

al-Radd al-jamīl—A Fitting Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus

History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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VOLUME 28

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al-Radd al-jamīl
A Fitting Refutation of the
Divinity of Jesus

Attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī

Edited by

Mark Beaumont
Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth



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Cover illustration: Opening folio of the Aya Sophia manuscript 2246; with grateful thanks to the Aya Sophia Library for permission to use manuscript 2246.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ghazzālī, 1058-1111, supposed author. | Beaumont, Ivor Mark, editor.

| Elkaisy-Friemuth, Maha, editor.

Title: Al-Radd al-jamil : a fitting refutation of the divinity of Jesus /
attributed to Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazali ; edited by Mark Beaumont Maha El
Kaisy-Friemuth.

Other titles: Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhīyat ʿĪsā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injil

Description: Leiden ; Boston : Brill, [2016] | Series: History of
Christian-Muslim relations ; v. 28 | English and Arabic. | Includes
bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016030039 (print) | LCCN 2016035427 (ebook) | ISBN
9789004321533 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9789004322806 (E-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Jesus Christ—Islamic interpretations—Early works to 1800. |
Bible. New Testament—Islamic interpretations—Early works to 1800. |
Prophecy—Early works to 1800. | Islam—Relations—Christianity—Early
works to 1800.

Classification: LCC BP172 .G49 2016 (print) | LCC BP172 (ebook) | DDC
297.2/465—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016030039>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1570-7350

ISBN 978-90-04-32153-3 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-32280-6 (e-book)

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Foreword

We present a new edition of *al-Radd al-jamīl* based on three extant manuscripts, two of which are in the Aya Sophia library in Istanbul and the third is in the University of Leiden. We gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and assistance of the librarians in supplying photocopies of the manuscripts. We also offer the first complete English translation of the *Radd*.

We are indebted to the British Academy for a grant towards travelling costs which enabled Mark Beaumont to travel to Dublin and Maha El-Kaisy Friemuth to visit Birmingham to consult on the Arabic edition and English translation.

We want to thank Samia Samy for her help with word-processing the Arabic edition. We also want to thank Professor Rifaat Ebied for assistance with the English translation.

Maha was responsible for the Arabic text and sections 1 and 4 of the introduction; the context and authorship of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and its manuscripts. Mark was responsible for the English translation and sections 2 and 3 of the introduction; the outline of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and its place in the history of Muslim refutations of Christianity.

The Context and Authorship of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

The Context of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat ʿĪsā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl, (A fitting refutation of the divinity of Jesus from the evidence of the gospel) is a long polemical work refuting the Christian concept of the divinity of Jesus Christ and is attributed to the famous eleventh century scholar Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). Three versions of this text exist: two are in the Aya Sophia Manuscript Library in Istanbul under the numbers 2246 and 2247, and the third copy is found in the University of Leiden under the classification OR828. The two Aya Sophia manuscripts attribute the text to al-Ghazālī, who wrote a significant number of works in philosophy, logic, Islamic jurisprudence, *kalām* and Sufism.¹ In many of his books, al-Ghazālī refers to his other writings and in his work *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* he mentions many of his other important works. None of these known works by al-Ghazālī refer to *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which has led several modern scholars to doubt that al-Ghazālī is the author of the refutation.

The text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is a refutation of the divinity of Jesus in three sections: the first is an exegetical study of six Biblical texts. The main argument of the author here is that the criterion for accepting a certain concept is its agreement with the clarity of the intellect, *bi-ṣarīḥ al-ʿaql*, a sentence repeated very frequently throughout the treatise. If a text in itself is clear to the intellect then it should not be interpreted, but if it contradicts other texts or it cannot be rationally accepted then these passages must be clarified and considered as metaphors with a symbolic meaning. Following this principle, the author interprets the six Biblical texts in order to refute the concept of the divinity of Jesus. The second section is a refutation of the divinity of Jesus as believed by three Christian sects: the Melkites, the Jacobites and the Nestorians. The third section discusses the titles that Christians attribute to Jesus to support his divine status. The author argues that such titles must be understood metaphorically, and shows that similar titles were also given to other Biblical prophets.

Concerning the context in which the refutation was written, it is generally agreed that *al-Radd al-jamīl* comes from an Egyptian Coptic milieu, based on

1 The manuscript is bound with other manuscripts of al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* and *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl* by Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī.

external and internal evidence. The external evidence is the fact that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was first mentioned by the thirteenth century Coptic priest Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. circa 1270).² He quoted parts of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in his work, *Maqāla fī-l-radd ‘alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i’tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha* (Treatise containing a refutation of Muslims who accuse Christians of believing in three gods). But he did not provide any details about *al-Radd al-jamīl* that might have helped his reader understand the nature of *al-Radd al-jamīl* as a polemical work.

