, which, as the wise well know, are from God. Such as these must say that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. All of us have recognized, too, that there is no passage in scripture in which two gods are counted. Rather, all scripture commands us to speak only of one God. This is enough to confirm this for those who are reasonable and to lead them to agree with the Christians both in speaking of the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Spirit as God, and in speaking of the Father, Son, and Spirit as one God. Nonetheless, as noted earlier,⁶⁶ we know that not everyone’s mind can overcome their heart, humbling it to receive faith. It is for this reason that we wish to convince such as these, with rational arguments, that,

57. Gen 35:1. 58. Exod 33:18–19. 59. John 1:1–2. 60. Rom 9:5. 61. Reading *hiya* for *fiya*. 62. Job 33:4. 63. Because the act of creation is ascribed to him. 64. Matt 28:19. 65. A partially overlapping list of prophetic testimonies can be found at pp. 145ff. 66. See p. 175.

notwithstanding that Christians speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as God,⁶⁷ they need not count three gods, even if each is God. If we can accomplish this, their arrogant⁶⁸ minds will not then be able to induce the weak to deny this doctrine and reject Christianity, which alone is the true religion, confirmed by wonders and the testimony of prophets as well as by the testimony of the mind, when it examines its claims sincerely and seeks to understand them accurately.

The Testimony of Reason

I want those who deny Christian doctrine to know that some names refer to persons and others to natures. Names that refer to natures include “man,” “horse,” and “ox.” Names that refer to persons include “Peter,” “Paul,” and “John.” If you want to count many persons with one nature, you must not predicate number of the name that refers to the nature. If you do, you attribute to the persons different natures. How so? If you want to count Peter, James, and John (three persons with a single nature, that being man), it is not right to predicate number of man, that is, their nature, and say that there are three mans. If you do, you cause their single nature, to which the name “man” refers, to be different natures and do something foolish. In the same way, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons with one nature (that being God). If you count them, you must not predicate number of the name “God,” which is the name of their nature. If you do, you cause their single nature, to which the name “God” refers, to be different natures and fall into manifest error. Again, everyone knows that, when you count Peter, James, and John, number must not be predicated of man.⁶⁹ Know this: Peter is a man, but man is not Peter; James is a man, but man is not James; John is a man, but man is not John. Since man is not Peter, or James, or John, when you count Peter, James, and John, you must not predicate number of man and speak of three mans. If you do, you have predicated number of what is not numbered.⁷⁰ In the same way, know this: The Father is God, but God is not the Father; the Son is God, but God⁷¹ is not the Son; the Spirit is God, but God is not the Spirit. When you count the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you must not predicate number of the name “God” and speak of three gods. If you do, you have predicated number of what is not numbered. Rather, you must count three persons and one

B34

67. Adding *ilāh* before *laysa*. 68. Reading *jasārat*. 69. For the argument that follows, cf. the parallel, if briefer, version in Opusculum 2, at PG1476D–1477C. 70. Reading *al-ma‘dūd* (cf. B34.19 and B35.7). 71. Omitting *fī wajh idh ism al-ilāh dalīl ‘alā al-ṭabī‘ah* (“in terms of person, since the name ‘God’ refers to the nature”), which seems likely to be a scribal interpolation.

B35 God. This is because “person” is a logical name⁷² and does not belong essentially to just one of them. Rather, the name “person” is predicated of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and of every angel, human being, and animal, as well as of every other indivisible entity. The logical name was introduced solely that number might be applied to it, for it is not right for number to be applied to their common name, that by which their nature is named, which name belongs essentially to it—otherwise, it would follow that there are different natures, as we have already said. Nor is it right for number to be applied to the particular, non-logical, name⁷³ of each of them—otherwise, number will make each of the numbered entities to be all of them. How so? If you say, “Here, Peter, James, and John are three,” you make each one to be the three of them. So also, if you say, “In heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three,” you make each one to be the three of them. For this reason, it is necessary that number be applied to the logical name, which is predicated of each of them (that is, of a person) and that we say that Peter, James, and John are three persons, but that the name “man” remain singular, neither diffused nor multiplied.

Notwithstanding what we have said, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not like three men, divided in terms of place or differing in form, will,⁷⁴ or state. Indeed, if things that are many agree in these respects, they are said to be one in the respect in which they agree, while those that differ in these respects are counted as many. You can say, “I and you are one in form, since we agree in it; I and⁷⁵ you are one in will; I and you are one in state.” You can also say, “I and you are not one in form, since we differ in it; I and you are not one in will; I and you are not one in this state.” (And the same holds for other, similar respects.) Human beings are divided in place and differ in all that we mentioned. As for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, however, not one is in a place that the others are not in, not one has a form that the others do not have; and the same holds for will and state.⁷⁶ If even one of these characteristics makes those that agree in it to be one, even if they are many, how much more is it necessary for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one, since they are not separated in place and agree in all these respects as well as in others like them. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit resemble, rather, three lamps in a dark house. The light of each is dispersed in the whole house, and the eye cannot distinguish the light of one from the light of the others or the light of all from the light of one. So also, the Father,

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72. “Logical names” include terms such as “genus,” “nature,” and “hypostasis”; cf. *Opusculum* 2, at PG1472A. 73. That is, names such as Peter or James. 74. Reading *al-mashiʿah* for *al-shibh* (cf. B35.19; 36.3; 46.12). 75. Adding *wa-anā* before *wa-anta*. 76. Reading *ḥāl* for *māl* (cf. B35.14).

Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, even though each is fully God. That said, the divine unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is incomparably more pure, lofty, and real than both the light of the lamp and every other refined⁷⁷ entity among created beings, even the most refined. Again, imagine that three men stand and recite a poem together and that you are outside listening. You hear only a single poem, but you do not doubt that each of them recited the complete poem, nor could you say, “I heard three poems.” This is the case even if in the voices of the men there is some difference. As for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there is no difference among them at all, no difference that has an effect on the hypostasis of one of them—other than that each is different from the other. Indeed, it is even more appropriate that they be one God, even if each is fully God. We find that people predicate unity of nature of the name that refers to the nature, not only in things that are refined, but also in things that are coarse. How is that? If three pieces of pure gold were placed before you, you would say that each of the three is fully gold and would not say that the three are three golds, but rather that they are one gold. If this is so, then it is even more appropriate that number not be predicated of the name of the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, nor that it be said that they are three gods.

B37

An Objection

What we have said should suffice to show that there is no need for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be called three gods, even though each is fully God. Christianity has been crowned with victory⁷⁸ with regard to its doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, even if each is fully God. In this regard, its witnesses have been both the revealed scriptures and the intellect employing analogy in the proper manner, by correctly examining things and how they resemble him with regard to that aspect in which they resemble him.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding, certain foolish people ask the Christians: Was it three or one that created the world? If you say three, they consider this loathsome. If you say one, they consider the other two hypostases nullified. Their minds’ twisted logic impels them to their souls’ destruction. To them we respond: It is one that created the world, and to say this does not prevent each of the other hypostases from being a creator. If you would understand this, listen: You say, “The tongue of the prophet Moses spoke truth,” and are right to do so. You say, “The prophet Moses spoke truth,” and are right to do so. You cannot say, “The prophet Moses and his tongue spoke truth,” for Moses spoke through his tongue. You say,

77. Reading *latif*. 78. For the idiom, cf. B66.12. 79. Reading *allatī tushbihuhu*.

B38 “The sun gives light to human beings,” and are right to do so. You say, “The rays of the sun give light to human beings,” and are right to do so. You do not say, “The sun and its rays give light to human beings,” for the sun gives light through its rays. You say to your friend, “Your eye saw me,” and are right to do so. You say to your friend, “You saw me,” and are right to do so. You cannot say to your friend, “You and your eye saw me,” for your friend saw you through the eye. You say to the carpenter, “Your hand made this door,” and are right to do so. You say to the carpenter, “You made this door,” and are right to do so. You cannot say to the carpenter, “You and your hand made this door,” for the carpenter made the door through the hand. Suppose you enter into the king’s presence and he tells his son to strike you. You say, “The king struck me,” and are right to do so. You say, “The king’s son struck me,” and are right to do so. You cannot say, “The king and his son struck me.” In the same way, one says, “The Father created the world” and “The Son created the world.” One does not say, “The Father and the Son created the world,” for the Father created the world through his Son. It is as St. Paul said, “In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, through whom he created the world.”⁸⁰ It is also as the evangelist John said in his gospel concerning the Son (calling him “the Word”), “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God; all things were made through him, and apart from him nothing was made.”⁸¹ We do not think that the tongue and the mind or the rays and the sun or the craftsman’s hand and the craftsman or the eye and the brain are more closely united than the Father and the Son—and this, because of the refinement of the divine essence, which is unimaginably more refined than the most refined creatures.

B39 You say, “The heat of the fire burnt me.” You say, “The fire burnt me.” You do not say, “The fire and its heat burnt me,” for the fire burnt you through its heat. So also, accordingly, one says, “The Father created the world” and “The Son created the world.” One does not say, “The Father and the Son created the world.” We do not think that the heat belongs more properly to the fire than does the Son to the Father, nor that the heat is more closely united to the fire than the Son to the Father, notwithstanding that each of the two is a hypostasis. This is because the divine nature is not subject to composition as are bodies, nor is there in it matter and form, nor is any change found with regard to any of its hypostases. Rather, the Son is to the Father as the fire’s heat is to the fire and rays are to the sun and speech is to the mind, notwithstanding that we hold the Son to be a full hypostasis—and this, because the divine

80. Heb 1:2. 81. John 1:1–3.

nature is too refined to be found to have change with regard to any of its hypostases, as we have just said. For this reason, St. Paul called the Son “the light of the Father’s glory,” when he said, “In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, through whom he created the world. He is the light of the Father’s glory⁸² and the form of his essence.”⁸³ He also called him “the wisdom of God” and “his power” when he said, “Christ is the wisdom of God and his power,”⁸⁴ comparing him to God in the same way that the fire’s heat is like the fire, for heat is the fire’s power. So also, the evangelist John called him “Word” when he said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.”⁸⁵ Why did these two theologians refer to Christ with these names? It was not because Christ was not a hypostasis and fully God. Rather, it was to teach us the following: even as the annexed noun and the noun to which annexation is made⁸⁶ are not said to do something, notwithstanding that each is said to do it by itself, so also, the Father and the Son are not said to create, even if each is said to create by itself. Be that as it may, these two theologians were loathe to predicate attributes that would induce those who hear to the conclusion that the Son does not have a hypostasis and that he is not fully God like the Father, even as each of these annexed nouns has not a hypostasis and is not called by the name of the noun to which it is annexed. For that reason, each of them also called the Son “God.” John the evangelist said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”⁸⁷ He thus called him both “Word” and “God.” St. Paul, too, said, “From the Jews, according to the flesh, Christ appeared, he who is God over all, who has praises and blessings.”⁸⁸ By saying this, John and Paul divested him of the attribute “Son” and indicated that it need not be said that both he and the Father created something; at the same time, by calling him⁸⁹ “God,” they taught that he is a full hypostasis and denied that the divine nature was subject to composition or that change was to be found with regard to each of its hypostases. All the theologians dealt in a similar fashion with the Holy Spirit: they annexed him to the Father in the same way that they annexed the Son to the Father, but then they said that he is a complete hypostasis like the Father and the Son. Now then, the Son and the Spirit are to the Father as such annexed entities are to that

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82. Adding *al-Ab* after *majd*. 83. Heb 1:2–3. 84. 1 Cor 1:24. 85. John 1:1. 86. Theodore is using technical terms from Arabic grammar. The annexed noun (*al-mudāf*) is the genitive noun that specifies the noun to which it is annexed (*al-mudāf ilayhi*). For instance, in the expression “the heat of the fire,” the word “fire” is an annexed noun that specifies the word “heat,” which is thus a noun to which annexation is made. 87. John 1:1. 88. Rom 9:5. 89. Reading *bitasmiyatihimā*.

to which they are annexed. The holy church thus says that the Father created and that each of the others created, but does not say that they created together. On the one hand, in that the church teaches that the Son is fully God and that the Spirit is fully God, even though they are annexed to the Father in this manner, she hypostatically counts the Son and the Spirit with the Father and speaks of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and thus, by counting the Son and the Spirit hypostases with the Father, she has gone beyond the limit of those annexed entities, none of which are hypostatically counted with that to which they are annexed. On the other hand, in that the church teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God—in the ways we mentioned earlier, even as the
 B41 sun and its rays and its light are one sun, and so on—she says that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created [sg.] the world but does not say that they created it. Similarly, she says “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have mercy [sg.] on me,” but does not say, “Have mercy [pl.] on me.” (Other similar examples could be cited.) Suppose someone says: It is said in the Torah, “Let us create,”⁹⁰ and, “Come, let us go down and confuse their languages.”⁹¹ Also, the Son said in the gospel, “I and the Father—we shall come to dwell in the one who keeps my commandments.”⁹² The Son also said through Isaiah, “The Lord sent me and his Spirit,”⁹³ and through Solomon, “Before the ages, I was creating with the Father.”⁹⁴ The one who says this thinks that what we said is contrary to what is in the scriptures, in that we are saying that it is not right to say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created [pl.]. This person should understand that these and similar verses in the holy scriptures were put there only because the theologians were eager to teach people that the Son is fully God and that the Spirit is fully God, lest they think that the Son and the Spirit are in God in the same way as those annexed entities are in that to which they are annexed, and thus go astray through the coarseness of their hearts.

Another Objection

B42 The ignorant ask the Christians: “Tell me. Do you deny every God other than the Father? Do you deny every God other than the Son? Do you deny every God other than the Holy Spirit?” If the Christian says, for instance, “I deny every God other than the Son,” they respond, “The Father and the Holy Spirit, then, must not be God.” If, however, the Christian says, “I do not deny every God other than Christ,” they respond, “You have, then, multiple gods.” Those who ask this must examine these

90. Lit. “Create with us”; cf. Gen 1:26. 91. Gen 11:7. 92. Cf. John 14:23. 93. Isa 48:16. Reading *wa-Rūḥahu*. 94. Seemingly an allusion to Prov 8:22–30.

matters in a subtle fashion and recognize that their question is crass. This will be clear to you from what follows. Imagine that a full gospel is placed before you and you are asked, “Do you believe in this gospel?” You respond, “Yes.” It is then asked, “Do you deny every gospel other than it?” You answer, “Yes,” even though you know that there are in the world an innumerable number of gospels. If the questioner were then to single out each of those gospels and ask about it, you would say, “I deny every gospel other than this.” It does not follow from your words that each of those gospels is not a full gospel, for the gospel through which the Holy Spirit speaks is one. Similarly, you say, “I deny every God other than Christ,” but your words do not entail that the Father and the Holy Spirit cease being⁹⁵ each a full God. Here’s why. When asked about the gospel placed before you, you were asked not about its hypostasis, but its essence (that is, its words, through which the Holy Spirit spoke), for the name “gospel” is not distinct to that book to the exclusion of others. Similarly, when asked, “Do you deny every God other than Christ,” you were not asked about his hypostasis, even if the question hints at it, but only his nature, for the name “God” is not distinct to Christ to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit. The name “God” is the name of a nature, not a hypostasis, as we established above.⁹⁶ For that reason, you can rightly say, “I deny every god other than Christ,” without having the Father and Spirit cease from being each God. The question, instead, is equivalent to asking, “Do you deny every divine nature other than Christ’s nature?” This you answer in the affirmative, and your answer is true, in that the Son’s divine nature is the nature of the Father and the Spirit.⁹⁷ Again, imagine that there is placed before you a plate inset with three mirrors. When you look in the plate, a complete image appears in each mirror. Suppose someone were to point to the image appearing in one of the mirrors and ask, “Do you have an image other than this?” You would have to say, “I have no image other than this,” because your face is one and your countenance is one, you do not have an image other than this one. By saying this, however, you would not be denying that the image in each of the other mirrors is your image. The following analogy is similar.⁹⁸ Imagine that a man comes and admires your countenance and draws it on three pieces of paper, fully on each. He then shows you one of the pieces of paper and asks you about your countenance on it, “Do you deny every other countenance?” You would say, “Yes, I deny every other countenance except for the one drawn on

B43

95. Adding *min* before *an* (cf. B43.1–2). 96. See p. 183. 97. A parallel, if bowdlerized, version of this argument has been preserved among the Greek works attributed to Theodore (p. 239). 98. Reading *hādḥā*.

this piece of paper.” To say this is not to deny that your countenance⁹⁹ drawn on each of the other pieces of paper is your countenance. This is because when he asked about the countenance drawn on this piece of paper, even though he was pointing with his hand to the lines on it, he did not mean that drawing, but the essence of your countenance (that is, that you have, for instance, a dark complexion, black eyes, an aquiline nose, and so on). The same holds when someone asks, “Do you deny every God other than Christ?” To say that this is so is not to deny that the Father and the Spirit are each God, for even though the questioner is B44 hinting at Christ with his words, it is not Christ himself that he means when he names “God,” but the nature of Christ, to which the name “God” refers. As we just said, this is the same as saying, “I deny every divine nature other than the nature of Christ,” and you are right to say this; nor do the Father and the Spirit cease from being each fully that nature, for the nature of the Father and the Spirit is one.

Metaphors for the Unity of Persons in the Trinity

As we have already said,¹⁰⁰ you must know that the divine nature is not subject to composition and that change has no effect on any of its hypostases; rather, it is wholly and purely simple, no divine hypostasis being able to have added to it anything that can have an effect on it. I want those of you who deny the Son and the Spirit for fear of believing in three gods to answer me this: Does God have a Word? If you say that he does not, you have both made him mute and made human beings better than him. There is no escape: you must say that God has a Word. We then ask: With regard to the Word of God, is he a part of God? If you say that he is a part of God, you ascribe parts to God and introduce composition into his nature, which cannot be; nor can you say that God’s Word is in God as form is in matter or anything else similar to that, for all this is excluded from God, as we have already said.¹⁰¹ You are thus compelled to make the Word a full hypostasis and to say that he is fully God. (The same can be said of God’s Spirit.) We then say to you: God and his Word and his Spirit are one God even as a person and that person’s word and spirit are one person; and the Word of God is God, in that the divine nature is not subject to composition or anything like composition, such as is the case with creatures. Now then, the Son is to God as a person’s word is to that person, and the Spirit is to God B45 as a person’s spirit is to that person, even though the Word of God is God and the Spirit of God is God—and this, because of how exalted the divine nature is above composition and the like. Accordingly, God and

99. Reading *hilyataka* here and on the next line. 100. See p. 186. 101. See p. 186.

his Word and his Spirit are not said to be other than one God, even as a person and that person's word and spirit are not said to be other than one person. Do you not see that a person's word is related¹⁰² to a person as the Word is related to God, and the same holds for the Spirit, though in a manner that is incomparably more exalted than is the case with an individual created being—and this, notwithstanding that the Son and the Spirit are fully God in the manner we have explained? Know also that the Son is called “the right hand of God” and “the arm of God,” as when David said, “For God, his right hand and his holy arm saved,”¹⁰³ meaning that the Son saved human beings for the Father, that is, that the Father saved them through him. The Holy Spirit is called “the finger of God,” as when Christ said¹⁰⁴ to the Jews in the gospel, “By the finger of God I cast out demons,”¹⁰⁵ meaning by “the finger of God” nothing other than the Holy Spirit. (This is made clear by another evangelist, when he says, in this same place,¹⁰⁶ “Christ, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons.”)¹⁰⁷ Thus, the Son is to God as the arm is to a person, and the Spirit is to God as the finger is to a person. Even as a person and that person's arm and finger are one and not three persons, so also God and his Son and Spirit are one and not three gods, even though both the Son and the Spirit are each fully God—and this, because of what we have explained¹⁰⁸ about how the divine nature transcends division, composition, and the like. Many similar names for the Son and the Holy Spirit are found in the holy scriptures. These summon people to relate the Son and the Holy Spirit to God in the same way that they relate the things indicated by those names to that to which they belong, lest their minds fall into error by counting three gods. The holy scriptures also name the Son and the Holy Spirit a complete God and affirm for each the attribute “God” in its fullness, so as to eliminate from the divine nature composition and the other similar things that we just mentioned. We do not wish to cite all these names and fill this treatise of ours with them. Nonetheless, we have established some rules through which those with subtle intellects might understand each of these names in its context in the holy scriptures and interpret it in the proper manner.

B46

Conclusions

I cannot help but wonder at those who believe in the Torah but find it loathsome when Christians say that the Father is fully God, the Son is fully God, and the Spirit is fully God, but that the Father, Son,¹⁰⁹ and

102. Reading *rātibah*. 103. Ps 98:1. 104. Adding *qāl* after *kamā*. 105. Luke 11:20. 106. That is, in the parallel pericope. 107. Matt 12:28. 108. See p. 186. 109. Adding *wa-l-Ibn* before *wa-l-Rūh*.

Spirit are one God. They do not remember what it says in the Torah: “Man and woman are one body.”¹¹⁰ All of us know that man is fully body and that woman is fully body. You accept, my friend, that they have two bodies and that they become one body, notwithstanding how coarse their nature is and how they differ from one another in terms of form, state, will, gender, and so on. How then can you not accept that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, especially given how subtle their nature is and how they agree with one another in those very things in terms of which human beings differ? You are not being fair. As for those who believe in both the Torah and the gospel, as well as in the books that stand between these, let them not deny that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, even if each is fully God—as long, that is, as they continue to believe that man and woman are one body, even if each is fully body. They should know that they are required to accept the testimony of the scriptures that the Son and the Spirit are each fully God. They should not let their intellects induce them to ignore the testimony of scripture, with the result that they say that it is not right that the Son is God and the Spirit is God and that both of them, along with the Father, are one God. This is so, especially when they hear what we have set down in this book of ours concerning the things that confirm this through the method of reason—a confirmation after which there can be no doubt for those who abandon pride and cease to deny something confirmed through the mind’s use of analogy, something with a certainty approaching that of eyewitness testimony.¹¹¹ As for those who do not believe in the books of the Christians’ Old and New Testaments, those who reject and disregard faith, sufficient proof¹¹² for them is what we wrote at the beginning of this book of ours,¹¹³ which compels them to have faith in them and against which they have no defense. In any case, it is not possible for those who are thus to find loathsome the Christian doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God and that the three of them are one God, when they see the many different rational arguments that confirm that this is possible. As for us, the community of Christians, we give praise to Christ who roused our minds rightly to understand faith and thereby guided us to believe the holy scriptures. It would have been enough for us to believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God and that each of them is God, even as the holy scriptures testify to us, even if we had¹¹⁴ not found anything to confirm for us this belief in a rational manner. How would the testimony of the scriptures not be enough for us? The rational confirmation of this has no other aim than our persuasion of others.¹¹⁵ We

110. Gen 2:24. 111. For the expression, cf. B26.6. 112. I have tentatively emended the text to read *burhānan*. 113. See p. 177–78. 114. Reading *nakun*. 115. Cf. above at p. 179.

ask Christ to confirm us in our faith and to return our hearts to acts of obedience and to the seeking of his kingdom. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen!

On Free Will

Those who commit a sin cannot enjoy its delights as long as their souls consider that sin reprehensible and fault them for committing it. This is true even if they can commit it without fear of experiencing some sort of harm such as might sully their enjoyment of it. When the human mind thus yields to desire and wants¹ to enjoy it without feeling ill at ease, its only thought is how to make the soul stop faulting it. One way to do this is to figure out how to make its desire seem commendable and permitted. A second way is to “offer excuses for its sins,” as was said by the divine prophet David,² that is, to convince itself, contrary to its own innate sense, that it is compelled to follow its desire, even though to do so is reprehensible. As for those who would convince themselves that their desires are commendable, these are of two sorts. The first are those “who take for themselves teachers because of the tickling of their ears,”³ even as St. Paul said, that is, from among those who claim to be prophets sent by God to believe only one⁴ who would establish a law that caters to their desire.⁵ The second are those who are “a law unto themselves,”⁶ that is, those who believe only what they can reconcile with their blind hearts and lustful inclinations, who refuse to be restrained by any law attributed to God, shutting their eyes to the knowledge of God and clinging instead to atheism. As for those who “offer excuses for their sins,”⁷ that is, those who say that they are compelled to follow their desire, even though to do so is reprehensible, these also are of two sorts. The first are those who claim to have no freedom and to be compelled

B9/PS130
PS132
PS134
PS136

1. Tentatively reading *wa-aḥabb* for *wa-aʿjabahu*. 2. Ps 141:4 LXX. 3. 2 Tim 4:3. 4. Omitting *aw* before *man*. 5. This theme was treated at length in most of the treatises translated in Part I of the present volume. See, in particular, pp. 20, 35, 41, and 49. 6. Cf. Rom 2:14. 7. Ps 141:4 LXX.

by their creator to do the good and evil they do.⁸ The second are those who say that God created them with freedom but that, for some cause or another, compulsion was introduced into their freedom such that it was coerced into doing the good and evil it does.⁹ Our objective in this treatise is not to confirm that of all laws attributed to God the gospel alone is true and perfect, nor is it to induce atheists to confess the truth. This we have accomplished elsewhere.¹⁰ Rather, our aim is to establish that there is freedom in human nature and that compulsion was not introduced into it from some cause or another—until, that is, it voluntarily yielded to that cause. Come then, let us converse with the proponents of each of these positions that we might guide them to agree with us.

That Human Beings Were Created with Freedom

Tell me this, you who claim that people are subject to compulsion in the good and evil they do: Do you affirm that God is just? We doubt not that you will answer this in the affirmative. If so, we say to you: It is the mark of one who is just to treat equals equally. Tell me this, then: If people are, as you say, subject to compulsion in what they do, and animals, too, are subject to compulsion, how does God reconcile it with his justice that he gives human beings commandments and prohibitions, and promises reward for their obedience and punishment for their disobedience, but does not do the same to animals? We do not¹¹ see God, according to what you have said, treating equals equally. Thus, this theory of yours has done away with God's justice. Far be that from him! How also would it be right for God to enjoin people to do what they have not the ability or means of doing and then to punish them if they do not do it? The only thing to compare him to would be to one who says to an ass, "Ass, fly about in the air like an eagle," and then beats it when it does not. Far be it from God to assign people a task that does not lie within their power!¹² If you say that God is just even though he does this, we respond: God is just, and it is precisely his justice that keeps him from doing this! Suppose you say: God has the power to do with his creation what he pleases. Indeed, did he not make the mole blind and cause

8. As will be seen below, Theodore considers Muslims to be the primary representatives of this type of person. 9. As explained in greater detail by Theodore below, he is alluding here to the Manicheans. 10. Seemingly a reference to one of the treatises translated in the first part of the present volume, or to a similar, now-lost treatise. 11. Reading *fa-lam* for *fa-law*. 12. As noted by Griffith, "Free Will," 97, there is here a strong allusion to a Qur'ānic dictum (2:233, 286; 6:152; 7:42; 23:62). In that Theodore's arguments here are partly or even wholly directed against Muslims, it would seem that Theodore, by citing the Qur'ān to bolster his own position, is having a bit of fun with his opponents.

it to live in the dirt while making the eagle far-sighted and allowing it to enjoy the purity of the air? If you say this, we respond: It is true that God has power over his creation and that he treated the mole and the eagle as you say. Only, he did not treat the mole this way because it disobeyed one of his commandments, nor did he treat the eagle like this because it obediently carried out what he told it to do. Rather, he treated his creation as seemed good to him in his wisdom. It is as St. Paul says, “The potter has power over his clay, to make of it one vessel for honor and another for ignominy.”¹³ Suppose you say: God gave people commandments and prohibitions solely that he might have a just cause against them when he punishes them. We respond: This is no just cause, for a just cause is nothing other than the righteous rebuking of those who merit it, whether for something reprehensible they did but were able not to do or for something commendable they did not do but were able to do. There would be no need for such a just cause with regard to the mole, such that it was created as it was created because of that just cause. Rather, if it were to speak, it could only say to him, “You have the power to create me¹⁴ as you created me.” Similarly, there would be no need¹⁵ for such a just cause with regard to people, such that they be punished because of that just cause, if, as you say, they are constrained and have not the ability either to accept or reject commandments and prohibitions.¹⁶ Rather, if God were to punish them, they could only say to him, “You have the power to punish me.” Accordingly, since God would have constrained people to do what they do, he would not have needed to give them commandments and prohibitions so as to have a just cause against them. God would not have considered them worthy of this, nor would he have needed to accuse them with groundless pretexts for something he wanted to do to them. Rather, he would simply have treated them as he wished, and none of them would have been able to ask him about what he was doing, since, as you say, he had preordained it for them through his power. Any way you look at it, constraint can never be reconciled with the giving of commandments and prohibitions. Those who speak of constraint will either have to deny all divine commandments and prohibitions in order to do so, or, if they continue to affirm that God gives people commandments and prohibitions, clearly they will have to reject constraint and advocate freedom.

You who deny freedom, even if you are blind to the knowledge of God,¹⁷ you must still admit that there is freedom in human nature. After

13. Rom 9:21. 14. Reading *an taḥluqani* for *idh khalaqtani*; cf. B10.18; 11.12. 15. Reading *tulzimuhu*, with Samir; cf. B11.7. 16. For the idiom, cf. B48.6–7. 17. That is, if you are atheists and do not accept the earlier, theological arguments. For the expression “blind to the knowledge of God,” cf. B9.13–14.

PS154 all, do we not observe that absolutely all people, whether religious or not, issue commandments and prohibitions and dole out reward and punishment? Indeed, there is no ruler who does not [. . .],¹⁸ in his armies and in the fighting of his enemies, distasteful deeds, with which the soul does not willingly comply. If any bear up¹⁹ in the face of those distasteful deeds, they are honored by the ruler. If any flag in the face of them, the ruler punishes them, removes them from his army, and returns them to civilian life. People as a whole would not have agreed to this if human nature were not either silently²⁰ summoning them to do so or telling them that human nature has the freedom and ability to induce the soul, as well as the body that the soul controls,²¹ to follow its desires with regard to what it likes and dislikes. So too, it is for this reason that judges are appointed, all the world over, among every nation, whether religious or not; or again, that every nation has a law, whether prescribed by God or invented by that nation itself.

That Human Beings Did Not Lose Their Freedom

What of those who claim that God created freedom in people but that compulsion was introduced into that freedom against its will? Such as these should know that in saying this they are forced to attribute to

PS158 God much that is loathsome, in a variety of ways. After all, compulsion must have been introduced into freedom either from God himself or from something other than God. If from God, there are only three reasons why he might have done this. He might have created freedom out of ignorance of what it would produce; and when he realized that it produces something detestable, he introduced compulsion into it. He might have created freedom out of generosity but then become miserly, such that he changed his mind and introduced compulsion into it.

PS160 He might have created it because through it he wanted to accomplish evil but then saw the light, coming to regret that to which freedom gives rise and thus annulling it. All this is too loathsome to be²² said of God! May he be blessed and exalted! He is not ignorant of what he does; he does not change his mind about an act of his generosity; he does not want evil to result from something he does. If, on the other hand, the compulsion introduced into freedom was from something other than God, what

B13/PS162 overcame freedom must be either something God created or something

18. Grammar and sense seem to require that a short lacuna be posited. 19. Tentatively reading *ṣabar* for *ḥamal*. 20. Perhaps “silently,” because human nature does not object. 21. Reading *taqharuhu*. The reading of the printed edition advocates a view that Theodore elsewhere (B13.7) explicitly condemns. 22. Reading *yakūn*, with Samir.

he did not create. If God created it, he was obligated, in that he also created freedom, either not to create something able to conquer freedom, or, if he created this thing for some other purpose, to intervene between it and freedom, that it might never reach freedom, with the result that what he created might be perfect and he not abrogate himself. If what conquered freedom was not something God created, it must certainly be something opposed to him, since it attacked his work and corrupted it without his permission. Those who say this, however, have taken refuge in the likes of the doctrine of the idiot Mani,²³ who introduced two principles, one good and one evil, and claimed that the soul is free²⁴ of the evil principle but that the body overcame and conquered the soul—and this, because Satan, the caretaker of evil, captured souls away from God, the caretaker of good, and imprisoned them in bodies.

PS164

Mani, to you we say: If, as you claim, the body overcomes and conquers the soul, then the soul is unable to refrain from doing evil as long as it remains in the body. You then, when you come commanding souls to good and forbidding them from evil, you ought rather to ask the good principle for an army and rescue those souls from the body—and they will save you a great deal of effort, in that they by nature do not do evil but only good. Because you, however, come commanding the soul to good²⁵ and forbidding it from evil, while also claiming that the soul is conquered by the body, the only thing to which you could be compared is to someone who approaches an eagle whose wings are tied to its sides with thick ropes and tells it to fly but does not undo its bonds. It would be more appropriate²⁶ for one who does this that he be [. . .]!²⁷ The extent of your idiocy is clear!²⁸

PS166

PS168

Mani, I cannot help but wonder at your ignorance. In order to establish the two principles forged by your insolent heart, you cite the words of our holy gospel, “A good tree cannot bear evil fruit; nor a bad tree, good fruit.”²⁹ You then go on to claim both that souls are from the essence³⁰ of the good principle and that they do evil with their bodies. Your claim is contrary to your interpretation of the words of the gospel, however. Indeed, if the good cannot do evil, then souls, which are from

B14

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23. It may be that Theodore is here using a traditional pun on Mani’s name, where his name is linked to the Greek word *mania* (“madness”). 24. Tentatively emending *al-ḥurriyah* to read *bari’at*. 25. Adding *bi-l-khayr* after *al-nafs*, with Samir (cf., e.g., B13.12; 14.8). 26. Reading *wa-aḥrā*, with Samir. Cf. also the parallels cited in the following note. 27. The reading of the printed edition (*an yakūn halak*) seems unlikely to be sound. The idiom for Theodore usually requires an indefinite accusative noun following *an yakūn* (see, e.g., D175.12 and B78.20 [reading *fa-aḥrā* with BD]). I am unable to suggest a suitable emendation, however. 28. For the idiom, cf. B16.9. 29. Matt 7:18. 30. Reading *jawhar* (cf. B14.5).

- the essence of the good principle, cannot do evil, even with the body, which is the opposite of what you are suggesting. Even supposing that the soul does absolutely no evil, however, whether apart from the body or with it, as you would have the gospel mean, I still do not understand how you, failure that you are, come to command them to good and forbid them from evil. The only thing to which I can compare you is to someone who commands the sun at noon, saying, "Give light, sun!" This is the very essence of idiocy. What of the body? I do not suppose that it is even possible for you to command it to good and forbid it from evil, since you claim that it is from the essence of the evil principle³¹ and say, as accords with your interpretation of the gospel, that what is evil cannot do good. Do you not resemble one who seeks to cajole the fire into being cold and not burning? Any way you look at it, your giving of commandments and prohibitions cannot be reconciled with how you interpret the words of the gospel. Be that as it may, Christ our God meant by the above-mentioned words of the gospel nothing other than good and bad intention. You should understand that good intention does not do bad acts and that bad intention does not do good acts. This is true, however, only as long as good intention remains good and bad intention remains bad. He did not say that bad intention cannot change and become good or that good intention cannot change and become bad. Indeed, in everything he taught, he suggested that intention can change from one state to the other. In teaching this, he resembles someone who says, "One who is asleep cannot read a book, and one who is awake cannot see a dream." What he said is true as long as the one who sleeps stays asleep and the one awake stays awake. The one asleep can change, however, and become one who is awake, and then read a book. So too, the one awake can change and become one who is asleep, and then see a dream. In the same way, good intention can change from its good state and become bad, and then do evil acts. So too, bad intention can change from its bad state and become good, and then do good acts. It is as John the Baptist said to the leaders of the Jews, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Perform acts that befit repentance!"³² Do you not see that he called them a "brood of vipers" but demanded of them acts of repentance? Because by an act of their will they became a brood of vipers, by an act of their will they could change from that state and perform acts of repentance. Mani is a tottering drunk: whichever way he leans, he falls down in a stupor. If he is right in his interpretation of the gospel, he is wrong to say that souls do evil with the body. If he is right to say that souls do evil with the body, his interpretation of the

31. Reading *al-shirrir*. 32. Matt 3:7–8.

gospel is wrong. Any way you look at it, if souls cannot do evil, even if compelled, Mani's coming to them is in vain³³ and his giving them commandments and prohibitions is the height of idiocy and failure.