The internal evidence is, firstly, that the author quotes the Coptic translation of John 1:14 to defend his interpretation of the text, thus appearing to believe that the Gospel was originally written in this language rather than in Greek. Secondly, the author seeks to refute the divinity of Jesus through a discussion of the concept of the union of the divinity and humanity in Jesus, as interpreted by the three main Christian sects. As Gabriel Reynolds rightly maintains, his argument is based on a sound knowledge of the Jacobites and their refutations of the other two sects.³ Thirdly, his comparison of the relationship between the Father and the Son with the relationship of the soul to the body is taken from the Jacobite explanation of the incarnation and union.⁴ Since the Egyptian Copts were followers of Jacobite rather than Melkite or Nestorian Christology, this is further support for the view that the author was highly familiar with Jacobite/Coptic writing.

To estimate when *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written is a difficult task, since it depends on the identity of the author. Those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author agree that it must have been written during his supposed trip to Alexandria after his visit to Jerusalem, which is mentioned by some historians. Other scholars date *al-Radd al-jamīl* to a much later period, up to the lifetime of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The latter rely on the following arguments: the style of writing is not that of al-Ghazālī, the work is not mentioned in any of his authentic works, which do not show the same depth of interest in the Biblical text as *al-Radd al-jamīl*, the discussion of Christians and Jews in the authentic Ghazalian works differs from that in *al-Radd al-jamīl*, and the Biblical quotations appear to be from a thirteenth century Arabic translation of the Bible. Those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* argue that although the writing

2 Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ‘Maqāla fī-l-radd ‘alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i’tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha’, in P. Spath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d’auteurs arabes chrétiens du IX au XIV siècle*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 176–178.

3 G.S. Reynolds, ‘The ends of *Al-Radd al-Jamil* and its portrayal of Christian Sects’, *Islamochristiana* 25, 1999, pp. 45–65.

4 F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazalis Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*, Leiden, 1966, pp. 41–42.

style of the work differs from that of his known writing, the ideas, concepts and discussion are typical of al-Ghazālī.

The Authorship of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

In 1932, Louis Massignon discovered two copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in the Aya Sophia library and published an article entitled, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī' in the *Revue des Études Islamiques*, in which he gave a good summary of this treatise and argued for its attribution to al-Ghazālī.⁵ In 1939, Robert Chidiac edited the text of *Aya Sophia* 2246 and translated it into French. He followed Massignon's argument concerning authorship, while noting that the text may have been written by a student who had taken notes at al-Ghazālī's lectures.⁶ J.W. Sweetman also gave a detailed summary of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, with a translation of many passages, in his two-volume work *Islam and Christian Theology* in 1945.⁷ He believed that the character and thought world of al-Ghazālī was present in the text: 'al-Ghazālī's debate is quite probably not written by his hands, but bearing clear marks of personality and method, and undoubtedly a faithful record of a discussion following his course, in Alexandria, during his visit to that city.'⁸ Arthur J. Arberry gave an English translation of a part of the text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in his *Aspects of Islamic Civilization* in 1964, and appeared to accept that al-Ghazālī was the author.⁹ Franz-Elmar Wilms produced a German translation of Chidiac's Arabic text in 1966, and argued at length for the authorship of al-Ghazālī.¹⁰ In 1986, the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Sharqāwī published an edition of the Arabic text, defending al-Ghazālī as the author.¹¹ All these scholars accept al-Ghazālī as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, many of them with the reservation that the text could represent lecture notes taken by one or several of his students.

5 L. Massignon, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī', *Revue des Études Islamiques* 6, 1932, pp. 523–536.

6 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Īsā bi-ṣariḥ al-Injīl*, ed., and trans., R. Chidiac, Paris, 1939.

7 J.W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology* 1:2, London, 1945, pp. 262–309.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 307.

9 A.J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, London, 1964, pp. 300–307.

10 F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*.

11 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Īsā bi-ṣariḥ al-Injīl*, ed., M. al-Sharqāwī, Cairo, 1986.

The first challenge to the authorship of al-Ghazālī came in 1959 from the French scholar Maurice Bouyges, in his *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres d'al-Ghazālī*.¹² He placed *al-Radd al-jamīl* among the books only doubtfully attributable to al-Ghazālī. A. Badawī followed Bouyges, considering this work as one of the doubtful works of al-Ghazālī.¹³ W. Montgomery Watt and F. Jabr made absolutely no mention of this book when dealing with al-Ghazālī's works.¹⁴ However, in 1975, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh's *Studies in al-Ghazzālī* presented a serious challenge to the assumption that this book was an authentic product of al-Ghazālī.¹⁵ G.S. Reynolds supported Lazarus-Yafeh's criticism of the idea of al-Ghazālī as author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and added some significant points to the debate in his 1999 article, 'The ends of *Al-radd al-jamīl* and its portrayal of Christian Sects'.¹⁶ Ines Peta translated the text into Italian in her 2010 doctoral thesis and argued against the authorship of al-Ghazālī. She explained that *al-Radd al-jamīl* quotes from an Arabic version of the Bible known as the Alexandrian Vulgate.¹⁷ Although this version was in circulation from as early as the ninth century, Peta could not find any example of an author quoting from it before the thirteenth century.¹⁸ Martin Whittingham, in a 2011 article, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī* (corrupt interpretation) as a category for analysing Muslim views of the Bible: evidence from *Al-radd al-jamīl* and Ibn Khaldūn,' argues that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* should be considered as 'Pseudo-Ghazālī'.¹⁹

I have played an active role in this debate, and in 2007 published the article, '*Al-Radd al-jamīl*: al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's?'²⁰ In this article, I defended the position of those who accepted al-Ghazālī as the deliverer of the main

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- 12 M. Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres d'al-Ghazālī*. ed., M. Allard, Beirut, 1959; Appendix VI, pp. 125–126.
- 13 A. Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī*, Kuwait, 1977, p. 262.
- 14 W.M. Watt, 'The Study of al-Ghazālī', *Oriens* 13–14, 1961, pp. 121–131. F. Jabre, 'La biographe et l'oeuvre de Ghazali reconsidères à la lumière des Tabaqat de Sobki', *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales* 1, 1954, pp. 73–102.
- 15 H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzālī*, Jerusalem, 1975.
- 16 G.S. Reynolds 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', pp. 45–65.
- 17 See H. Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels, the Manuscripts and their Families*, PhD, University of Birmingham, 2008.
- 18 I. Peta, 'Il *Radd pseudo-ghazaliano*: Paternità, Contenuti, Traduzione', *Officina di Studi Medievali*, Collana Machina Philosophorum, Palermo, 2010.
- 19 M. Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī* (corrupt interpretation) as a category for analysing Muslim views of the Bible: evidence from *Al-radd al-jamīl* and Ibn Khaldūn', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, 2011, pp. 209–222.
- 20 M. El Kaisy Friemuth, '*Al Radd al-Jamīl*: Al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's?', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 275–294.

material edited and produced in an independent form as *al-Radd al-jamīl*. It is indeed possible that al-Ghazālī himself was never aware of the existence of this book. However, my involvement in the editing of the present work has given me further opportunities to reconsider carefully the question of authorship. I believe that those who reject al-Ghazālī as author have made important observations, which may lead to the book being described as Pseudo-Ghazālī. The most important observation is the deep knowledge of the author of the whole Bible, which cannot be observed in any work known to be written by al-Ghazālī. In addition, the considerable awareness of Coptic Christology and the arguments against other Christian sects from a Monophysite Coptic position are qualities not present in al-Ghazālī's authentic writing. On the other hand, those scholars who have attributed the work to al-Ghazālī rely on the fact that although *al-Radd al-jamīl* does not mirror his style of writing, it does represent his thinking and worldview. This can be seen in many parts of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, as demonstrated below. I will present both arguments and provide an analysis of their plausibility, before giving my own reflections on the question of authorship. To begin with, I examine, among al-Ghazālī's works, the sources that mention the book, and those that mention al-Ghazālī's short trip to Egypt. Then I discuss the attitude of the author towards the Bible.

The Sources that Attribute the Book to al-Ghazālī

al-Radd al-jamīl was totally unknown to many historians who have dealt with the biography of al-Ghazālī. M. Bouyges points out that the work appears for the first time in modern lists compiled at the beginning of the twentieth century by al-Qabbānī and al-Ḥilmī.²¹ In addition, while al-Ghazālī had the habit of referring to his previous works, he never refers to this book when talking about the Jews and the Christians in some of his other works.²²

The earliest reference to *al-Radd al-jamīl* is by the thirteenth century Egyptian Coptic scholar Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib.²³ There is a long quotation in his treatise *Maqāla fi-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn* from *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which Ibn al-Ṭayyib has taken from a Muslim text, which claims to quote from the well-known and important polemical work *al-Radd al-jamīl* written by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.²⁴ Interestingly, this quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl* contains some differences from the three existing copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which indicates

21 Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 126.

22 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, pp. 459–460.

23 Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Maqāla fi-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i'tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha', pp. 176–178.

24 See the Appendix for the complete text.

that other copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* existed and that the three extant copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* may have been altered.²⁵

al-Radd al-jamīl is also mentioned by at least three historians. Ḥajjī Khalifa, the Ottoman historian (d. 1658) mentions the book among the works of al-Ghazālī in his Catalogue vol. IV, no. 9650, under the title *al-radd al-jamīl ‘alā man ghayyar al-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl*.²⁶ Wilms points out that the second part of this title of the book is problematic, as it gives the impression that al-Ghazālī is accusing Christians and Jews of corrupting the text of scripture; however, this impression is false. It is possible that in a later period the title was intentionally changed to make the book more popular among Muslims.²⁷ al-Murtaḍā Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)²⁸ also mentions, in his *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn*,²⁹ a book with the title *al-Qawl al-jamīl fī-l-radd ‘alā man ghayyar al-Injīl* among al-Ghazālī's works. Since the title mentioned here differs from Ḥajjī Khalifa's, it is possible that al-Zabīdī took this title from another source. This title was copied by ‘Abd al-Qādir Ibn ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydarus Ba‘alawī in his book *Ta‘rīf al-ahyā’ bi-faḍā’il al-ihyā’*, which is written in the margins of al-Zabīdī's book.