Mani, I would like to know whether you have a body. If you say that you are like other people and that you have a body, then surely your soul is compelled by your body to do evil. This is, after all, what you claim the body does. In that case, however, it is impossible for you to be good. Being fully immersed in every manner of wickedness, you must be a liar, for lying is a kind of evil. Since you are a liar, everything you say has to be false. If you claim that what you say is not false, your body must not have overcome your soul, brought it down to its own natural level, and caused it to lie. Rather, your soul must have overcome your tongue, a part of your body, so as to speak the truth through it. Your words thus falsify themselves. You resemble one who claims to be mute and unable to speak to anyone with his tongue, saying, "People, know that I am mute and unable to speak!" The very claim falsifies itself. Similarly, Mani, your words falsify themselves. You claim that you have a body and that the body overcomes the soul, making it like itself, but then you say that your tongue speaks the truth. Any way you look at it, your words are refuted, whether you claim that they are false or whether you claim that they are true. The foolishness into which you have fallen is sufficiently clear! Suppose, on the contrary, that you claim that you do not have a body and that you are not walking in the way of the evil one.³⁴ If this is what you claim, I have to wonder why the evil one did not seize you and imprison you in one of his bodies. After all, while they were still in their own realm, he captured the other souls, which are essentially the same as yours, and imprisoned them in his bodies. And because you are living in his realm, it is thus far more likely that he would find you ready prey and imprison you in one of³⁵ his bodies. He did not do this, however. One of two things must thus be the case: either he was too weak to do this to you, or he was being kind to you. In the first case, if he was too weak, then the good principle, whom you think is commanding you to rescue souls from the evil principle, must either himself deliver them from his prisons or give you more of his power that you might easily accomplish that task. If the good principle willingly left them with the evil principle, it would have to be concluded that the evil principle is not doing evil things to them, in that the good principle was able to deliver them from him but chose not to. If this was what he was thinking, however, he had no reason to send you to them. In the second case, if the evil one

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B16

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33. Reading *bātil*. 34. Lit. "that you are walking in the non-evil one." It may well be, however, that the text is corrupt. 35. Adding *ba'd* after *fī*; cf. B16.11.

was being kind to you, notwithstanding that he was able to seize you, it would have to be concluded that he is good.

B17 What of your followers, Mani? We do not doubt that they have bodies.

PS190 According to what you teach, surely they must be indulging in every manner of evil—which is, as you claim, what their bodies, which overcame their souls, do by nature—refusing to desist from murder and adultery, from thievery and lying, and from every other manner of evil. (Your claim that souls are compelled by their bodies to do evil would be decisively demonstrated were there in the world only adherents of your religion! Indeed, they accepted what you teach solely so as to eliminate piety from their hearts and indulge in that to which their souls are inclined, whatsoever it might be.)³⁶ Moreover, if any of them were to do something good, this would surely be contrary to the religion they

PS192 profess. Mani, what of the people of truth,³⁷ who do not follow your religion? We see that their bodies are subject to their souls, through the goodness of their intentions. As for the body, which you say is evil and overcomes the soul, this we see fasting and praying, its feet quick to visit the sick, its hands giving alms and serving those who are ill and weak, its tongue speaking truth and guidance, its eyes diverted from disquieting sights, its ears turning from wicked talk, each of its senses abandoning disobedience to God. The whole of the body is holy in the case of those who rightly conduct themselves, who turn from your teaching and set right their intention by way of the true teaching, that is, the holy gospel of Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary. Further, the soul is not content simply to force the body to follow internally the good it intends. Rather, it also makes the body undertake external acts of goodness that accord with what it has heard internally about what the soul intends. Mani, things are thus exactly the opposite of what you teach: the body is found doing good; the soul proposing evil.

PS194 We do not wish to spend too much time on what Mani says and stray too far from our purpose. If we were to devote ourselves to a single page of what he has written,³⁸ we would be required to compose many books to illustrate its³⁹ most loathsome and foolish implications. Indeed, those lost in their dreams are not more in error about their oneiric visions than

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36. For the effect of desire on one's choice of religion, a major theme in Theodore's writings, see above at pp. 20, 35, 41, and 49. 37. This same expression, "people of truth," is also used as a synonym for "Christians" in the preface to Theodore's *On the Death of Christ* (p. 109). 38. Translation tentative. The text bears *ilā ṣahīfatihi*, which would literally be translated "to his page" or, less likely, "to his book." Neither translation makes a great deal of sense when seen against the background of the extensive size of the Manichean corpus of scripture. It may well be that the text is corrupt. 39. It is tempting to emend *minhu* to read either *anna-hu* or, even better, *anna-hā*.

is Mani in his mental fantasies. We have spent so much time on what Mani says only because it resembles what is said by those who would do away with freedom by introducing compulsion into it. We must now continue with our discourse until we accomplish our purpose.

God's Foreknowledge and Human Freedom

You should understand well that those who introduce compulsion into freedom take refuge in the pretext of God's foreknowledge, what with all escape being cut off and loathsomeness surrounding their words on every side. They say: God foreknows everything; what he foreknows must take place; as for what must take place, the one who does it is compelled to do it; accordingly, human freedom is compelled to do the good or evil it does. To those who say this we respond: If the matter is as you say, the first to be subject to such compulsion because of God's foreknowledge would be God himself. God foreknows what he will do before he does it. If what God foreknows must happen and the doer of what must happen is, as you claim, compelled to do it, God is compelled to do what he foreknows he will do. That God is compelled with regard to anything that he has done or will do is the most loathsome thing that could enter anyone's mind. May he be exalted above that and blessed! If God's foreknowledge in and of itself does not compel him to do what he foreknows, his foreknowledge does not compel human freedom to do what he foreknows—indeed, otherwise, his foreknowledge would be found to annul his will. Since your argument causes there to be compulsion in God, you have only three options. First, you might say that God does not foreknow what he will do before he does it. Far be it from God that he be such! Secondly, you might say that God is in fact compelled to do what he foreknows he will do. This, however, is the greatest of lies that could be forged against God. Thirdly, you might say that God's foreknowledge does not compel him to do what he foreknows he will do, and this is the truth. Since this is so, it is necessary that God's foreknowledge not compel human freedom, which freedom God generously granted people and fixed in their nature—otherwise, God's foreknowledge will abolish his will, as we just said, and his knowledge will be opposed to it.⁴⁰ May he be exalted above that! You should understand that God's knowledge is perfect and that he thus knows, from himself, that he will do what he will do and that he is able not to do it. All this God knows from himself. So also, he knows, from human freedom, that it will do what it will do and that it is able not to do it. It is in this manner that God does what he foreknows but is able not to do it and that human

40. Reading *la-hā* (cf. B19.12).

PS208 freedom does what God foreknows but is able not to do it. So too, it is in this manner that God's knowledge is not nullified and is not opposed to his will, not even in something he wills for his creation. Do not think that God will do what he foreknows just because his foreknowledge of it has preceded his doing of it and that human freedom will do what God foreknows just because God foreknew what it will do. Rather, God—may he be blessed!—does what he wills through his perfect power, no less than what he would have done if he had not had foreknowledge of what he would do. So too, human freedom acts as it wills through the power PS210 God gave it, with regard to what God commands and prohibits, no less than it would have done if God had known nothing about what it would do. God's foreknowledge is not something that forces either God or freedom⁴¹ to end up at what God has foreknown. Far be it from God that his knowledge compel him or that his knowledge⁴² nullify the freedom that he kindly and generously implanted in people when he created them.

Intention and Human Freedom

B20/S212 You should understand that the power of human freedom does not cease and is not in any way subject to compulsion⁴³ with regard to what God commands and prohibits. It is able to intend what it wishes, whether to obey or disobey God, and to carry out what it wishes in everything that lies within its ability, both in moving its body and in moving things outside its body. That said, in terms of what is outside its body, it is often prevented from carrying out its will. Sometimes, too, it is prevented from directing its body as it intends, whether because of sickness or because of PS214 external compulsion. And yet, none of this prevents freedom from intending what it wills, whether to obey or disobey God, whether to do what is praiseworthy or what is blameworthy. All of its acts are requited according to the intention behind those acts, not according to the external and visible manifestation of those acts. Thus it is that freedom is called "freedom"—being that it always has power over itself, to do what it wishes. It is this power that does not cease and is not in any way subject to compulsion. PS216 Because freedom always has power over its intention and God justly requites it only according to its intention, surely its power is effective only in terms of its intention and the requital that follows its intention. Since this is so, it follows that it lies within its ability to perish or to enjoy a life of blessing, to enter hell or to inherit the kingdom. Whether it is one or the other depends on the movements of its intention, which movements,

41. Reading *minhumā* for *minhā*, with Samir. 42. Reading *ʿilmuhu* for *ʿalayhi*.

43. Tentatively reading *yazūl sultānuhā wa-lā yadkhul ʿalayhi al-qahr* for *yaʿdū . . . yakūn* (cf. B20.10–11).

whether subtle or not so subtle, are not hidden from the wisdom of God, who, in truth, sees them⁴⁴ in their every detail. You should also understand that freedom merits requital only as long as it desires to obtain things according to the intention of its will. This is the case, however, only as long as it is in this world, where, while residing there,⁴⁵ it willingly submits to its desire for the good and evil it intends. When it has quit this world, the place of desire—and this prevents it from desiring to obtain things—and when the resurrection has occurred and everything has become unchanging, then it will no longer be required according to its intention. For that reason, everyone must hasten to repentance while still in this transient realm, before death befalls them and comes between them and their repentance. PS218 B21

Those Who Deny God's Foreknowledge

You should understand that there are some who avoid saying that God has foreknowledge for fear that this will force them to introduce compulsion into human freedom. It is only their insolence and their lack of understanding of the divine scriptures that leads them to this conclusion. Do you not know, you who say this, that God said to Moses, with regard to the children of Israel, "I know that after you they will forsake me and play the harlot with foreign gods?"⁴⁶ Did not David prophesy that the Jews would nail Christ's hands and feet,⁴⁷ and that they would give him vinegar to drink and mix gall with his food?⁴⁸ Did he not prophesy Judas Iscariot, who handed Christ over to death, saying of him in the voice of Christ, "The man in whom I trusted ate my bread and lifted his heel against me?"⁴⁹ Did not our Lord Christ⁵⁰ say to his disciples in the gospel, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"⁵¹ He meant by this none other than Judas Iscariot, for he knew that he was the one who would betray him. So too he said to Simon, the head of the disciples, on the night in which he was betrayed,⁵² "Simon, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times."⁵³ There are many other, similar passages in the holy scriptures. Those who avoid granting God foreknowledge for fear that it will introduce compulsion into freedom, would that I knew whether they say that God's foreknowledge compelled the aforementioned sinners to do what they did and that thus he excuses them. If so, what shall we make of the words of Christ our God in his holy gospel, "The Son of Man will be betrayed, as it is written, but woe to the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him had he not been born"⁵⁴ Do you not see that he knew Judas would betray PS220 PS222 PS224 B22/PS226

44. Emending *wa-tahriruhā* to read *wa-bi-ḥaqq yarāhā*. 45. Reading *tataqallab*. 46. Cf. Exod 34:16. 47. Ps 22:16. 48. Ps 69:21. 49. Ps 41:9. 50. Reading *al-masih*, with Samir. 51. John 6:70. 52. Reading *uslim*. 53. Matt 26:34. 54. Matt 26:24.

him and yet pronounced his woe, saying that it would have been better for him had he not been born? Accordingly, even though God foreknows that some will do evil, this does not mean that they are predestined to do evil; and if they are not predestined, they are not compelled. If I am wrong on this point, it would have to be concluded that God is unjust in finding fault⁵⁵ with them. Far be it from him that this be so! Again, *PS228* it says in the gospel that Christ our God, when he sits on the throne judging people, says to those who stand guilty before him, “Depart into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”⁵⁶ Surely God would never have prepared this fire for the devil and his angels had he not foreknown their acts, through which they would merit this fire. If they were excused before God because of his foreknowledge of their acts, he would never put them into that fire, for otherwise he would be unjust; but if they were compelled to those acts, they would have had an excuse before him. Accordingly,⁵⁷ God’s foreknowledge compels no one, as we established earlier, and there is no need for the wise to avoid saying that *PS230* God has foreknowledge for fear that compulsion will be introduced into human freedom.

Conclusions

We ask Christ to grant us his Holy Spirit without measure and to give us the best of the fruits of the freedom with which he has honored us and that through it he confer on us his blessed kingdom, on which the mind’s desire focuses when it does not stray from its path. To him be praise, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever!⁵⁸ Amen!

55. Reading *lāʿimatihī*, with Samir.

56. Matt 25:41.

57. Reading *idhan*.

58. Reading *al-dāhirīn*, with Samir.

Questions on Free Will

Father Abū Qurrah, the bishop of Haran, was asked the following question about Christ: G39

Muslim: Was it or was it not in accordance with Christ's will that he be crucified? G40

Theodore: If I respond that it was in accordance with his will, you will say that the Jews are thus blameless and that no punishment is required of them. If I say that it was not in accordance with his will, you will respond that he was weak in that he was overcome. Here's my answer to your question: Do you not claim that we forge lies against your God?

Muslim: Indeed, the greatest of lies!

Theodore: Is it or is it not in accordance with his will that we do this? If it is in accordance with his will that we forge lies against him, we are blameless and no punishment is required of us. If it is not in accordance with his will that we forge lies against him, he is weak in that we overcome him.

Let me explain the answer to this conundrum. Imagine that you were undertaking military operations in the land of the Byzantines and that you brought along your brother, one of your closest companions, the son of both your mother and your father.¹ Imagine further that one of the Byzantines killed him in battle. Do you have any doubt that he will enter paradise? Moreover, if you were to capture that Byzantine, would you not kill him?

Muslim: Yes.

Theodore: Why would you do that when he delivered² your brother to paradise?

1. As opposed to his being a son of his father and one of his father's other wives.

2. The verb *waddā* represents a Middle Arabic form of *addā*. See Blau, *Grammar*, 169.

Muslim: Because the Byzantine had not intended to cause my brother to inherit paradise but to destroy him. That's why I'd kill him.

Theodore: It's the same with the Jews. They had not intended to do Christ's will but only to destroy him. It's thus that they committed the gravest³ of sins and deserve the worst manner of punishment—on account of their intention, even though Christ's will was fulfilled.

Here's another example. Imagine that there was an abscess in your eye and that you were in dire straits. One of your enemies then saw you and took aim at your eye, with the thought of killing you with the blow. When the blow struck your eye, however, the abscess was lanced and you were healed. Should you get hold of him, what would you do to the man who struck you?

Muslim: I would kill him. This is because I recognize that he was acting toward me in a hostile manner and his intent was wicked.

Theodore: We say the same with regard to the Jews. There are also many other examples of this kind.

3. Reading *aqṣā*.

PART IV

THE BYZANTINE LEGACY



Refutations of the Saracens
by Theodore Abū Qurrah, the Bishop of Haran,
As Reported by John the Deacon

As I pondered how heretics are at present assaulting the church, GKh86
how those who are hostile are attacking her, how enemies are rising up
against her,¹ it occurred to me to liken such events to sicknesses, which
are now present in the body of a living being and then gone. This is in
accord with the unfalsifiable promise of him who founded the church on
the unshakeable rock of the faith of Peter,² the chief of the apostles—
the promise of him who is the head of her body,³ he who is the Word of
God and God, the only begotten Son, he who has the same essence as
the Father and the Holy Spirit, he who like them is without beginning
and eternal, he who is equal in dignity. For what reason the attacks⁴
of the heretics are befalling her—this I reckoned it necessary to explain.
Satan, who hates virtue, is in all things opposed to God, who loves vir-
tue. As many things as the Lord endeavors to build, the wretched one
strives to tear down. There are many examples that make this clear to
us, not least the account of the righteous Job. When God testified that
Job was righteous and pious and that he abstained from every evil, the
accursed one asked for the chance to show that he was not thus,⁵ so that it
might be established, so⁶ he thought, that God had necessarily and conse-
quently spoken falsely. The enemy of the righteous, however, was himself
shown to have reckoned falsely. And because the Lord had promised
Peter,⁷ the chief of the apostolic choir, that he would lay the church's
foundation on the unshaken rock of his confession, and because he
had assured the church that she would overcome the gates of hell,⁸ so

1. Adding *kai enantiōn epanastaseis* after *ephodous*, with V. 2. Cf. Matt 16:16, 18.
3. Cf. Col 1:18. 4. Reading *hai hormai* for *aphormai*. It may be noted that V reads
hai phorai. 5. Job 1:6–12. 6. Adding *hōs* before *ōieto*, with V. 7. GKh's emen-
dation is confirmed by V. 8. Cf. Matt 16:18.

the opponent of God, up to the present, struggles against the church. He endeavors to throw her down. He plots and contrives to show that the essential Truth⁹ of God the Father spoke falsely. Charlatans and “deceitful workers,”¹⁰ as it is written, he continually arms¹¹ against her with corrupting doctrines, as it were, combining sicknesses with sicknesses¹² on every side. While the lover of evil struggles to kill¹³ the immortal bride of Christ and endeavors to shut her up within the gates of hell, her bridegroom and lord, who protects those who cling to him,¹⁴ does not overlook those in danger for his sake. Even though,¹⁵ being opposed to God, the tyrant¹⁶ stands in hostile array,¹⁷ continually urging on against her his soul-destroying¹⁸ soldiers, still, against each one her protector sets up in rivalry one of his shield-bearers and defenders, who is easily able to ward off that one’s hands. (One of these, in particular, will be mentioned shortly.) It is clear, accordingly, that the error of idolatry was undone by the victorious and holy martyrs. Similarly,¹⁹ it is clear that the destruction of each of the heretics²⁰ was accomplished by the assembly of the holy fathers.²¹ While there is no need now for us to list these fathers, in that they are everywhere openly mentioned in all the sacred books, the present task induces me to mention one of them. I am speaking of the most blessed and most philosophical bishop of Haran in Coele Syria, Theodore. In his writings, which were truly inspired by God, he worthily held up to public scorn the impious religion of the Agarenes²² and showed to all that it was worthy of complete derision. Indeed, I was often present when he effected his refutations of their so-called wise men. Accordingly, I thought it necessary to draw up some little of what I remembered²³ to have transpired there, expecting that from this there will be not a little benefit for those who read this book. Beginning with God’s help, I put first the proposed question of the Saracen, using the letter Σ for his name, and then the most blessed bishop’s response, prefaced with the letter Θ, for his name was Theodore Abū Qurrah.²⁴

9. That is, Christ. 10. 2 Cor 11:13. 11. *GKh*’s emendation is confirmed by V. 12. Reading *nosēmata nosēmati pantothēn eranizomenos*, with V. 13. *GKh*’s emendation is confirmed by V. 14. Reading *ho tōn antechomenōn autou proestēkōs*, with V. 15. Reading *eiper* for *hōsper*, with V. 16. Reading *antithetos tōi theōi ho turannos* for *antitheos kai turannos tōi theōi*, with V. 17. Reading *antiparatattetai*, with V. 18. Reading *psuchoblabeis*, with V. 19. Omitting *hōsautōs de kai*, with V. 20. Reading *de hekastou homoiōs* for *hekastote*, with V. 21. Reading *patrōn*, with V. 22. That is, the Muslims. The etymology of this term is still unclear. Christians understood it to be derived from the name “Hagar,” however, whose descendants the Arabs were thought to be. Cf. Gen 25:12–18. 23. Reading *epi mnēmēs* for *epimnēmē*, with V. 24. Neither Y nor V, nor the Georgian version, separate the dialogue that follows from John the Deacon’s preface.