25 Paragraph 111 is the beginning of the quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl*. Comparing the quotation in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise with the Aya Sophia manuscript, we make the following observations. There is no doubt that the later of the Aya Sophia manuscripts was edited in at least four places: 1. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's text has the words *al-dhāt al-ilāhiyya* on p. 177, line 5 from the bottom, which is *dhāt al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia ms. 2. On p. 178, line 3, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *dhāt Allāh* is *dhāt al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia ms. 3. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *al-Bārī’ ta‘ālā* on p. 178, line 4 is *al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia ms. 4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *al-‘Aql* is *al-‘Aql al-mujarrad* in the Aya Sophia ms.

The Aya Sophia ms also adds a short passage as an explanation to paragraph 112, as follows: ‘So the Father connotes the idea of Existence, the Word (or the Son) connotes the idea of Knowledge and the Holy Spirit connotes the idea of Essence, of the Creator being intellected by Himself.’ This addition shows that the author of the Aya Sophia ms is interested in these details as if he wants to defend the Christian Trinity rather than refute it. This passage mainly presents the argument that the Father represents the (pure) intellect, *al-‘aql*, the Son is the intellector, *al-‘āqil*, and the Holy Spirit is intellection, *al-ma‘qūl*. Thus it seems that the later Aya Sophia ms is an edited text while the earlier text quoted by Ibn al-Ṭayyib is probably lost. See Appendix below.

26 *Kashf al-zumūn ‘an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn* is a very important work of Ḥajjī Khalifa, listing more than 14,500 books, along with detailed information about them. See F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazalis Schrift*, p. 34, n. 4.

27 Ibid.

28 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 461.

29 al-Murtaḍā Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols, Princeton, 1963, vol. 1, p. 42.

Thus, *al-Radd al-jamīl* was actually associated with al-Ghazālī in the thirteenth century, but then disappeared from the list of his works until the reference by Ḥajjī Khalīfa in the seventeenth century. This leads to the question: what happened to the book and why did it disappear from the list of the works of al-Ghazālī for so many centuries? Chidiac's answer is that historians were silent about *al-Radd al-jamīl* because it accepts the sovereignty of the Biblical text and considers it a source of true knowledge.³⁰

Part of the answer to the question of whether the work can be attributed to al-Ghazālī depends on whether or not he visited Egypt. M. al-Sharkāwī argues that the visit to Egypt took place after al-Ghazālī left Jerusalem.³¹ Although Ibn 'Asākir, Ghazālī's contemporary, did not report this trip, Yāqūt al-Hamawī (d. 1229),³² Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282),³³ al-Subkī (d. 1355),³⁴ al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), and al-'Aynī, (d. 1451), confirm this visit. al-Ṣafadī seems to be the first to report it in great detail.³⁵ He narrates that after al-Ghazālī left Jerusalem:

He set himself towards Egypt and stayed a while in Alexandria. It is said that he intended to sail towards Morocco to meet the prince Yūsuf Ibn Tashfīn because of what he had heard of his enthusiasm and support for people of knowledge. But after he [al-Ghazālī] was informed of his death he returned to his own land, Ṭūs.³⁶

Wilms attempts to give a more plausible interpretation of this visit, going beyond al-Ghazālī's plan of going to Morocco. He believes that al-Ghazālī was probably ordered by the Caliph to write a series of polemical works against those scholars and sects who might introduce instability into the empire. These are his polemical works against the philosophers, the Ismā'īlīs, and the Christians (of Egypt).³⁷ al-Ghazālī, therefore, was probably sent to Egypt to meet some Muslim scholars involved in polemics against the Coptic Christians.

30 Chidiac, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 20. See also Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, p. 35.

31 M. al-Sharkāwī gives the date 489–490 AH in his edition of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 15, but this date is not found in other sources.

32 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, p. 23.

33 Ibid.

34 Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Naṣr al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, Cairo, n.d., vol. 6, p. 199.

35 Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, Istanbul, vol. 1, 1931, p. 275.

36 Ibid., p. 274.

37 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, pp. 27–31.