[Opusculum 18]

There was once a debate in Azotus.²⁵ The Christians there were in distress because of the Saracens and asked the bishop for help. Boldly, the Saracen began:

Saracen: Tell me, bishop, wasn't the world full of idols before Moses preached Judaism?

Theodore: Clearly.

Saracen: When Moses summoned to Judaism, which part of the world seems to you pious, that which accepted Judaism, or that which remained idolatrous²⁶ and did not obey Moses?

Theodore: That which accepted.

Saracen: When later Christ came preaching Christianity, which part seems to you pious, that which accepted Christianity, or that which remained fixed in Judaism and did not obey Christ?

Theodore: That which accepted Christianity.

Saracen: When later Muhammad came preaching Magarismos,²⁷ which part seems to you pious, that which accepted Magarismos, or that which remained in Christianity and did not obey Muhammad? GKh90

Theodore: That which remained in Christianity and did not obey Muhammad.

Saracen: Your last conclusion²⁸ does not accord with the premises.

Theodore: There is no need for me to draw a conclusion²⁹ based on false premises. Things are not as you suppose. Moses and Christ were not deemed worthy of belief simply because they preached and taught, such that Muhammad should also be believed because he preached and taught. Let me tell you why each was deemed worthy of belief. When Moses was sent by God, he asked God,³⁰ "What if I go and they say to me, 'You did not see God, nor did he send you,' what shall I do?" God said to him, "What is this in your hand?" He answered, "A staff." He then said to him, "Throw it down." When it had been thrown down, it turned into a snake; but when it was again picked up, it was turned back into a staff. God then said to him, "Put your hand into your bosom." He put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, it was leprous. So he put it back into his bosom; and when he took it out, it was restored.

25. A small city near the coast in southern Palestine, some ten kilometers from Ascalon. 26. Reading *eidōlotatroun*, with M. 27. That is, Islam. This term, which is occasionally encountered in early medieval Greek texts on Islam, would appear to be an attempt to render the Arabic designation *muhājir* ("those who make migration" in the early Muslim conquests), perhaps through the Syriac intermediary *mahgrāyē*. See Crone, "*Hiğra*," 352–87. 28. Reading *to eschaton epēnegkas sumperasma*, with M. 29. *GKh*'s emendation is confirmed by M. 30. Theodore here summarizes Exod 4:1–9.

God then said to him, “If they do not believe the first sign, or the second, make the water blood.” Thus was Moses sent and thus did he do; and his words were believed because of his deeds. Is this not true?

Saracen: Certainly.

Theodore: This Moses, who lent credence to what he said through signs, prophesied that Christ would come. What do you say? Do you think that Moses’ prediction was worthy of belief?

Saracen: Very much so.

Theodore: Now then, when Christ came, he confirmed that he had been sent by God in two ways: engendering faith in himself not just by means of Moses’ prophecy, but also, after that,³¹ through signs, wonders, and diverse³² miracles.

Saracen: What kinds?

Theodore: A seedless conception, a mother but no father, birth from a virgin, changing water into wine. Later, not in obscurity³³ but openly, he restored the sight of the blind, cleansed lepers, strengthened paralytics, healed diverse sicknesses, revealed his divinity on the mountain, cast out demons, filled many multitudes with a few loaves and fish, raised the dead as if from sleep, and, in general, repaired the faults of nature. Saracen,³⁴ what do you say to this? Did not Christ engender faith in himself with proofs that were no less impressive than Moses’ signs?

Saracen: They were in no way less.

Theodore: After being prophesied by Moses and with so many and such marvelous signs engendering faith that he had come from God, he exhorted his disciples, “Take heed that you are not led astray, for the law and the prophets were until John the Baptist. Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”³⁵ Accordingly, it is clear where this leaves your prophet.³⁶

Muhammad Is Not from God

GKh94 It is customary for the Saracen hypocrites, if they meet a Christian, not to offer a greeting, but immediately to say, “Christian, testify that God is one and without companions and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.” One of the hypocrites came up behind the blessed bishop as he was coming down from Jerusalem, and instead of receiving the bishop’s greeting, immediately said: “Christian, testify that God is one and without partners and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.”³⁷ Theodore replied:

31. Reading *ekeinēn*, with M. 32. Reading *poikilais*, with M. 33. *GKh*’s emendation is confirmed by M. 34. Reading *Sarakēne*, with M. 35. Cf. Matt 11:13, 15; Luke 16:16. 36. Reading *pou toinun ho prophētēs humōn ouk adēlon*, with M. 37. Following the reading of Y, which is confirmed by V and M, as well as by the Georgian version.

Theodore: It is not enough for you to be condemned for false testimony? Must you also incite others to testify falsely?

Saracen: I'm not giving false testimony.

Theodore: Were you present when God sent Muhammad?

Saracen: No. But as my father testifies, so also do I testify.

Theodore: If ancestors always speak the truth to their offspring, it would follow that the Samaritans, Jews, Scythians, Christians, and pagan Greeks are also justified in their beliefs. After all, each of these religious communities was taught by its ancestors to testify as they do. Is there anything different about your religion, if all you do is believe your father? Using such reasoning, the brutish Gentiles would also be justified in their beliefs.

Saracen: Fine, you've trapped me. But you answer me this: Don't you also testify only such things as your own father taught you?

Theodore: That's true. My father taught me things that are different from what your father taught you, however.

Saracen: What are these different things that our respective fathers taught us?

Theodore: My father taught me to accept someone as a messenger only if he was prophesied by an earlier prophet or through signs established himself as worthy of belief. Your Muhammad, however, could appeal to neither of these conditions. No earlier prophet declared him to be a prophet and he did not engender faith in himself through signs.

Saracen: That's not true. In the gospel, Christ wrote: "I shall send to you a prophet named Muhammad."³⁸

Theodore: The gospel has no such prediction.

GK496

Saracen: It used to, it's only that you all deleted it.

Theodore: If someone goes before a judge against a debtor³⁹ with a written document concerning the loan, but one without any mention of what he is seeking or claiming—what would the judge decide that he should receive?

Saracen: Nothing.

Theodore: Accordingly, you have nothing from the gospel.

Saracen: Even if I have nothing from the gospel, he can still be shown to be a prophet worthy of belief through the signs he performed.

Theodore: What sign did he perform?

The Saracen⁴⁰ then told some false stories, and when he was unable to say anything true, he fell silent.

38. Cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26. Muslims have traditionally taken Christ's references to the sending of the Holy Spirit, or Paraclete, to be a prophecy of the coming of Muhammad. See Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 22–23. 39. Reading *chrēopheiletou* for *tou ophelontos*, with V. 40. Reading *ho de Sarakēnos* for *barbaros*, with M.

Christian Doctrine Is Confirmed by the Most Disadvantageous Features of Its Preaching

GK^h102

A certain notable Saracen heard about the bishop. While sitting with ten other rulers, he sent for and invited him. Being confident in the eloquence of his own words, he had gathered them so that they might marvel at how invincible he was as a debater. When the bishop entered, he bade him sit and said, “I’ve heard that you boastfully proclaim that you’re able to confirm Christianity from its most disadvantageous features.”⁴¹ Recognizing the Saracen’s arrogance, Theodore responded:

Theodore: You’ve heard right.

Saracen: If you’re unable to do this, what penalty would you suffer?

Theodore: That I have no right to debate with a Saracen.

Saracen: And if you’re able⁴² to do this, then I’d have no right to debate with a Christian.

Theodore: Are you willing to agree to suffer some other penalty?⁴³

Saracen: Whatever you agree to suffer—I’ll agree to suffer the exact same thing.

Theodore: It would not be the same. If you were to stop me, you would⁴⁴ have great thanks from the Saracens. If I were to stop you, however, even if you spoke at great length, the Christians would think it no great triumph.

Laughing haughtily and wondering at the bishop’s boldness, the Saracen said:

Saracen: Without imposing a penalty on one another, come, bishop, let’s just go ahead and talk.⁴⁵

Theodore: I’ll ask; you answer.

Saracen: Ask away.

Theodore: How many kinds of people are there?

Saracen: I couldn’t say.

Theodore: Well, surely, there are three.⁴⁶

Saracen: And what are these?

Theodore: The wise, the average, and the stupid.⁴⁷

41. For the text of the dialogue thus far, I follow M, which reads: *tōn ellogimōn tis Sarakēnōn peri tou episkopou akousas sun allois deka ek tōn archontōn kathēmenos pempsas metekalesato auton tharrōn gar tēi tōn logōn autou euepeiāi sunēgagen autous hina hōs anikētōn dogmatistēn thaumasōsin eiselhonta de ton episkopon ekeleusen kathisai phēsas ekousa episkope hoti kauchōmenos epaggellēi dunasthai ton christianismōn bebaioun ek tōn en autōi elattōmatōn.* 42. Reading *dunētheiēs*, with M. 43. Reading *heteron ti pot’ allo sugkatathou pathein*, with M. 44. Reading *esēi*, with M. 45. Reading *ho Sarakēnos pros touto semnon gelasas tēn tou episkopou parrēsian thaumazōn phēsi mēden kat’ allēlōn epithentes prostimon age dē ō episkope lalēsōmen*, with M. 46. For the following three-fold division of humanity, cf. pp. 35–36, as well as pp. 43 and 52. 47. Reading *Th. pantōs treis S. poiai hautai Th. sophoi mesoi mōroi for pantōs . . . mōroi*, with M.

Saracen: That seems right.

Theodore: Is there even one of these three kinds of people who would agree to have a crucified God?

Thinking himself on the verge of victory, without hesitation the Saracen said, “Not one of them.”

Theodore: Pay closer attention. Don’t let yourself be overcome. In your expectation of victory, don’t let yourself be reduced to nothing.

Saracen: I stand by my answer. It’s simply not possible that either the wise, the average, or the stupid would be able to accept a crucified God.

Theodore: Am I to suppose then that you don’t consider the Christians to be human beings, who are only either wise, average, or stupid?

The Saracen, sensing that he was in trouble and coming to regret⁴⁸ the rashness of his denial, fell silent out of shame.

Theodore: My friend, what of the Christians, who comprise half or a fourth of all human beings? They consent to having a crucified God.⁴⁹ GK104

Saracen: Tell me this, then. How did these three kinds of human beings consent to having a crucified God? I’m at a loss to understand what mysterious cause could have induced them to consent to this.

Theodore: As I suggested a short while ago, I shall now prove that Christian teaching is confirmed and established through those teachings found among us that seem to you to be worthless.⁵⁰

Saracen: Go right ahead.

Theodore: I don’t want to spend time going through the argument point by point. I’ll thus briefly sketch for you its high points.⁵¹ Now then, imagine that you all are ruling over the ten idolatrous nations. One of you is in charge of the Greeks; another, the Romans; another, the Franks; and so on. Suddenly a man comes to you. He’s a foreigner⁵² and nothing much to look at, a dust-covered beggar, with neither shoe nor staff, dressed in just a tunic, with not a penny or a dollar to his name.⁵³ With great⁵⁴ boldness, he cries out to you, “My friends, why do you go astray? Why do you prefer impiety to piety?” I reckon you would answer him, “You wretch, just what is this piety to which we prefer impiety?” He then says, “To worship a crucified God—this is real piety.” On hearing this, you gnash your teeth and rush forward to kill him, but are unable to do so. Returning to his question, you answer him, “Give us more detail about this unbelievable proclamation of

48. Reading *metamelos* for *en metamelei*, with M. 49. Reading *hoi Christianoi ōtan hēmisu tetarton tōn anthrōpōn ontēs katadechontai echein Theon estaurōmenos* for *hoi Christianoi . . . estaurōmenon*, with M. 50. Reading *nuni deiknumi hoti dia tōn dokountōn soi par’ hēmin eutelōn dogmatōn to Christianōn kuroutai dogma kai bebaioutai* for *deiknumi . . . bebaiousthai*, with M. 51. For what follows, cf. pp. 46–47 and 52. 52. Omitting *ptōchos*, with M. 53. Adding *auchmēros ptōchos anupodētos arabdos monochitōn achalkos te kai anarguros* after *phainomenon*, with M. 54. Reading *pollēs*, with M.

yours.” He then says, “The Son of God, having come down from heaven, took flesh of a woman and became a human being. He was raised as a child.⁵⁵ When sought by his enemies, he fled to Egypt. When he returned, he was seized. He was slapped. He was spat upon. He was beat about the head with a stick. He was dressed in a scarlet robe and mocked. He was made to wear a crown of thorns. He was crucified. He was made to drink vinegar. He was pierced in the side with a lance. He cried out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’⁵⁶ He gave up his spirit. Dead, he was put in the grave.” He does not add, however, that on the third day he rose from the grave, that he might not seem to be seeking to deceive those listening by tricking them with tall tales. On hearing these things, you answer, “Stranger, there has never been anyone more foolish than you! Just what did the one who suffered these things proclaim to those who believed in him?” He replies, “Live an austere life. Avoid pleasure. Don’t practice polygamy. Offer the left cheek to someone who strikes you on the right. If pressed into service for one mile, go two. To the one who takes your coat, give your shirt also. Love your enemies. Speak well of those who revile and curse you, and pray for them.” You answer, “How will he reward those who undertake to do these things?” He responds, “In this world, there is no reward. When you are raised from the grave on the last day, however, he will give to those who did these things abundant and plenteous enjoyment of everlasting good things.” You answer, “Friend, the weakness of the one proclaimed by you is evident and the perversity of your message is manifest. Further, the wages for these things are too far away and dubious. Who would undertake to enter such a religion?” He then says, “Tell me: Does the creation serve and submit to anyone other than the creator?” You respond, “Absolutely not. Only the creator.” He then says, “Bring me a blind man.” When a blind man is brought, the messenger cries out, “Blind man, in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,⁵⁷ who was born of Mary⁵⁸ in Bethlehem, who fled to Egypt, who was seized by the Jews, who was beaten and spat upon, who was crucified, who cried out from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’⁵⁹ who was made to drink vinegar and gall, who was pierced in the side by a lance, who was buried in the grave, I say to you, ‘See!’” Immediately, he is able to see. Moreover, with this same⁶⁰ invocation he also cleanses lepers, drives out demons, cures paralytics, and raises the dead.⁶¹ From this, you⁶² and all those who see it, whether men or women, whether

55. Reading *anetraphē*, with M. 56. Matt 27:46. 57. Reading *Nazōraiou*, with M. 58. Reading *Marias*, with M. 59. Reading *kai rapisthentos kai emptusthentos kai estaurōthentos kai epi xulou Thee mou Thee mou hina ti me egkatelipes boēsantos for kai epi xulou kremasthentos*, with M. 60. Reading *autēi* for *autou*, with M. 61. Reading *daimonas apēlasen parolutous iasato nekrous ēgeiren for kai panta ta thau-mata epoiēsen*, with M. 62. Reading *humeis*, with M.

young or old,⁶³ whether wise, average, or stupid, in short, the whole human race, know without doubt that Jesus Christ⁶⁴ the Nazarene⁶⁵ is God and the Son of God and that he willingly suffered these things for a reason that escapes the understanding of all who saw it. Behold, it has been shown to you, as we promised, that Christian doctrine is established from its seemingly most disadvantageous features.

The Eucharistic Bread Is the Body of Christ

Once, in a debate, a Saracen asked him:

GK^h108

Saracen: Bishop, why do you priests delude the Christians? Given two pieces of bread baked from the same flour, one you allow to be eaten as common food; the other you distribute in little pieces to the people, calling it “the body of Christ” and affirming that it can forgive the sins of those who partake of it. Do you mock yourselves or those over whom you have charge?

Theodore: We delude neither ourselves nor them.

Saracen: Convince me of this, not from your scriptures, but from common notions that are accepted by all.

Theodore: What are you saying? Does or does not bread become God’s body?

Saracen: I would have to say that it doesn’t.

Theodore: Does or does not bread become a human being’s body?

Saracen: I’m at a loss to affirm either part of this contradictory proposition.

Theodore: Were you as large as you are now when your mother gave birth to you?

Saracen: No.

Theodore: How large were you?

Saracen: I was quite small.

Theodore: What made you get larger?

Saracen: By the will of God, food.

Theodore: Well then, for you at least, bread became body.

Saracen: I grant you the point.

GK^h110

Theodore: How is it that, for you, bread became body?

Saracen: I don’t know the exact process.