The Attitude of the Author to the Bible

Before discussing different opinions on the question of authenticity, the author's attitude towards the Bible needs to be examined. The fact that the author provides all his arguments against the divinity of Jesus on the basis of his interpretation of five texts from the Gospel of John, and argues for his humanity on the basis of other texts from the Bible, shows that he accepts the text of the Bible and is arguing for a better form of interpretation. On this basis, he presents a very careful interpretation of Biblical verses that attribute divinity to Jesus, by using other Biblical verses that demonstrate his humanity. Applying this method to argue against Jesus's divinity, he claims that the Bible is being used here as a source for disclosing the reality of Jesus. Moreover, the author shows full respect to the evangelists, as well as to Paul whom he calls a prophet 'بولص الرسول'. He claims that Paul also understood the divinity implied in the Gospels to be metaphorical. He says:

وهذا التصريح منه يدلّ على انه فهم عين ما فهمناه وفهم ان هذه النصوص ليست ظواهرها
مرادة

[...] He (Paul) understood the essence of what we have understood, and that he comprehended that these passages are not intended literally.³⁸

Nevertheless, when he refers to the crucifixion he uses the expression 'in their opinion', demonstrating that he does not accept the Biblical version. This is a clear Muslim position, showing that the author holds that the Bible may report what some thought happened but not the reality. In the case of the crucifixion, the Qur'an discloses in *sūra* 4:157 that although someone was on the cross, it was not Jesus but someone who looked like him, so that 'it was made to appear to them' that he was crucified. Thus the sentence 'in their opinion' here does not necessarily demonstrate the author's doubt about the Biblical text, but that the text describes what Christians think happened rather than the reality of what took place.

Reynolds does not consider the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to be loyal in his acceptance of the integrity of the Bible and sees this as 'thoroughly pragmatic', a tactic employed to find common ground from which to launch his attack.³⁹ Whittingham agrees with this,⁴⁰ and also argues that the author does not

38 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

39 Reynolds, 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', p. 62.

40 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'navī*', p. 213. Whittingham also adds to the above

represent the concept of *tahrif ma'nawī* which shows acceptance of the text and rejection of its interpretation. His main argument is that the author uses the phrase 'in their opinion', which is widely used by Muslim polemicists such as al-Juwāynī who rejects the integrity of the Bible.⁴¹

In contrast, the phrase 'in their opinion', could be referring to the Christians' conviction that Jesus was crucified and had pain as the text supports this understanding. Thus this phrase refers to the text of the crucifixion story as well as to the interpretation of it. It seems that the author adopts the opinion expressed by al-Ghazālī in his *Mustasfā*⁴², namely that one should believe that the Christians witnessed the crucifixion. However, it was not real because they did not know that God had replaced Jesus with someone else. Thus, al-Ghazālī is defending the integrity of the Christians who reported this event, while not considering it a true report. Therefore, I consider that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* does not doubt the text itself, but questions the way Christians read it.

There is no doubt that the author is selective, taking statements out of context and playing them against each other in order to prove his case. This is a widely-used legitimate exegetical method, taking verses out of context in order to support a theological position. Nevertheless, Whittingham uses these arguments in order to demonstrate that the author should not be considered to be using *tahrif ma'nawī* (hermeneutical corruption of the text) but is only using this concept as a tactic to prove his case.

Both Whittingham⁴³ and Reynolds⁴⁴ consider that the work is clearly not intended for Christians but for faithful Muslims, in order to support them in their discussions with or refutation of the Christians.⁴⁵ Yet why would the author adopt such an unfaithful and pragmatic attitude of accepting the authenticity of the Bible when he is speaking exclusively to Muslims? Why would he make all this effort in a brilliant exegetical work, when he knows that it

arguments the fact that al-Ghazālī frequently uses cross-references to his other works which are absent in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. al-Sharqāwī explains that, although this is the case, al-Ghazālī did not cross-reference all his known works. He also adds that Muslim polemicists usually avoided mentioning cross-references to other works. He believes this assisted in the silence about *al-Radd al-jamīl* in later writing. Moreover, al-Ghazālī did not refute the divinity of Jesus elsewhere in his writing, so he could not refer to this in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. See al-Sharqāwī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 30–31.

41 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

42 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*, Cairo, 1905–1908, vol. 2, p. 157.

43 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

44 Reynolds, 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', p. 62.

45 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

is of no benefit to his audience who do not accept the authenticity of the Bible? On the contrary, *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have been directed at Muslims who were highly educated in philosophical thinking and were willing to accept the authenticity of the Bible, but needed someone, other than a Christian, to explain the parts that attribute divinity to Jesus.

After dealing with the sources, the possible visit to Alexandria and the attitude of *al-Radd al-jamīl* towards the Bible, we now focus on the arguments presented by those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author.