Theodore: Through the throat, food and drink enter the stomach, which is like a pot. Because the liver, which is hot, surrounds the stomach, the food is made to boil and is converted into liquid. The dense part sinks down; the light part, after being boiled, rises to the surface. The

63. Adding *andres te kai gunaikes neoi kai presbuteroi* after *theasamenoi*, with M.

64. Adding *Iēsous ho Christos* after *estin*, with M. 65. Reading *Nazōraios*, with M.

liver, which is hot and porous, absorbs the light part, turns it into blood, and makes it irrigate the whole body through the arteries, as if through pipes, distributing the food that was boiled in the stomach and in it turned into blood, so that it is converted into each of the parts: bone into bone; marrow into marrow; nerve into nerves; eye into eyes; hair into hair; skin into skin; nail into nails. This is how an infant grows into an adult: when bread becomes, for that infant, body; and drink, blood.

Saracen: This appears to be what happens.

Theodore: Understand our sacrament to take place in the same manner. The priest puts the bread and wine on the holy altar; and when he prays the sacred Eucharistic prayer,⁶⁶ the Holy Spirit descends on the gifts placed there. Through the fire of his divinity, he transforms the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, no less than the liver transforms food into the body of a person. Or don't you concede, my friend, that the Holy Spirit can do what the liver can do?

The Saracen made the concession, and with a sigh fell silent.

Christ Was the True God, Even Though He Became Human

GKhh12 *Saracen:* Christ said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, except what he sees the Father doing."⁶⁷ How can you Christians say that one who can do nothing of himself is God?

Theodore: Can you fly?

Saracen: No.

Theodore: If you were to see an eagle fly up into the sky and you too were to ascend and fly about like an eagle, which of you would be more wondrous to those seeing this? You or the eagle?

Saracen: I would be the more wondrous.

Theodore: Therefore, Christ is more wondrous than your God.

On Monogamy

GKhh14 *Saracen:* Why do you Christians think monogamy more lawful than polygamy? If you abhor polygamy, you should also reject monogamy. After all, if the whole is bad, the particular is bad; and if the particular is good, the whole is good—and this, because the whole is of necessity predicated of the individual.⁶⁸

Theodore: This particular does not differ from your whole in the same way that person NN differs from human beings as a whole; rather,

66. Reading *deomenou*, with M. 67. John 5:19. 68. That is, if marriage as a whole is good, all forms of marriage are good, but if marriage as a whole is bad, all forms of marriage are bad.

this particular stands opposed to the whole, as modesty is opposed to immodesty and justice is opposed to injustice.⁶⁹

Saracen: Prove this to me, not from your Isaiah or your Matthew, which I don't much care for, but from notions that are necessary, shared, and universally acknowledged.

Theodore: Using whatever method you want, I can easily satisfy⁷⁰ you.

Saracen: Using the method I've already mentioned. Come, give me your argument!

Theodore: Why⁷¹ is it that men and women get married?

Saracen: I'm not entirely sure.

Theodore: There are two reasons: for the sake of pleasure and in order to have children.

Saracen: This seems right.

Theodore: From the original man Adam up to the present day, are you aware of any man who received from God a wider variety of pleasures than Adam?

Saracen: No.

Theodore: Is there any form of pleasure he lacked?

Saracen: No.

Theodore: How many wives were created for him?

Saracen: One.

Theodore: It's established, then, that one has greater pleasures through a single wife than through many.

Saracen: I have to agree. And yet, it seems, one can have more children if one has many wives.

Theodore: Can you think of any age more in need of children than Adam's?

Saracen: None.

Theodore: Accordingly, it's established that in terms of the number of children begotten, monogamy⁷² is more fruitful than polygamy. It should also be clear how opposed to God and addicted to the flesh are the minds of those who advocate polygamy when the world is heavily populated, not least when the creator ordained monogamy when the world was inhabited by just a few people.

Hesitating to admit his defeat and contriving to hide the shame of his teaching on this subject, the Saracen said: GK116

Saracen: Give me yet another proof.

69. That is, polygamy is not related to marriage as a part is to a whole. It is, instead, the opposite of marriage. 70. Reading *koresai*, with M. 71. Adding *S. hothēn eipōn age dē moi ton tropon sou deixon. Th.* after *koresai*, with M. 72. Reading *hē mia* for *ēmin*, with M.

Theodore: Imagine that two slaves of one master were sent on a journey. Their master told one that he could wear as many cloaks as he wants and the other that he could wear just a single tunic. Their master also decreed that if one of them begins to shiver he must be given eighty lashes. In that he established such rules, do you reckon their master to be just or unjust, and especially if the one allowed to wear just one tunic was the weaker of the two?

Saracen: Unjust.

Theodore: You are, thus, accusing God of being unjust. According to you, he orders women, who are prone to lust, to have just a quarter of a husband, while men, who are endowed with self-restraint, can have four wives, as well as a herd of concubines. At the same time, he says that⁷³ the punishment for adultery is eighty lashes. Could there be anything more unjust than this?

Saracen: Come, give me another proof!

Theodore: Which would God rather see among human beings? Peace or strife?

Saracen: Peace.

Theodore: Do you think a man with many wives more likely to experience peace than a man with one wife?

Saracen: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Theodore: Are those women ever able to love one another?

Saracen: No.

Theodore: Do they not often poison their husband and one another? Because in their dealings with each other rivalry is endemic, do they not engage⁷⁴ in implacable battles? Monogamy, on the contrary, unites two genders that were initially distinct and joins with one another two genders that seemed disparate.

Saracen: So it seems.

Theodore: It is for these reasons that we consider monogamy to be more honorable and more lawful than polygamy and more pleasing⁷⁵ to God. If you wish, however, I'll give you yet another proof.

Saracen: I opened my ears to you once and you just about turned me into a Christian. Enough on this subject!⁷⁶

Christ's Hypostasis Was Not Destroyed in the Passion

*GKh*124

In another debate, one of the more clever Saracens asked the bishop, "Tell me, bishop, when your God hung on the cross, did he die?" "With-

73. Reading *tēs porneias de phēsīn* for *kai hekastēi tēs porneias*, with M. 74. Reading *sunēpsan*, with M. 75. *GKh*'s emendation is confirmed by M. 76. Reading *S. tas akoas soi diapatasantā mikrou me christianon pepotēkas halis moi tade*, with M.

out doubt,” responded the bishop. Falling into a fit of laughter and as if mocking the assembled Saracens and Christians, the Saracen held out his hand and exclaimed:

Saracen: The Christians’ God has ceased to exist!

Theodore: What makes you so sure that the Christians’ God ceased to exist?

Saracen: By analogy with myself.

Theodore: What sort of analogy?

Saracen: I used not to exist—until, that is, my two parts (my body and my soul) were joined together in my mother’s womb. It was then that I was begotten as a third something:⁷⁷ a single composite hypostasis formed from the union and composition of the two. Since they will be separated when I die, isn’t it necessary that my hypostasis will cease to exist?

Theodore: Are you suggesting that this type of composition in you is the same as what was in Christ?

Saracen: How can I not!

Theodore: Before the synthesis of your two parts, as you yourself acknowledge, you did not exist. After you had been begotten, however, there was no way for you to preserve the properties of these two parts, for you put an end both to the soul’s immortality and the body’s irrationality. You thus became, as you say, a third thing, one that is neither soul nor body, but a human being. As for what you derisively call “the Christian’s God,” even before the composition of his two parts, he existed with the Father and the Spirit: or rather, he has existed from all eternity. When he became a composite being and was begotten of the Virgin, he put an end to none of the properties of his two parts (that is, his divinity and his humanity), for he remained perfect God even as the Father is perfect and he became a human being even as his mother was a human being. At the time of the passion, when his soul was separated from his body, he was not separated from either part but was bound together through an inseparable union: a single hypostasis formed from divinity and humanity.

GK1126

Saracen: Where then were his body and his soul?⁷⁸

Theodore: His body was in the grave; his soul, in hell.

With a hearty chuckle, the Saracen then said, “With so great a distance between them, how was the Word united with both and separated from neither?” With a grin, Theodore responded:

Theodore: Well now, if one follows your line of thought, your God could not be both in the mosque of Mecca and in Baghdad.

77. Reading *etechthēn triton pragma egō* for *etechthē . . . egō*, with M. 78. Reading *pou ēn to sōma kai pou ēn hē psuchē*, with M.

Saracen: Were both parts still deified even though they were separated from one another?

Theodore: No less than when they were united.

Saracen: And how is it that this deified body lying lifeless in the grave was not moving about?

Theodore: Because the Word that was in it preserved inviolate for a time what is appropriate to the state of death.

As if snared in a net, the Saracen fell speechless and silent in amazement.

Muhammad Was God's Enemy and Possessed by a Demon

GKh98

Imagine that a king⁷⁹ who rules over all of creation under heaven learns that the residents of one of his territories are reviling him and treating his power with contempt. Imagine then that this ruler gets mad and sends to them a general, so as either to make them stop reviling him and teach them to speak in his praise or to punish with the sword those who refuse to submit. Imagine further that this general, after conquering the land of those arrogant subjects and getting himself corrupted by bribes, encourages them to behave even more arrogantly toward the king, even to the point of writing out for them, in his own hand, a letter of encouragement in exchange for their money. Is there anyone more wicked than one who would do such things to his king? How could there be? Perhaps someone will say, "Who would be so insane as to encourage people to revile his master in exchange for money?" I respond: Muhammad, the insane false prophet of the Agarenes. This can be shown from his own boastful and lying remarks. Under the power of a demon, he said, "God sent me to spill the blood of those who venerate the divine nature as three hypostases and of all those who do not say, 'God is one, barren-built, who did not beget and was not begotten, who has no partner.'"⁸⁰ This is the theology of one who is insane. He first denies that God is the begetter of light and the progenitor of holiness; and then, notwithstanding his boast to have been commanded by God to punish Christians with the sword, in that they arrogantly revile the divine, he lets himself be appeased by bribes⁸¹

79. Reading *basileus* for *kata*, with M. 80. Cf. Qurʾān 112:1–4. Reading *steiropēktos*, with MVY. This term also seems to stand behind the Georgian, which bears the odd expression *bercʼ-mtʼkʼice*, literally, "barren-strong." The term "barren-built" seems to be either a deliberate mistranslation or a misunderstanding of the Qurʾānic term *ṣamad* (usually translated as "eternal" or "absolute"). For other Christian discussions of this term, see Khoury, *Polémique byzantine*, 338–41, and Meyendorff, "Views of Islam," 122. Cf. van Ess, "Youthful God," 4–5, who argues that Christian understandings of this term may reflect nearly forgotten Muslim traditions. Rubin ("High God," 213) also draws attention to a number of early Muslim interpretations of this verse in which *ṣamad* was taken to mean "solid." 81. Theodore is alluding to the taxes that Christians pay to the Muslims. Cf. Qurʾān 9:29.

and allows them to act arrogantly toward the one who sent him. Or so at least the demoniac thought! That no one might think we are falsely accusing him of being possessed, read the account they have, the one entitled *The Forgiveness of Aisha*.⁸² She was Muhammad's wife. Once, when there were suspicions that she had committed adultery, he banished her to her parents' house. A few days later, when he was sitting with them, he fell to the ground in a demonic trance and began to writhe about in such a way that those passing by said that a weighty oracle had been revealed to him. After a bit, he regained his senses and was asked what he had seen. He answered, "The forgiveness of Aisha was revealed to me." On the grounds that he had been assured by an angel that she was innocent of what was suspected, he received her back again.

GKh100

God Has a Son Who Shares His Essence and Like Him Is without Beginning and Eternal

The Saracens⁸³ are intent and zealous to deny the divinity of the Word of God. On all sides, they array themselves against him, eager to show that he is neither God nor Son of God. Indeed, it was only because their false prophet was the disciple of an Arian that he gave them this godless and impious teaching. Once, during a public debate, one of them, a clever and eloquent speaker, asked the bishop:

GKh118

Saracen: Theodore, what do you say Christ is?

Theodore: God and Son of God.

Saracen: Is it possible that God have a Son?

Theodore: It's impossible that he not have a Son.

Saracen: How so?

Theodore: Is it possible that God not rule?⁸⁴

Saracen: Certainly not.

Theodore: Over whom does he exercise this rule?

Saracen: His creation.

Theodore: Ruling for him would then be accidental and not natural. Moreover, it would have to be said that he has this ruling as something acquired from without, that it is something he acquired at a later time rather than something existing with him from all eternity. Indeed, according to what you've said, he wouldn't have been a ruler before there was a creation. In fact, it would have been the creation itself that caused him to become a ruler, by selecting him to rule over itself, something

82. That is, ʿĀ'ishah bt. Abī Bakr (d. 58/678), one of Muhammad's wives. For the story in question, which is used by Muslims to interpret Qurʾān 24:11–20, 23–26, see Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 3:314–15. 83. Reading *Sarakkēnōn* for *Agarēnōn*, with M. 84. A strong parallel to the following argument can be found at pp. 140ff.

which earlier he had not been doing. He would also have to give thanks to it for its having thought him worthy of the honor of being its ruler. Further, if he should think it good that the creation revert to nothingness, for want of subjects he would be, in your opinion, deprived of rule.⁸⁵ In addition to such absurdities, there would be another, even more absurd consequence.

Saracen: What's that?

Theodore: An earthly king's rule would have to be considered incomparably better⁸⁶ and more honorable than God's rule.

GKh120

Saracen: And why would this follow?

Theodore: It follows because the earthly king would be ruling subjects who are the same as himself in terms of their essence and when they came into being, while God would be ruling subjects who possess a different essence, who are much lower, and who only came into being after him.

Saracen: I don't understand what you mean.

Theodore: Imagine someone who comes to a king and greets him with these words, "Hail, king of the asses." What do you say should happen to such a person?

Saracen: That person should be punished with death.

Theodore: Is creation more like God or are asses more like an earthly king?

Saracen: Asses are more like a king, for both are creatures, sharing the same ultimate origin and equally slaves of God. Well then, if, as you say, he does not exercise his rule over the creation, allow me to ask over whom he exercises it?

Theodore: There are three possible types of subjects: those who are greater than their ruler, those who are less, and those who are equal. It would be blasphemous to suggest that God exercises his rule over those who are greater, for than God nothing is greater. Because of the absurd consequences discussed above, it would be dishonorable for him to exercise his rule over those who are less. The only thing left to say is that he exercises his rule over those who are equal to himself and like him without beginning.

Saracen: Who then is equal to God and like him without beginning, and yet ruled by him?

Theodore: There are three possible types of subjects: those who choose to be ruled, those who are overcome by force, and those who neither choose to be ruled nor are overcome by force. God does not exercise his

85. Reading *chrēizei tōn archomenōn tēs archēs an kata se gumnōtheis for anēkoa . . . an*, with M. 86. Reading *beltiōn*, with M.

rule over those who choose to be his subjects, as this would mean that they might change their minds and choose someone else instead. In addition, according to our earlier arguments, this would mean that he does not have rule eternally and naturally, but only after an act of the will and as something recently acquired and as something dishonorable. God does not exercise his rule over those who have been overcome by force, for in addition to its other absurd consequences, this is simply unseemly. The only thing left to say is that God exercises his rule over one who neither chooses this nor is overcome by force, but who is ruled in a manner that accords with nature.

Saracen: Who is so ruled by God?

Theodore: There are three possible types of rulers: the one who exercises rule over subjects by their free choice, the one who exercises rule by force, and the one who exercises rule by nature. God does not exercise his rule over subjects by their free choice, for this would entail the consequences discussed above, which would be untoward to predicate of God. God does not exercise his rule by force, for the use of such force is in no way appropriate to God. The only thing left is the third option: God's rule is untouched either by the free choice of his subjects or by the exercise of force, which means that it must be by nature.

Saracen: Who is it that God rules by nature?

GKh122

Theodore: His Son. It is because of him that God is known to be an eternal ruler and Father—and this, because everything that is by nature precedes willful choice.

Saracen: What do you mean?

Theodore: Before willing to breathe, we breathe. Before willing to hear, we hear. Before willing to see, we see. You who deny the divinity of the Word of God, it has been demonstrated to you that God has a Son who shares his essence and like him is without beginning and eternal, who because of his divine majesty sits with his Father, who as⁸⁷ maker and creator is—with him—served and worshipped by every invisible and visible creature, who has heaven for his throne and earth for his footstool.⁸⁸ As the prophet said, “He measured the heavens with a span and the earth with a hand. Before his face, all the nations are like dust on a scale and a drop from a bucket.”⁸⁹

87. Adding *hōs* before *dēmiourgos*, with M. 88. Cf. Isa 66:1. 89. Isa 40:12, 15.

Greek Fragments

A Dialogue between Theodore Abū Qurrah, the Bishop of Haran, and the Postmaster of Emesa, Who Had Asked Him to Prove through Reason Alone That God Exists

Unbeliever: My friend, prove that God exists.

GK^h128

Orthodox: Every number that can be augmented must be finite.¹ The number of human beings is thus finite, even if we don't know their total number. Nonetheless, let's suppose for the sake of brevity and clarity that there's a total of one hundred human beings. It's impossible that all of these be begotten. They're descended from one another; but as the mind traces back the line of descent, it must come to one that's wholly unbegotten. How so? It's impossible to say, on reaching² the first, that it too was begotten from another, for that from which it was begotten would itself have to have been begotten from yet another. Eventually, we must bring our minds to rest at a first that's unbegotten. As to this first that's unbegotten, it must have sprung from the earth, like some plant, or be eternal, or have been made by some fashioner. If it sprang from the earth, the earth at present would still be causing other, similar things to spring forth, in the same way that it causes the different types of trees and plants to spring forth. Since we don't see this happening, clearly the earth wasn't responsible for causing the first to spring forth. So also, we can't say that it's eternal. If something is without beginning and eternal, it doesn't die or perish—and this, because what is without beginning is also without end.³ Accordingly, it must have been made. Because what is made has a maker, there is a creator and maker of human beings. Here's

GK^h130

1. Another version of the argument that follows can be found at p. 158. 2. Reading *elthonta*, with M. 3. For a similar argument, cf. p. 171.

another proof that leads to the knowledge of God.⁴ Tell me, suppose I were to take a lump of dirt from the ground up onto a high house and were to let it go. Because by nature it tends downward, would it not travel continuously down until it came to rest on something that is both more solid and immovable?

Unbeliever: Yes.