Arguments Supporting the Authorship of al-Ghazālī

Massignon, who first brought attention to *al-Radd al-jamīl* in 1932, did not doubt the attribution of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī and encouraged Chidiac to translate the text into French.⁴⁶ Chidiac did not hesitate to connect the work to al-Ghazālī but questioned its linguistic style. Being convinced that the work represented al-Ghazālī's thought, he came to the conclusion that the work must have been turned into a book by an Egyptian student of al-Ghazālī who had listened to him delivering lectures.⁴⁷ This solution satisfied Chidiac, and seemed plausible to G. Hourani who trusted the opinions of Massignon and Chidiac.⁴⁸ Wilms also considered that the likelihood that al-Ghazālī did not write the work himself was a reason for the book being so unfamiliar among Muslims.⁴⁹

Wilms, who translated *al-Radd al-jamīl* into German, was very interested in the question of authorship and offered lengthy arguments defending its connection to al-Ghazālī, which are discussed here in detail. For Wilms, the fact that the Aya Sophia manuscripts mention al-Ghazālī as the author, and that this is confirmed by the quotation of the thirteenth century Coptic priest Ibn al-Ṭayyib, are important pieces of evidence in attributing it to al-Ghazālī. To any objections based on the fact that the work is not mentioned or quoted by Muslim writers, he responds with two reasons. Firstly, al-Ghazālī seems to accept the authority of the Gospels in order to be able to defend his theory that Christians misconceived Christ's teaching in them. Therefore, it was probably not well received by other Muslim teachers who did not find it useful in their

46 Massignon, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī', pp. 523–536.

47 Chidiac, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 23.

48 Ibid. See Hourani, 'The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79, 1959, pp. 225–233.

49 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift*, p. 33.

refutation of Christians. This made the work unpopular among Christians, as Muslims did not use it in their polemical works. Secondly, since *al-Radd al-jamīl* was delivered orally, as evidenced by the style of writing, it is not easy to refer to these arguments in other works by al-Ghazālī.⁵⁰ Wilms believes that the work was not directed at Christians, but rather at Muslims in Alexandria to support them in their discussions with Coptic Christians in Egypt by providing an exegetical study of the verses used by Christians in their arguments for the divinity of Jesus. In addition, the sharp polemical tone of *al-Radd al-jamīl* made Christians reluctant to use the text and popularize it.⁵¹

Moreover, Wilms provides internal evidence connecting *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī's thought world.⁵² *al-Radd al-jamīl* fits into al-Ghazālī's methodology of polemical writings. In *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, al-Ghazālī outlines his method of refutation. First, one should present accurately and thoroughly the theory and viewpoints of the opponents. Second, the method employed to refute the arguments of the opponents should be presented.⁵³ Wilms adds a third aspect to the method, which is to show that the opponents' arguments are ridiculous and insult their approach and capacity for clear perception. The reasoning and argumentation used in *al-Radd al-jamīl* are very close to those used by al-Ghazālī in two other polemical works, one against the philosophers, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*,⁵⁴ and the other against the Ismā'īlīs, *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*.⁵⁵ *al-Radd al-jamīl* follows these rules, by which the author starts by presenting the problem, which he considers as the core of his research (the divinity of Jesus), then follows by presenting the texts that the Christians point to as evidence for the divinity of Jesus (the use of exegetical methodology). He discusses each text thoroughly and demonstrates the hermeneutical errors of the Christians. He does the same when discussing the three Christian sects. A comparison of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* shows a similarity of argumentation.

50 Wilms, pp. 33–35.

51 Ibid., p. 34.

52 He argues that *al-Radd al-jamīl* belongs to a polemical series of works which al-Ghazālī set out to write beginning with *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, then *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, which was written immediately after *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. Wilms thinks *al-Radd al-jamīl* is next in the list of polemical treatises by al-Ghazālī.

53 al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, Cairo, 1924, p. 15.

54 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed., S. Dunya, Cairo, 1972. See also the English translation by M.E. Marmura, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-falāsifa)*, Provo, 1997.

55 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, pp. 27–30. al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, ed., M.A. Qutb, Beirut, 2001.

Tahāfut al-falāsifa

فإني رأيت طائفة يعتقدون في أنفسهم التميز عن الأتراب والنظراء، بمزيد الفطنة والذكاء، قد رفضوا وظائف الإسلام من العبادات، واستحققوا شعائر الدين من وظائف الصلوات، والتوقى عن المحظورات، واستهانوا بتعبادات الشرع وحدوده...، ولا مستند لكفرهم غير تقليد سماعي، ألقي كتقليد اليهود والنصارى. إذ جرى على غير دين الإسلام نشوئهم وأولادهم، وعليه درج آباؤهم وأجدادهم، لا عن بحث نظري، بل تقليد صادر عن التعثر بأذيال الشبه⁵⁶