Orthodox: The same would hold for the earth itself, in that the whole can be understood from the part: that is, if the earth doesn't have something more solid below it to support it, it would not cease to be borne downward. Everyone can see, however, that the earth is firmly established in its place. Accordingly, there must be some stronger power that supports and lifts it up—and this is the Word of God. If you suggest that there's another body supporting it, what in turn is lifting up that other body? And thus, following this line of inquiry, the argument eventually must arrive at a final object that is lifted up by some stronger power. After all, what is limited above cannot be without limit below, for what is limited in one part must surely have a limit in the other part. Imagine, for instance, a rope that stretches from this part of the earth to the other. If I take hold of the visible end of the rope and pull it up two or three cubits, is it not necessary that the end of the rope pull away from the other part, the unseen part, and that it be pulled away in the same measure? From this we know that the earth has a limit below. Accordingly, it is demonstrated that there is a creator of beings.

Unbeliever: Very nicely have you demonstrated it too, and I thank you for the help. But how do we know that this creator has a Son?

Orthodox: Don't you know that it is one thing that beats and another that is beaten, one thing that sees and another that is seen, one thing that knows and another that is known?

Unbeliever: Yes, this is very surely the case. The same cannot both act and be acted upon.

GK^h132

Orthodox: Is not God something simple, wholly without mixture and composition?

Unbeliever: This must be the case.

Orthodox: How then does what is completely simple and wholly one know itself? After all, it has been granted that it is one thing that knows and another that is known. This is an especial problem in the case of things that have only a single part and are simple. As for things composed of parts, perhaps it's possible that one part sees and another part is seen, that one part knows and another part is known—though such a situation of necessity introduces composition. God is not susceptible

4. For another version of the argument that follows, see pp. 158 and 168.

to any composition, however, in that he transcends every immateriality and simplicity. One of two things must be the case, therefore. It may be that God knows himself and is thus composite. To say this, however, overturns our original premise, that it is one thing that knows and another that is known. Alternatively, it may be that God exists without knowledge of himself, which, too, is quite improper.

Unbeliever: The argument is unimpeachable.

Orthodox: Since then both options are improper, how will God know himself while remaining simple?

Unbeliever: I can't see how.

Orthodox: There are five types of knowledge.⁵ First, one can know a thing from the thing itself. For instance, when I see a person, I know whether that person is white or black, has curly or straight hair, is handsome or ugly, is tall or short. Secondly, one can know a thing from something similar, that is, from something that shares the same essence and nature. For instance, how do you know that you have a heart, a liver, and a spleen, as well as whatever else touches the form and arrangement of your insides? After all, you've never seen such things. You know them from another with the same nature, from which you infer that you yourself are such too, for similar things are comprehended from similar things. Thirdly, it often happens that something is known from its effects.⁶ For instance, if I travel through a field that's been ploughed and worked, I know from the effect that it was worked by someone, even if I don't see the ploughmen. Again, if I see a missile or rock hurled from a tower walled on all sides, I grasp that it was hurled by someone. Fourthly, often someone is known from an image. If, while holding a mirror, I see the reflection of someone standing behind me and staring at me, I know from the likeness reflected in the mirror whether that person is bald, whether he is possessed of a flat or an aquiline nose, whether he has big eyes. Fifthly, opposites are often known from opposites. For instance, when God said to Adam, "On the day you eat from the tree, you will die,"⁷ how did Adam know what death was, having not yet seen it—for he had not seen anything die? It could only have been from death's opposite, that is, from life, for surely the absence of life is death. It is in the same way that a wealthy person knows poverty and a healthy person sickness. In which of these five ways does God know himself? He can't know himself from himself, for it's been conceded that it is one thing that knows and another that is known. He can't know himself from effect, in that created beings are too secondary and too low. He

GKk134

5. Cf. Theodore's discussion of the four types of knowledge at pp. 157f. 6. Cf. Theodore's extensive discussion of this same subject at pp. 167f. 7. Gen 2:17.

can't know himself through a mirror or through any of the four manners discussed above. Accordingly, there must be something wholly similar to God, that is, something that shares his essence and like him is eternal. It must be that he knows himself from this similar being, for otherwise he would be left without knowledge of himself. When God sees his Son, who is in all things similar to himself, he sees himself in that Son. The Son, after all, is "the image of the invisible God"⁸ and "the impress of his existence."⁹

Unbeliever: Fine, let God have something coeternal and similar, so that he might know himself from it. How are you going to prove that this is his Son?

Orthodox: Those who desire to be just should measure and weigh by the same measure and balance by which things were measured and weighed for themselves.¹⁰ If I receive from you one hundred pieces of gold and I wish to give these back to you, you ought to receive from me an amount determined by the same balance that was used to weigh them when I initially received them from you. After all, God says, "My soul hates a balance that is too big or too small."¹¹ How do we know that God exists and how do we recognize his attributes? Is it not from the things of or relating to ourselves? (Otherwise, if we had never seen God and if we were unable to comprehend him from his works, there would be every necessity for us to remain completely ignorant of him.) We thus attribute to God our noble qualities, while refusing to ascribe to him our defects.¹² For instance, among us there is both life and death. With which of these attributes would it be fitting for us to characterize God?

Unbeliever: Clearly, by life.

Orthodox: Now then, we say that God lives, that he is a living being, and that he is life itself. Among us, however, life has both a beginning and an end. It also stands in need, requiring an influx of external things: food and drink, for instance, or the inhalation of air, as well as other, similar things to sustain it. All such defects we declare too low for God and refuse to attribute to him. We say, instead, that God enjoys a life that has neither beginning nor end and that his life is not sustained by external things. Is this not true?

Unbeliever: Making use of things of or relating to ourselves, you describe God admirably and wisely. It's simply impossible to know or speak of him in any other way.

Orthodox: My friend, you should think in the same way about God's other attributes. We can both see and be blind. As for God, we first set

8. Col 1:15. 9. Heb 1:3. 10. Cf. Matt 7:2. 11. Cf. Prov 20:10, 23 LXX. 12. For a fuller form of the following argument, cf. pp. 11ff., as well as p. 159 ff.

aside blindness and then say that he sees in a passionless manner—that is, because he is wholly passionless, we separate sight’s passions from him. The same holds for our hearing and our being deaf. We say that God hears but that he cannot be deaf. The same holds for his other attributes. In short, even if we had never received scripture, we would be able to track God down by following such trails.

Unbeliever: Your arguments are quite cogent.

Orthodox: If you would be just, you should “use the same balance” and concede the argument’s logical result. What do we value more, the bearing of children or its opposite? Begetting or sterility? If you wish unfairly to refute this point, then I would have to refute the propositions that death is better than life and that being blind and deaf are better than being able to see and hear. To make such an argument—is there anything more improper or more worthy of derision? GK4138

Unbeliever: You’ve cogently established that God must be fertile and capable of begetting.¹³ Indeed, there’s no counterargument: it’s more honorable for him to beget than to be sterile and infertile. Still, you must recognize that the act of begetting entails passions.

Orthodox: My good and wise friend, did we not lay it down as a premise that the divinity has the attributes that we consider honorable but not the passions or defects to go along with them?

Unbeliever: Enough! Fine, you’ve established that there’s a God and that he has a Son. But answer me this! Why didn’t God beget multiple sons? By doing so, wouldn’t he be able to have authority over multiple entities?

Orthodox: One of three things must be the case: either he begot infinite sons and will continue to beget such sons forever and ever; or he begot a limited number of sons (say, one hundred); or he begot just a single one. If he begot an infinite and innumerable number of sons and continues to beget, his desire and good pleasure will never be fulfilled. If he begot a limited number (say, one hundred), for what reason did he do so? It must have been because one son was not enough to fulfil his good pleasure and desire, and thus there was a need for more sons. If we concede this to be the case, however, it would have to be concluded that the one son was imperfect, deficient, and insufficient. If the one son was deficient, however—and it has been shown that he is equal and similar to the Father—God also would have to be imperfect, deficient, and insufficient. Lord have mercy! This is unthinkable! Contrariwise, if the Son is perfect, as also is the Father, there would be no need for other sons. Tell me, do you not say that God created angels and human beings with free will?

Unbeliever: Of course!

13. For a similar argument, cf. pp. 12, 142, 162.

Orthodox: As for the other kinds of living creatures, are they lacking in reason and free will?

Unbeliever: Yes.

GKh140 *Orthodox:* If God wished to send to us (that is, into the world) a messenger, from which rank would he send him?

Unbeliever: From the angels, of course, or from men, but not from the irrational creatures.

Orthodox: In that angels and human beings have free will, the one sent would have a choice: either to obey God and be sent, or not; either to speak as ordered or refuse. Do you not know that Moses and Jeremiah, as well as others sent by God, at first declined and refused to be sent?¹⁴ They were overcome by fear of the task at hand or by some other passion and offered excuses until with many words and exhortations God persuaded them to be sent. If they had decided to continue resisting to the end, however, they could have done so. They did, after all, have free will.

Unbeliever: Yes.

Orthodox: Jonah, too, fled from the face of the Lord to Tarshish, when God wanted to send him to Nineveh.¹⁵

Unbeliever: Thus do we read.

Orthodox: If those sent had either refused to be sent or had proclaimed the wrong message, one of two things must have been the case. The first is that God's will was nullified in that it did not find a messenger. The second is that God left his divine throne and became a messenger and spokesman for himself, a servant of his own will, a worker for himself and his own underling.¹⁶ As the argument has shown, however, it is wholly alien and foreign to royal worthiness to effect through itself and of itself one of its own dictates and commands.¹⁷ At the same time, it is foolish to say that he sent us one of the irrational creatures. Accordingly, there is every necessity that God have someone with an essence that is the same as his own, someone endowed with free will, someone possessed of a purpose that does not alter and is not untrue to itself when he does what God desires. And this is his Son, who is coeternal, who shares God's will and counsel, who is called in scripture "the messenger of great counsel,"¹⁸ who prophesied to our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses, and to others, as also you can learn by reading the holy books most carefully.

GKh142

14. Cf. Exod 3–4 and Jer 1:6. 15. Cf. Jon 1:3. 16. Reading *hupēretēn*, with M.
17. This is not a point that was discussed above. 18. Isa 9:6.

Unbeliever: What about the Spirit? What need was there for him, if, as you've said, the Son was sufficient to bring to fullness the Father's rule and governance?

Orthodox: One mark of the most lawful form of kingship is that the king does nothing whatsoever through himself. Rather, it is through the giving of commands that he effects what he thinks right. Indeed, it would be a defect, a lack, and a shortcoming, and not at all something royal, to do something through himself. It is for this reason that the Son acts as intermediary. At the same time, among the most necessary and characteristic aspects of kingship is the having of boundless and limitless wealth, as well as treasures and reserves. Indeed, one would be a poor and wretched king if one had not wealth and did not distribute gifts to the poor; in fact, one would not even be a king. The Father's royal wealth is the Holy Spirit, who is responsible for distributing his gifts. Accordingly, it is through the Son that the Father gives the Spirit, that is, the activities and gifts of the Spirit.

Unbeliever: Why didn't the Son give himself, that he himself might be the wealth?

Orthodox: The Son would then have been himself both the one who gives and the one who is given. This you earlier agreed to be inconsistent, when it was said that it is one thing that knows and another that is known, one thing that acts and another that is acted upon. Accordingly, it must be that the Father gives orders in a kingly fashion and that the Son brings to effect the Father's good pleasure and gives the Holy Spirit, who is the wealth and treasury of all good gifts. In this manner, God's kingship will be found to be without defect, perfect, and orderly.

Unbeliever: Still, before the creation there were none to whom wealth might be given and none to be honored with gifts. What need was there then for the Spirit? Of what use was he?

Orthodox: My friend, if God's kingdom is not to be brought to perfection only with the passage of time, it must be eternally perfect even if there's no one to participate in it. Here's an analogy. The philosopher and the doctor desire to have a perfect understanding of their disciplines, even if they don't have students or patients. So too, you are capable of seeing when you lay down in your bed at night, even if there's nothing for you to see. This is because you are a perfect man: when you wish to see, the faculty of sight is there for you and not something that must be acquired from without. Let me ask you concerning the Spirit what I asked concerning the Son: Is the wealth of God greater, equal, or less than God himself?¹⁹ He isn't greater, for nothing is greater than God. He isn't less,

GKh144

19. This is not a topic treated above. For a parallel, however, cf. above at p. 141.

since then you would have to classify him as a created being—for that which is less than God is a created being—and God would be ever poor, needy, and lacking. This, however, is both inadmissible and unseemly. Accordingly, it must be that he is equal to God and coeternal with him, that God might be both perfect and an eternal king. To him be the glory, honor, and power, forever and ever! Amen!

By the Same

PG1521 *Question:* Why do we say that the humanity of Christ is the same as the humanity of Peter and Paul and of each and every human being, but we do not say that the body of Christ, in which also we participate, is the same as the body of Peter and Paul and of each individual human being?

Answer: What is common (that is, what is universal), when it receives a characteristic property, becomes a hypostasis. The body, however, though it is also in one sense called “common,” when it receives a characteristic property, is not then called “such and such” but “of such and such”—that is, it does not become a hypostasis but belongs to the hypostasis, for the body is a part of the nature, not the whole. For that reason, the part does not exist by itself, but is said to belong to the whole.

PG1524

An Example Showing How the Stain of Sin Passed from Adam to the Whole Human Race

PG1524 Farmers say that if you plant the shoot of a grape vine that has been dipped in oil, the whole quality of the oil is also transmitted to the fruit (that is, to the grapes). In the same way, after Adam received a nature that was pure, he defiled it with sin and passions, and this quality was transmitted to us.

How in the Savior’s Incarnation Purity Passed to All of Us

PG1524 They also say that if you take a melon seed, dip it in honey, and then plant it, the honey’s sweetness is transmitted to the fruit. In the same way, after Christ purified human nature from the oily quality (that is, from sin) through holy baptism, he took it up without spot or stain, such as it had been when it was initially created; and by dipping it in the honey of his divinity, through its²⁰ sweetness (that is, through the power of the Comforter) he made us share in its sweetness—and this, via transmission, as was also the case with the melon seeds with regard to their fruit.

20. Adding *tēi* before *glukutēti*, with M.

On the Contending of Christ with the Devil

Question: When Christ, who is God, contended with the devil and conquered him, what great thing did he accomplish? For the devil will say, "I conquered a man, but by God I was conquered." Also, what benefit was it for our nature that God effected this conquest? PG1524

Answer: The Jacobites say that God the Word alone contended and conquered. The Nestorians say the opposite, that it was the man alone that did this. As for the church, it takes²¹ the middle and royal road, teaching that God the Word in the flesh²² contended with the devil. If, as the Nestorians say, it was just a man that conquered and was killed, his death would have been of no benefit to us. I shall not now say in how many things they would have to have stumbled before they could demonstrate that a mere man conquered. If it is as the Jacobites say, there would be no benefit for us in that God alone conquered. Rather, when the devil saw that it was through their free choice²³ that Adam, and indeed²⁴ all other human beings, had come to be bested²⁵ by him, he did not reckon the besting to have been of the hypothesis of Adam and the other human beings, but of human nature itself, and thus he said, "God created a creature that was unable to withstand either me or sin." For this reason, when God the Word assumed human nature in its entirety, he made use of its free will, its senses, and all its natural faculties, in a manner that was both natural, appropriate, and in accord with God's will. In conquering the devil, he did not add or supply a power that was divine and supernatural in his contending. Rather, in a way that accorded with God and his divine law,²⁶ he made use of what pertained to human nature, directing all its parts and its faculties and its organs, in a manner that was fit and in accord with the measure of humanity. It was thus that he conquered and showed human nature victorious; and hence, victory and justice were reckoned to that nature. PG1525

Question: Tell me, as for the human mind, was it this that contended with the devil? In short, was it moved by itself or by another?

Answer: Your mind or foot or hand is not said to move itself, for it is you that moves and directs, as you will, your mind, your members, and your faculties. In the same way, it is God the Word himself who moves and governs, as he wills, his human mind, his senses, his natural abilities, and his faculties. As for your question whether the mind of Christ was moved by itself or by another, we say this: Human nature, that is, the mind,²⁷ the soul, the body and its members and organs of

21. Reading *anouosa*, with M. 22. Adding *en* before *sarki*, with M. 23. Reading *idioruthmiāi*, with M. 24. Reading *nai mēn* for *nemein*, with O. 25. Reading *hēttemenous*, with O. 26. Adding *kai tōi theiōi* after *theōi*, with O. 27. Adding *hous* after *ētoi*, with M.

sense—each of these has a certain simple and natural motion of its own. Indeed, if these did not by nature have a certain motion, we would not be able to move them. Accordingly, making use of this natural and simple motion, we move and direct it as we will, whether for good or for evil. Here's an example. The feet by nature have a walking motion, but it is I who use the walking as I will. The eyes are simply able to see, but I use the seeing as I will: thus, by nature I am able to see, but how I see arises from me. The same holds for the will and for the other parts of human nature—and for the mind itself, for it too by nature simply has the ability to think this²⁸ or that, but it is I who use this natural ability of the mind however I will and²⁹ decide, that is, thinking either good things or evil things and using the mind's ability as I choose. Accordingly, simply to be moved pertains to the nature, while how something is moved pertains to the hypostasis. You should think the same way about Christ. Just as it is said both that the carpenter made the throne with his hand and that the hand of the carpenter made the throne, so also it is said both that God the Word conquered in the flesh and that the flesh (that is, human nature) conquered.

Question: How was Adam overcome? Was it not because he disbelieved? Or rather, did he not give up faith in the Word of God and put his faith in the devil?

PG1528

Answer: The blandishments of pleasure charmed him first through his desire;³⁰ only then did he disbelieve. Indeed, if the forbidden fruit had not been attractive and had not appeared seasonable to him, he would never have deceived himself into accepting the word of the enemy. Attend to what I say. Imagine that the devil had shown him a foul smelling fruit, thorny and sharp, and said to him, "If you eat from this, you will be a god." If the devil had done this, Adam would not have accepted the fraud without proof and examination. Rather, he would have questioned the devil, "How do you know this?³¹ How will you prove to me that what you say is true?" In a word, apart from some indubitable proof, he would never have been persuaded to accept what the devil said. When desire deceived him,³² however, he led his own reasoning astray. It was thus that those who followed the false prophet of the Agarenes came to believe in him, after having been tricked by the pleasures given and promised to them. After he had provided them with a mass of booty and spoils, as well as a slack law that accorded with their desires, they lost their senses and came to deceive their own consciences, so as to believe that he was a prophet and messenger of God. If he had offered nothing

28. Omitting *kai* before *touto*, with O. 29. Adding *kai* before *kata*, with O. 30. Reading *tēi epithumiāi*, with M. 31. Omitting *to*, with M. 32. Adding *auton* before *echaunōse*, with M.

they desired, but instead things that were vexatious and difficult, they would immediately have answered him, harshly and forcefully, “How will you persuade us that God has sent you? What guarantee can you give?” They would also have exacted from him manifest proofs of what he said. In sum, when the faculty of desire is sick, it attracts the mind and deceives it into agreement.