I have seen a group who, believing themselves in possession of a distinctiveness from companion and peer by virtue of a superior quick wit and intelligence, have rejected the Islamic duties regarding acts of worship, disdained religious rites pertaining to the offices of prayer and the avoidance of prohibited things, belittled the devotions and ordinances prescribed by the divine law ... There is no basis for their unbelief other than traditional, conventional imitation, like the imitation of Jews and Christians, since their upbringing and that of their offspring has followed a course other than the religion of Islam, their fathers and forefathers having [also] followed [conventional imitation], and no [basis] other than speculative investigation, an outcome of their stumbling over the tails of sophisticated doubts.⁵⁷

al-Radd al-jamil

فإني رأيت مباحث النصارى المتعلقة بعقائدهم ضعيفة المباني واهية القوى وعرة المسالك يقضى المتأمل من عقول جنحت إليها غاية عجيبة، ولا يقف من تعقيدها على اليسير من اربه. لا يعولون فيها إلا على التقليد المحض، عاضين بالنواجذ على ظواهر أطلقها الأولون ولم ينهض بإيضاح مشكلها لقصورهم الآخرون، ظانين بان ذلك هو الشرع الذي شرعه لهم عيسى عليه السلام معتدريين عن اعتقادها بما ورد من نصوص يعتقدون انها قاهرة للفكر غير قابلة للتأويل وان صرفها عن ظواهرها عسير.

56 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 37.

57 al-Ghazālī, *the Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans., M. Marmura, pp. 2–3.

I have found the opinions of the Christians related to their doctrines to be weak in construction, lacking in power, and shameful in method. The one who researches them is filled with amazement at intelligent people so inclined to them, and he is unable to achieve his aims with ease as a result of the complexity of them. They only rely on following bare tradition in them, clinging stubbornly to the literal meaning which the earlier Christians gave to them, while Christians of the present day, due to their indolence, do not endeavour to explain their obscure aspects, thinking that this is the divine law which Jesus, on him be peace, gave them. They offer as an excuse for holding to them by what is mentioned in texts they take as controlling their thinking, which are not susceptible to metaphorical interpretation.

Thus, methodologically, *al-Radd al-jamīl* follows al-Ghazālī's concept of polemical writing. The author also uses the insulting ironical style of al-Ghazālī, for example when he writes, 'This point of view invites an excuse, but it is laughable, it is really laughable', and 'I know no other group who are so insolent towards God.' In fact, *al-Radd al-jamīl* is full of such insulting speech, which proves that it was not intended for Christian ears but rather for Muslims involved in polemical dialogue. This feature is also found in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, as pointed out by Wilms, for example in the lines, 'I see the veins of stupidity running in their stupid heads',⁵⁸ and, 'Only those influenced by the mentality of a small group of people who have degenerate and disturbed opinions would oppose this.'⁵⁹ Wilms gives several examples of speech common to the three polemical works in order to demonstrate that *al-Radd al-jamīl* shares al-Ghazālī's way of thinking.⁶⁰ These examples raise the question of why the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was careful to imitate the method, way of presenting the subject and usage of insulting speech, but failed to fully imitate the style of al-Ghazālī's writing? This can be a feature of how students reproduce lectures by teachers, providing the method, insulting terminology, familiar speech patterns and illustrations of the teacher, but without being able to completely imitate the teacher's style of writing.

58 Ibid., p. 38.

59 Ibid., p. 39.

60 Wilms shows that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* uses in his argument for the miracles of Jesus, images which al-Ghazālī uses in his polemical works, such as the fertilization of the mother by the male sperm which is absent in the case of Jesus, found in *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. This is also true of the usage of the example of the miracle of Moses' rod turned to a snake. See Wilms, pp. 37–38.

al-Radd al-jamīl and Tahāfut al-falāsifa

Continuing with the comparison of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, Wilms notes a similarity between al-Ghazālī's attitude to philosophy and philosophers in the two works, which can be seen in *al-Radd al-jamīl* where the text says, 'In addition, what weakens their belief in this issue is the theory of the philosopher concerning the soul and its connection (to the body) ... Even though they are not capable of presenting *proofs* for it.' This is exactly how al-Ghazālī describes, in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, the theory of *al-naḥs* as explained by the philosophers and how they are not able to provide proofs for it.⁶¹

al-Radd al-jamīl presents the theme of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* in which the author accuses the philosophers of unbelief:

However, those who accept this teaching must also follow the philosopher in: that prophecy can be acquired, that the world is eternal and does not experience becoming and decay, that the Creator does not know particulars, that the One only gives rise to one, and that the God of creation is pure existence who does not possess knowledge or life or power or similar things in his essence, by which they reject the injunctions of the legislators and who make liars out of the prophets that were sent.⁶²

This passage repeats a similar list found in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, which accuses the philosophers of making the prophets out to be liars. This idea is also mentioned in *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa* where al-Ghazālī considers that the Jews, the Christians and the philosophers are making the prophet out to be a liar.⁶³

al-Radd al-jamīl and the Sufi Writing of al-Ghazālī

There are concepts in *al-Radd al-jamīl* which reflect al-Ghazālī's Sufi thought, as well as his criticism of those who believe in union with God in a literal sense. In refuting the concept of union, which Christians hold to support the divinity of Jesus, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* compares this notion with the blasphemy

61 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 206.

62 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

63 al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa*, ed., M. Bijo, Cairo, 1993, p. 26.