Question: As for the mind³³ and the flesh that were united hypostatically to God the Word, were they in any way able to be led astray by the pleasures of the tempter and of the world?

Answer: This was not possible: not because they were too weak or it was impossible for them, but for the sake of reason and seemliness, even as we say that God is unable to act unjustly.

A Question of the Arabs to a Christian

Question: Tell me, is Christ your God?

GKh146

Answer: Yes.

Question: Do you have another God besides Him?

Answer: No.

Question: Are the Father and the Spirit then utterly worthless to you?

Answer: You listen to me. Let’s imagine that standing here was your scripture, which descended from heaven, as you claim. I ask you: Do you have any other scripture?

Arab: I answer that I have no other.

Christian: Do you therefore reject every other scripture?

Arab: Yes.

Christian: What if there were another book standing here with the same scripture? Would you reject that scripture?

Arab: It’s not a different scripture, but the same, even if it’s found in a different book.

Christian: Accordingly, I also say that the Father and the Spirit are not different gods in addition to the Son, even if he’s found in a different hypostasis.³⁴

An Unbeliever’s Question

Unbeliever: Do you not say that God exists in all things and everywhere? GKh148

Christian: Yes.

Unbeliever: He was thus also present in the womb of his virgin mother. What then was extraordinary about his presence in her?

33. Adding *nous* after *Logōi*, with O. 34. For the argument here, cf. the parallel at pp. 188f.

Christian: Tell me, when you think about things that are already known to you, how do you do this? Do they come to your mind or does your mind wander over to them?

Unbeliever: It's clear that my mind goes to them and sees them through the contemplation of their spiritual essences.

Christian: We thus say that your mind is both in the things in which it dwells and meditates and in you, but that it is not in both you and them in the same manner. With you, it is united in essence; not so with regard to those other things. Following this example, you should thus understand both that God the Word was essentially and hypostatically united with his own flesh during the incarnation—both when he was in his virgin mother and after his birth—and that he was present everywhere, through his providential activity guiding and governing all things. He was not, however, in his own flesh and in all things in the same way. (God is, of course, beyond every example, notwithstanding that we can infer from material beings certain rudimentary concepts about him, that is, about him who both transcends beings and is their creator.)

An Agarene's Question to Abū Qurrah

GKh150 *Agarene:* Tell me, when the Jews crucified Christ, whom you call your God, did he or didn't he will that they do this to him?

Christian: He willed it.

Agarene: Accordingly, not only are they guiltless, but they should also be thanked by you.

Christian: Answer a question for me. When I, as you claim, blaspheme daily against your God, does he or doesn't he will that I do this? If he doesn't will it, he's weak. If he wills it, not only ought not taxes and tribute be exacted by you, but also gifts ought to be brought, inasmuch as I'm fulfilling your God's will. Answer another question for me. When you invade Roman lands,³⁵ if one of you is slain, don't you teach that he'll most certainly go to paradise?

Agarene: Indeed.

Christian: What if you went there with your closest brother and one of the Romans killed him? Would you take vengeance on the one who killed him, treat him as an enemy, and kill him in return, or would you show him honor, treat him as a benefactor, and shower him with hugs and kisses?

Agarene: I would most certainly kill him ten thousand times, and then dismember him, if I could.

35. That is, Byzantium.

Christian: And how do you think it right to kill him, when he was the cause of such salvation and delight for your brother? Tell me something else. Imagine that there was in your eye a very painful and deadly abscess. Imagine that one of your enemies wanted to deal you a mortal blow, taking advantage of your illness as an opportunity to set you free from life even more quickly. Imagine that he delivered his blow right at your afflicted eye, so that, as I've said, he might more quickly set you free from life. Imagine that your eye, after being struck, let flow pus, serous discharge, and liquid decay,³⁶ and that you, after being freed from your affliction through his blow, regained perfect health. Do you look on the enemy³⁷ who gave you the blow as your friend and benefactor? Do you ignore his intention and attend only to what he unintentionally did? Do you feel affection for him and treat him with kindness?

GK152

Agarene: I can assure you that I would punish him limb by limb, if I had the ability, and I would treat him³⁸ as one most hateful and most hostile.

Christian: You should think in the same way about the good that the Jews unwillingly did for us.

The Same in Debate with a Jew

Jew: I debate with you on the basis of the scriptures, for I know nothing else besides them.

PG1529

Christian: Nor do I reject them. Still, I must first explain³⁹ for the present hearers how I understand the scriptures. Imagine that someone enters a house decorated with portraits and sees an image of, say, Paul. Pointing at it, he says, "This is Paul of Tarsus, who stood by and consented to the death of Stephen,⁴⁰ who received letters from the high priests and proceeded to Damascus,⁴¹ who ravaged and threw into prison the Christians.⁴² This is the one who was converted by a divine⁴³ vision to Christianity⁴⁴ and became a preacher and teacher of the Gentiles." These and similar things he might say, the one looking at the icon of Paul. All these things he refers to the Paul who is represented in the image, but not to the painting or the colors. Suppose he were to say, however, "The painter has not rightly recalled Paul. He made his shoulders too wide and he did not paint his eyes very well and he made his legs too light and thin," and so on. If he were to say this, such faults would not be attributed to what is being represented, but would be limited to the image alone. The same holds for the things⁴⁵ said in scripture of the holy men. Some refer

PG1532

36. Reading *hugras sēpedonas*, with M. 37. Omitting *ē hōs*, with O. 38. Reading *etasson*, with MO. 39. Reading *prodiasteilasthai*, with M. 40. Acts 8:1. 41. Acts 9:2. 42. Acts 8:3. 43. Omitting *dunamei*, with M. 44. Acts 9:3–9. 45. Adding *ta* before *en*, with M.

to Christ who is being represented and prefigured by them, while others are restricted to just the holy men. My Jewish friend, do you consider this manner of reading and explaining scripture acceptable?

Jew: No, I don't accept this. Rather, all things are according to the letter. For instance, I understand the things said of David to refer to him alone. And the same holds for the things said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and the rest.

Christian: Examine what you're saying and understand that according to⁴⁶ what you say and think, you make God a liar in many things.

Jew: What do you mean?

Christian: Didn't God say to Abraham: "All this land that you see, to you I shall give it, and to your seed"?⁴⁷

Jew: Yes.

Christian: Did Abraham ever rule over that land?

Jew: How could he, when he had there not even a place to put his foot? Indeed, he was able to bury Sarah only after he had purchased a plot.⁴⁸

Christian: Has the word of God then failed?

Jew: God intended to give them the land.

Christian: God did not say, "I intend to give it to your children," but "to you and to your seed." Similarly, he said to Jacob, "This land that I gave to your fathers, to Abraham and to Isaac, I shall give it to you and to your seed after you."⁴⁹ Jacob, also, had not a place for his foot. Rather, he died in a foreign land, in Egypt.⁵⁰ Don't you see that if you understand scripture in this way you make God a liar? And what⁵¹ did he say to Jacob? "Nations and companies of nations shall come from you."⁵² Where or how were nations begotten of Jacob? Again, he said to him, "The sons of your father will bow down before you and you yourself and your seed will dominate⁵³ them."⁵⁴ How could he speak of "your brothers," in the plural, when he had but one brother, Esau? Where is it that Esau is said to have bowed down before Jacob? The opposite is rather the case: Jacob seven times bowed down on the ground before Esau and called him master.⁵⁵ Indeed, he spent the whole of his life trembling in fear of him. Furthermore, many years later, when the the Israelites were leaving Egypt, Moses declared to the chief⁵⁶ and leader of the sons of Esau, "We are your brothers. Allow us simply to cross through your land. We shall travel by the royal road and shall not incline to right or left. Rather, water and bread we shall buy for a price, until we have crossed into the land that God has given us."⁵⁷ He replied, however, "No, if you traverse

PG1533

46. Reading *kata for meta*, with M. 47. Gen 13:15. 48. Gen 23. 49. Gen 35:12. 50. Gen 49:33. 51. Omitting *hoti*, with O. 52. Gen 35:11. 53. Reading *kurieu-seis*, with M. 54. Cf. Gen 27:29. 55. Gen 33:3. 56. Reading *prōtarchōi*, with M. 57. Cf. Num 20:14–19.

my land, we shall come out and kill you.”⁵⁸ God did not overturn this, but rather confirmed⁵⁹ and strengthened it,⁶⁰ saying: “This land that I have given to Esau, do not draw near to them,” and so on.⁶¹ Where then did God fulfil for Jacob what he said, that “the sons of your father⁶² will bow down before you and you and your seed will dominate⁶³ them,” and so on? My Jewish friend, do you not see that everywhere you make God a liar, through your impious interpretation and understanding of scripture? When God appeared to Jacob and wrestled with him, did he not say, “Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel”?⁶⁴ And yet, many times after this, God and scripture and Jacob himself used the name “Jacob.” Did God’s words fail? Are they unreliable?

Jew: But I’m the son of Israel and the promises are for me.

Christian: No, you’re not his son. Rather, I’m the son of Israel. Why is it that you glory⁶⁵ in Israel? Because he had curly hair or a body bigger than others? Because he was strong? Because he somehow looked different?

Jew: No, because he was pious.

Christian: Everyone then who is pious and pleasing to God is Israel, a son of Israel, and a son of Abraham. Why do you marvel, if, when I worship and love the God of Israel,⁶⁶ I say that I’m the son of Israel, in that I resemble him in morals and faith? Remember, the blessings were Esau’s, the firstborn, but Jacob came and said to his father, “I am Esau,” when he was not, and he received the blessings: and Isaac⁶⁷ did not take them back, even after learning of the deception.⁶⁸ In the same way, I receive your⁶⁹ blessings and say that I am a son of Israel.

Another, with a Nestorian

Orthodox: “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”⁷⁰ PG1533
Who said this? The son of the Virgin (that is, the man) or the Son of God? PG1536

Nestorian: The man.

Orthodox: In that all power over heavenly and earthly things has been given to this man, people behave wrongly and contrary to the will of God if they beseech God or ask him⁷¹ for anything, for all things belong to this man. Whatever we might ask for, whether of the earthly or the heavenly realm,⁷² all these belong to the man. Accordingly, either

58. Num 20:20. 59. Reading *epekurosen*, with M. 60. Reading *katischuse*, with M. 61. Cf. Deut 2:5. 62. Omitting *kai hoi adelphoi sou*, with M. 63. Reading *kurieuseis*, with M. 64. Gen 32:28. 65. Reading *egkauchai*, with M. 66. For *tous tropous Israēl sebōn kai agapōn*, reading *Israēl esti kai huios Israēl kai huios Abraam ti oun thaumazeis ei ton Theon tou Israēl sebōn kai agapōn*, with M. 67. Reading *Isaak*, with M *post correctionem*. 68. Gen 27:1–30. 69. Reading *sou* for *soi*, with M. 70. Matt 28:18. 71. Omitting *ti* after *aitountes*, with M. 72. Omitting *esti*, with M.

those who ask God for anything are sinners, in that this man has the power and the gifts of God are irrevocable;⁷³ or, if in fact it is necessary to pray to God, this man was deceived⁷⁴ and made false claims, vainly saying, “All power has been given to me,” even though there was another who controlled and ruled what he said belonged to him.⁷⁵

Another Question to the Same Heretic

PG1536 *Orthodox:* Who paid our debt⁷⁶ by dying for us, through which payment we were freed⁷⁷ from death, corruption, and sin? God the Word or the man?

Nestorian: The man.

Orthodox: To this man then we should give thanks for our salvation, since it was he who did good for our race: indeed, we see how, when God had his debt against us, it choked and led us to destruction; when we were freed from it, however, we were saved and given life again.

Another

PG1536 *Orthodox:* The things pertaining to Christ are four: his birth from a woman; his natural and innocent passions; his cross and the passions pertaining to it; and his death. As for these four things proper to Christ, did God the Word transfer all of them to himself, or some of them, or did he take, appropriate, and make his own not one of them?

Nestorian: Surely, all of them, though not according to his nature, but only according to his incarnate mission.

Orthodox: Fine, I’ll grant that it was not⁷⁸ according to his nature, but⁷⁹ according to his incarnate mission. Was it in truth, or an illusion and trick?

Nestorian: Surely not! It was in truth.

Orthodox: We thus say that God the Word was in truth begotten of a woman, knew hunger and thirst, had natural passions, was crucified, and died.

At this the heretic cried out in confusion and stupefaction.⁸⁰ These things Abū Qurrah said and taught, precisely defining and explaining the issues and the persons,⁸¹ even as he had also demonstrated to the
PG1537 Agarene that God has a Son.⁸² Again, he asked the Nestorian:

73. Cf. Rom 11:29. 74. Reading *ēpatētai*, M. 75. A fuller version of this argument has been preserved in Arabic. See p. 114. 76. Omitting *cheirophonon*, with M. 77. Reading *ēleutherōthēmen*, with M. 78. Adding *ou* before *phusikōs*, with M. 79. Reading *all’* for *alla kai*, with M. 80. Reading *strophoumenos* for *phoboumenos*, with M. 81. Reading *psēphidōn*, with M. 82. Cf. pp. 232f.

Orthodox: Was Christ (that is, the man) aware of God the Word while in his mother's womb?

Nestorian: No.

Thinking the answer blasphemous, the Nestorians with him censured the exarch defending their heresy (an exarch has the status of a bishop)⁸³ and withdrew from him.

Another, with a Nestorian

Nestorian: Why do you call Mary "Theotokos" rather than "Christotokos"?⁸⁴ Show me where in scripture this word "Theotokos" is found. PG1537

Orthodox: You show me the word "Christotokos."

Nestorian: Sure! "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother had been betrothed,"⁸⁵ and so on. She who begot Jesus Christ is thus clearly called "Christotokos."

Orthodox: I asked you to show where it is found expressed in a distinct manner, just as⁸⁶ you also sought the expression "Theotokos" from me. If this is how you make your proofs, I, too, drawing on a multitude of scriptural passages showing that Christ is God, can also show that she who begot him ought to be called "Theotokos." Indeed, how could she not be Theotokos if she has God as a son? Would you dare say to the mother of the king, "You did not beget a king," and, "You are not the mother of the king"? Why, in that he is called "Jesus Christ," do you not call his mother "Jesoutokos,"⁸⁷ but instead bypass the name "Jesus" and call her "Christotokos"? What you've done is this: You've bypassed "Jesus" and selected "Christ." This is the same thing that I've done. I've bypassed "Christ" and selected a name that is primary, proper, and distinct, that is, "God." The reason: names should be applied based on the better rather than the baser part, especially by those who are offering praise and are wishing to honor someone.

Nestorian: But if I say "Theotokos," I indicate that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit were begotten of her. Indeed, if someone says⁸⁸ "God" without qualification and⁸⁹ does not indicate⁹⁰ the hypostatic property of fatherhood or sonship⁹¹ or of the Spirit, that person signifies the whole of the holy Trinity.

Orthodox: What you're saying isn't true! You're simply "offering"⁹² excuses for your sins.⁹³ Read the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans.

83. Reading *episkopou* for *epistichōi*, with E. 84. "Mother of God" rather than "Mother of Christ." 85. Matt 1:18. 86. Reading *ōsper* for *hoper*, with M. 87. "Mother of Jesus." 88. Reading *legōn*, with M. 89. Adding *kai* before *mē*, with M. 90. Reading *emphainōn* for *epipherōn*, with M. 91. Adding *ē huiotētos* after *patrotētos*, with M. 92. Reading *prophasizēi*, with M. 93. Ps 141:4 LXX.

Nestorian: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”⁹⁴

Orthodox: Who is this God?⁹⁵ Which hypostasis?

Nestorian: The whole Trinity.

Orthodox: You’ve just refuted yourself!⁹⁶ Read the rest.

PG1540 *Nestorian:* “. . . which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was begotten of the seed of David according to the flesh.”⁹⁷

Orthodox: What then? Was Christ the Son of the holy Trinity? Do you see that your perverse views are refuted? Read, too, the letter to the Hebrews, as it also overturns your wrongheaded notions.⁹⁸ Indeed, the divine scripture at every turn offers manifest proofs against your heresy, for it often uses “God” to refer to just the one hypostasis of the Son, as, for instance, when it says, “And the Word was God.”⁹⁹ Divinely inspired, Paul, too, referred to the Son as “he who is God over all.”¹⁰⁰ There are many similar passages, though I’ve not time at the moment to cite them all. Even so, these things should suffice for those who are searching for the truth rather than just a good argument.

Another Short Dialogue with a Nestorian

PG1584 *Orthodox:* Tell me to which nature the name “Christ” refers. The divine nature or the human nature?

Nestorian: It doesn’t refer to just one, but to both together, that is, both to God and to the man.

Orthodox: Fine. Now tell me whether it was Christ who was begotten of a woman.

Nestorian: Yes, it was Christ.

Orthodox: You must then conclude that both God the Word and the man were begotten of a woman, for you’ve already acknowledged that Christ is both God and the man. Let me ask you another question. Was it Christ that died?

Nestorian: Yes, it was Christ.

Orthodox: You must then conclude that both God the Word and the man died, for you acknowledge that Christ is both God and the man.

Again, against a Nestorian

PG1540 *Orthodox:* Why is Christ called “Christ”?

94. Rom 1:1. 95. Reading *tis* for *ti*, with O. 96. Reading *seautou*, with O. 97. Rom 1:2–3. 98. Theodore cites Hebrews for precisely this reason at p. 247. 99. John 1:1. 100. Rom 9:5.

Nestorian: Because God anointed [*echrisen*] him with the Holy Spirit.

Orthodox: Who then was anointed? God the Word or the man?

Nestorian: We'll not say that God the Word was anointed. No, it was the man that was anointed.

Orthodox: Christ then is man, for if Christ is the one anointed, and the one anointed is man, and if, as you say, God the Word is something different from the man, then Christ would be only man. Why then do you deceive yourselves and others by saying that Christ is both God and the man?

A Brief Discourse on Divine Names, Those Common to the Trinity and Those Distinct to Its Individual Hypostases

Some names are common to the holy Trinity and are predicated of the divine essence as a whole. Examples include “God,” “Lord,” “good,” “just,” “wise,” “powerful,” “king,” “master,” “maker,” “provider,” “savior,” “holy,” and as many other names as are applied to the divine nature as a whole and not to¹⁰¹ just one of its hypostases. Other names are individual or hypostatic. Examples include “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit.” As for those names that are common and are predicated of the divine essence, “God” is taken of the Father and is his in a special degree, as he is the cause of the Son and the Spirit and they exist with reference to him; “Lord” is taken of the Son in the same way; and “Holy”¹⁰² is taken of the Spirit. Accordingly, when the apostles and just about the whole of divine scripture use the word “God” without qualification or specification, and as a whole, with the definite article and without mention of any hypostatic property, they are referring to the Father. There are many examples of this usage. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,” that is, for the gospel of the Father.¹⁰³ Again, “Long ago God spoke to our fathers in many and various ways”; that is, the Father spoke.¹⁰⁴ Again, in the creed, “I believe in one God,” that is, the Father, “and in one Lord,” that is, the Son. Again, the apostle said: “Even if there are many gods, for us there is one God, the Father,” and, “Even if there are many lords, for us there is one Lord, the Son.”¹⁰⁵ The Father is called “God” in a special degree, as he is the unity of the Trinity.¹⁰⁶ As the Theologian said, “For us there is one God,¹⁰⁷ for there is one divinity.”¹⁰⁸ Again, “The Son and the Spirit are referred to a single cause, without composition, without coalescence.”¹⁰⁹

101. Reading *epi* for *esti*, with M. 102. Omitting *Pneuma*, with M. 103. Rom 1:1. 104. Heb 1:1. 105. Cf. 1 Cor 8:5–6. 106. Omitting *ētoi . . . anakephalaiōsis*, with M. 107. Omitting *ho Patēr*, with M. 108. Greg. Naz. *or.* 31.14 (SC 250:302). 109. Greg. Naz. *or.* 20.7 (SC 270:70).

PG1601 Again, “The Father is a unity from which and to which those from him are referred.”¹¹⁰ This is because the Son and the Spirit are said to belong to the Father, while the Father is not said to belong to them. Of this there are many examples: the Son of God, the wisdom of God, the Word of God, the power of God, the arm of God, the right hand of God. The same holds for the Spirit: the Spirit of God, the finger of God. To the Father they are thus referred, not the Father to them. If you find “God” applied to the Son and “lord” applied to the Father and the Spirit and “holy” and “spirit” applied to the Father—for instance, “God is holy,”¹¹¹ that is, the Father, and, “God is spirit”¹¹²—this is because these names, in that they refer to the nature, are sometimes also predicated of the hypostases. Accordingly, in predication, because of his nature, the Son is also called “God,”¹¹³ usually without the article, unless¹¹⁴ the preceding verse or¹¹⁵ expression has been about him, in which case the article becomes a reference to him, as to an aforementioned person, as in the following verse: “From them according to the flesh is Christ, he who¹¹⁶ is God over all.”¹¹⁷ One must also know that no name indicates the essence of God. This is not like what happens when we apply names to other things. When we say “stone” or “gold” or “cow” or “human being,” we indicate the essence of each through the name. If we call God “God,” however, or¹¹⁸ “lord” or “king” or “father” or “son,” or any other name, we signify his activity or his relation. “God” or “creator” signifies activity; “king” or “lord” or “father,” relation.

A Question to the Same Theodore

PG1581 *Origenist:* For a person who has sinned for ten or fifty years, what manner of justice would it be if that person were to be punished for ten thousand eons, or rather, for an infinite number of eons?¹¹⁹

Abū Qurrah: You tell me what you think justice would be.

Origenist: It would be to effect a punishment that accords with the sin—that is, if a person sinned for fifty years, that person should be punished for the same number of years.

Abū Qurrah: From how many different sources do we learn what justice is? And where did you learn this?

Origenist: You tell me! How many?

110. Greg. Naz. or. 42.15 (SC 384:82). 111. For instance, Ps 99:9. 112. John 4:24. 113. Reading *ho Huios Theos* for *kai . . . Theos*, with M. 114. Reading *ei mē pou*, with M. 115. Reading *ētoun*, with M. 116. Omitting *kai*, with M. 117. Rom 9:5. 118. Omitting *kai*, with M. 119. Many manuscripts, including M, identify the interlocutors in this dialogue as simply “A” and “B.” Other manuscripts make reference to an Origenist and Abū Qurrah and entitle the dialogue, “A Question of an Origenist to a Believer.”

Abū Qurrah: We know what every form of justice is either from the law of God or from the laws instituted by human beings¹²⁰ or from the nature of material objects. Not one of these would suggest that justice effects a punishment that accords with time. For instance, let's imagine someone who fornicates, steals, or kills—but does so for just one hour. Both the law of God and the laws of human beings, when they kill a killer and punish a transgressor, do so not just for a single hour; rather, by killing him, they punish him for eternity, and by beating him, they cause him to suffer from wounds for a very long time. You also, if someone committed adultery with your wife or raped your daughter, you wouldn't think that he should be punished for just a single hour, but that he should be handed over to death, which is an eternal punishment. The nature of material objects teaches the same. Suppose, for instance, that we're advised not to drink cold water or touch something harmful. If we do so anyway, are we not subject to a protracted punishment? Indeed, it's often the case that we're punished with a chronic illness if we drink cold water or touch fire or partake of vinegar—and nature is most just. Tell me then, on what basis do you hold to your definition of justice? Where did you find it?

That We Have Five Enemies from Whom the Savior Saved Us, by Way of Question and Answer

Christian: By becoming human, Christ saved us from five mortal enemies. PG1461

Unbeliever: I would like to know the identity of these enemies and how we were saved from each, and I importunately inquire¹²¹ of you, inviting you to tell me about these things.

Christian: As you're curious, I'll explain these things to you in a rational manner, to the best of my abilities. But first, you must answer me a question.¹²²

Unbeliever: What question?

Christian: Do you think that the God of all ever did or said anything in vain and without purpose?

Unbeliever: How could it be right to say this of God? It's not even right to say this of¹²³ such human beings as are possessed of prudence and do nothing to excess.

Christian: When he declared to the man who had transgressed his command, "You are earth and to earth you will return,"¹²⁴ whereas earlier he had declared to him, "On the day you eat from the forbidden

120. Reading *ek tōn hupo anthrōpōn telesthentōn nomōn*, with M. 121. Reading *punthanomai*, with M. 122. Reading *erōmenōi* for *eperōtōn se*, with M. 123. Reading *tōn* for *ton*, with M. 124. Gen 3:19.

tree¹²⁵ you will die,¹²⁶ how could he annul his declaration without there being some other grounds for justly doing away with it? If you met a judge who today gives a ruling and the next day overturns it, wouldn't you think him mad? How then did God annul his earlier ruling and declaration?

Unbeliever: You'll have to tell me, for I can't imagine.

Christian: What occasioned the condemnation of death?

Unbeliever: Surely it was disobedience.

PG1464

Christian: Just as through the disobedience of one man (Adam) death entered the world and spread to all others, so also through the obedience of one man, the second Adam (Christ), death was justly annulled and life introduced instead.¹²⁷

Unbeliever: Before Christ, did not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as Moses and Enoch, obey and please God?

Christian: Even if they are said to have pleased God, it is only in comparison with others. Strictly speaking, no one is innocent of sin—excepting Christ. Every sin, whatever its extent, brings death, however. According to the words of the righteous man,¹²⁸ in that Christ was utterly obedient and resisted all the devil's temptations when he contended with him in the desert, he destroyed death and through his obedience introduced life.

Unbeliever: Well then, what need was there for Christ's death on the cross, if the condemnation of death was already destroyed?

Christian: If he had not done this, the accusation of the devil would have remained against us. Don't you know that we became the devil's slaves when we disobeyed God and pledged our obedience to him? What would he have cared,¹²⁹ if death had been overturned while his tyranny and power over us remained in place? Indeed, he would have rejoiced all the more in that he now ruled over immortal beings.

Unbeliever: I would like to learn how we became the devil's slaves.

Christian: In the beginning, when God fashioned human beings, he made¹³⁰ them strong and unconquerable. Because he was unable to overcome them by force, but was crafty in working evil, the devil contrived to deceive them by enticing them with pleasure, so as to strip them of God's strengthening grace—and this, through their free choice to be disobedient. When they had become weak, he overcame them and easily led them and their progeny into every form of pleasure, sin, and disobedience. Further, God, when human beings had rejected his command and had hastened to submit themselves to the

125. Reading *apeirēmenou xulou* for *apēgoreumenou . . . xulou*, with M. 126. Gen 2:17.

127. Cf. Rom 5:12–18. 128. Seemingly a reference to Paul (cf. Rom 5:18–19).

129. Reading *emelen*, with M. 130. Reading *pepoiēken* for *apephēnen*, with M.

enemy, allowed them to be tyrannized by the devil, and this was only just. It is as the Apostle said: “If you obey any one, you show yourself that person’s obedient slaves, for you are slaves of the one whom you obey.”¹³¹ Accordingly, where once they had been free, human beings sold themselves to pleasure and to the enemy.

Unbeliever: How is it that human beings after their sin were not able through penance to recall themselves and shake off the devil’s yoke?

Christian: While we were able to sell ourselves, after the sale and after we had entered into servitude, we were not able to free ourselves. For this reason, we don’t say that the devil was our master, as if he had overcome us wholly through force. Rather, we say that when we had become weak through our sin, then, like those who are ill, we became easy for the devil to overcome,¹³² with the result that it was more than easy for him to lead us into sin and pleasure. Just as an enemy might give his opponent a harmful poison to drink, that he might easily overcome him when he has become weak; in the same way, the devil enticed human beings through the forbidden¹³³ fruit and laid hold of them when they had become weak. It is thus that he had us as slaves. As for Christ, because he enticed our enemy into destroying him unjustly, he was able—because of this unjust destruction—to take back¹³⁴ both the devil himself and all his slaves. Accordingly, the just action of Christ rescued us from servitude to the devil and—if I might use the expression—shook death off from us, all of which had resulted from Satan’s possession of us through our submission to him.

PG1465

Unbeliever: I wish there were an analogy to help me understand this better.

Christian: Let there be a king in a certain land and let him have some slaves. Let there be a river surrounding this land. On the other side of the river, let there be a garden with beautiful and pleasant fruits. Let the king issue an order that none of his slaves are to cross the river to that garden. Let one of his slaves be charmed by the sight of those fruits and by his desire for them. Filled and overcome by his appetite, disregarding¹³⁵ his master’s command, let him cross the river to indulge his desire. Let him do not only this. Let him also lead astray his fellow slaves, by showing them how nice the fruit is and thus enticing them to disobey their common master, cross the river, and come under his control.¹³⁶ Then let that chief malefactor act like a tyrant toward his fellow slaves and oppress them. Let those subject to his tyranny call upon their¹³⁷ proper master

131. Cf. Rom 6:16. 132. Omitting *kai* before *eucheirōtoi*, with M. 133. Reading *apēgoreumenēs*, with M. 134. Reading *anelaben*, with M. 135. Reading *alogēsas*, with M. 136. Emending *hupo cheira* to read *hupocheirious*. 137. Adding *ton* before *oikeion*, with M.

and beseech him to rescue them from their evil circumstances. Then let their most kind¹³⁸ king have mercy on them and send his son, clothed as a slave and looking like them in every way. Let him come out into the open and walk along the banks of the river. When the chief malefactor and tyrant sees him, because he supposes¹³⁹ him just another slave, as is his custom, using the nice fruits, let him invite him to cross the river and become subject to him. When, however, the son does not listen to him, but instead strenuously rejects his urgings,¹⁴⁰ let the tyrant grow incensed with jealousy and envy, and let him cross the river and kill the king's son. Taking advantage of this occasion,¹⁴¹ let the king interrogate him, saying, "Tell me, you wicked man, when you seduced the other slaves into disobeying me, their rightful master, and into crossing over to you, even though I was more than capable of doing so, did I tear them from your hands and from servitude to you, into which they had freely entered? No, I didn't wish to contravene justice. This my son, who didn't yield to any of your urgings—why then did you kill him and unjustly slay him? Since you have dared to do this, justly shall I seize both you and all your slaves and make them subject to my son—and even if you had acquired a thousand times¹⁴² more slaves than these, I would still not owe you anything in return. After all, what could you ever give in exchange for a single drop of kingly blood?" In this manner, he rescued us from the tyranny of the evil one, acting in a just fashion and not simply using power and force.

Unbeliever: Enough on this. Tell me now about the five enemies from whom Christ saved us.

Christian: These five are death, the devil, the curse and condemnation of the law, sin, and hell.

Unbeliever: You've already spoken of death, when you said that it was destroyed through Christ's obedience.¹⁴³ Likewise, you've already explained how he set us free from the devil.¹⁴⁴ Explain, now, how he "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for our sakes."¹⁴⁵

Christian: Recall what was said above,¹⁴⁶ that we, having transgressed the law of God a myriad of times, deserve to die a myriad of times.¹⁴⁷ Now then, answer the question I initially asked you concerning Adam—did God do anything in vain and without cause?¹⁴⁸

Unbeliever: No.

138. Reading *hēmerōtatos* for *hierōtatos*, with M. 139. Reading *hupotopasas*, with M. 140. Reading *protropas* with M. 141. Reading *toutou de draxamenos* with M. 142. Reading *muriakis*, with M. 143. See p. 250. 144. See p. 251. 145. Gal 3:13. 146. Reading *logois*, with MO, and omitting *moi*, with O. 147. Nothing like this was mentioned above. 148. See p. 249.

Christian: Suppose someone owed to another thousands of dollars, which he was unable to repay. Suppose further that the one to whom the money was owed decided not to demand back any of the money, but to draw up to no purpose a bond against him, seize and throw him into prison, and torture him in a variety of ways, not wishing, as I've said, to receive from him any of the money. Suppose further that he later demands that the debtor be set free. Do we not suppose that such behavior would be pointless?

Unbeliever: How could one not think this?

Christian: If God had decided not to demand back the law's rights, why would he have drawn up this law against us? This is not how things are, however. God forbid! God does not do things without purpose, as if he were jesting with us. No! Through his just judgment, he demanded back from us all that was written in the law. We were not able to repay it, however. It is for this reason that our Lord Jesus Christ for our sakes rendered what was due and assumed the curse and condemnation that was owed by us, willingly taking them on himself. What we were to suffer he himself suffered. For our sakes, he was beaten, spat upon, slapped, buffeted, crucified, and died. Although, as we said above,¹⁴⁹ he was able to destroy death through his obedience, still, going one step further, that he might free us both from the devil and from the law's curse and from God's just judgment, he died for us. In this manner, he made it possible for God to have mercy on us, without making null and void his justice, but instead satisfying it by allowing it to receive its rights, and without allowing his mercy to be ineffective. PG1469

Unbeliever: Enough on this subject. Explain now how he freed us from sin.

Christian: What is sin? Is it not a certain missing of and falling short of one's object? When the healthy walk, they place their feet where they want. If they are sick, weak, and tremulous, however, they can't place their feet where they want. Although they wish to place their feet in some spot, they are pushed off course through internal weakness and end up placing their feet in the wrong place. It is the same way with the sin that dwells in our soul. It has made our soul weak and sickly, prone to fall short of its objects and ends. Christ, however, baptizes us in water and the Spirit,¹⁵⁰ and the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthens us, stripping away every sin, weakness, and sickness, renewing and restoring us to the original strength and beauty that we had before the transgression.

Unbeliever: Only hell remains to be discussed.

149. See p. 250. 150. Cf. Matt 3:11.

Christian: Since it was impossible for him, while in the flesh, to sojourn with those in hell, when through death the Lord's soul had been separated from his flesh, naked his soul sojourned with the souls in darkness¹⁵¹ and flashed the light of his divinity on them, and he thus conveyed those who believed in him to paradise and overthrew the kingdom of hell. Just as the holy Virgin was a gate and an entrance for the sojourning of God the Word in the world, so also death was a gate and an entrance for his descent into hell.

Abū Qurrah Was Questioned by an Unbeliever¹⁵²

PG1541 *Unbeliever:* Christ declared, "Whoever has not been begotten of water and Spirit will not enter the kingdom of heaven."¹⁵³ What of the righteous who lived before his coming and were not baptized? How can they enter it?

Christian: Christ was baptized for them, even as he died for all. It is as he said, "I sanctify myself for them."¹⁵⁴ At the same time, they too were baptized in a bodily manner.

Unbeliever: How can this be?

Christian: Don't you know that those who die are not completely destroyed? Rather, they are dissolved into their composite elements.

Unbeliever: That's true.

Christian: It is written that when he was pierced in the side by the lance, water and blood flowed from his side.¹⁵⁵

Unbeliever: Indeed.

Christian: Accordingly, when that water was dissolved into the elements, he sanctified all things and baptized those who had been dispersed and dissolved into the elements.

Unbeliever: On this account, unbelievers and absolutely all who died before his coming were baptized.

Christian: Not at all. Rather, only the bodies of believers, whose souls had faith in Christ when he (that is, his holy soul) descended into hell. Here's an analogy. Imagine an aqueduct or river of fresh water, one with many trees planted along its banks. Some of these trees are dead and totally desiccated; others are still alive. What do you think? When the water touches them, will all the trees benefit by drawing up water and life, or only those with the ability to receive or attract it? Those that are completely dry will benefit not in the least from the water. In the same way, unbelievers will benefit not in the least from the dissolution of that water into the elements.

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151. Cf. 1 Pet 3:19. 152. This dialogue was, long ago (1698), the subject of Thomas Ittig's doctoral thesis (*Commentatio theologica*). 153. John 3:5. 154. John 17:19. 155. John 19:34.

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