قد وردت النصوص في اليهود والنصارى والتحق بهم بالطريق الأولى البراهمة والثوية والزنادقة و
الدهرية و كلهم مشتركون في انهم مكذبون للرسول فكل مكذب للرسول فهو كافر و كل كافر فهو
مكذب للرسول

attributed to al-Ḥallāj or al-Biṣṭāmī because of their usage of a kind of mystic mysterious speech, in the moment of union, which confused their followers who took their words literally.

al-Radd al-jamīl

والذي أوقعهم في هذه المضائق تعلقهم بظواهر اوجبت صراخ العقول
القطع بعدم ارادتها فكم ورد في كل شريعة من ظاهري مصادم لصريح العقل وأوله علماء تلك
الشريعة وقد وقع في مثل ذلك جماعة من الاكابر فيعصمهم قال: "سبحاني" وقال الآخر: "ما
أعظم شأني" وقال الحلاج: "انا الله وما في الجبة إلا الله". وحمل ذلك منهم على احوال الاولياء
الشاغلة عن التحفظ في المقال حتى قال بعضهم: "هؤلاء سكارى ومجالس السكر تطوى ولا
تحكى" كل ذلك لقضاء صريح العقل باستحالة كون هذه الظواهر مرادة⁶⁴.

What caused them to be entangled in these difficulties is their attachment to literal meanings which sound minds must affirm are not intended. How many literal meanings contrary to sound reason would appear in every revealed law, unless experts in these laws interpreted them metaphorically? Indeed a number of leading people have fallen into this kind of error; one of them said, 'glory be to me', another said, 'how great is my state'.⁶⁵ al-Ḥallāj said, 'I am God, and there is nothing in my robe except God'.⁶⁶ That is induced in the saints during their ecstatic experiences which distract them from being cautious in speech, so that one of them says, 'these people are drunk, and the speech of drunkards should be hidden and not made known'. All this has convinced people of sound mind that a literal meaning could not have been intended.⁶⁷

Mishkāt al-Anwār:

واستوفيت فيها عقولهم فصاروا كالمبهوتين فيه ولم يبق فيهم متسع لا لذكر غير الله ولا لذكر
أنفسهم أيضا. فلم يكن عندهم إلا الله، فسكروا سكرًا دفع دونه سلطان عقولهم، فقال أحدهم
(أنا الحق) وقال الآخر (سبحاني ما أعظم شأني) وقال آخر (ما في الجبة إلا الله) وكلام العشاق

64 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our Arabic text).

65 These are sayings of Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874).

66 al-Ḥusain ibn Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922).

67 *al-Radd al-jamīl* (our text).

في حال السكر يطوى ولا يحكى. فلها خف عنهم سكرهم وردوا إلى سلطان العقل الذي هو ميزان الله في أرضه، عرفوا أن ذلك لم يكن حقيقة الاتحاد بل شبه الاتحاد⁶⁸

No capacity remained within them save to recall ALLAH; yea, not so much as the capacity to recall their own selves. So there remained nothing with them save Allah. They became drunk with drunkenness wherein the sway of their own intelligence disappeared; so that one exclaimed, 'I am The One Real!' and another, 'Glory be to ME! How great is MY glory!' and another, 'Within this robe is nought but Allāh!' ... But the words of Lovers Passionate in their intoxication and ecstasy must be hidden away and not spoken of ... Then when that drunkenness abated and they came again under the sway of the intelligence, which is Allāh's balance-scale upon earth, they knew that that had not been actual Identity (union), but only something resembling Identity (union).⁶⁹

He uses the same examples in *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* in his criticism of a union of the attributes of God with the attributes of humans.⁷⁰

In another passage in *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* he explains his difficulty in accepting the full union with God claimed by some Sufis:

لان قلنا اذا عقل زيد وحده وعمرو وحده ثم قيل ان زيدا صار عمرو واتحد به فلا يخلو أي الحال عند الاتحاد اما ان يكون كلاهما موجودين او كلاهما معدومين او زيد موجودا وعمرو معدوما او بالعكس ... وان كانا معدومين فما اتحدا بل عدما ولعل الحادث شيء ثالث ... فالاتحاد بين الشئيين مطلقا محال⁷¹

If we say: if Zaid and Amr are known as individuals and then it is said that Zaid became Amr and united with him there could be no other result than a union. Either they both exist or both vanished, or Zaid exists and Amr has vanished or the opposite. If they have vanished then there was no union but nullification. Perhaps the result is something third ... Thus a union between two things is absolutely impossible.

68 al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, p. 11.

69 al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans., W.H.T. Gairdner, London 1924, pp. 106–107.

70 See al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* ed., M. al-Khisht, Cairo, pp. 135–137.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* explains the union in a similar way:

هم يعتقدون ان الاله خلق ناسوت عيسى عليه السلام ثم ظهر فيه مُتَّحِداً به ويعنون بالاتحاد انه صار له به تعلق على حد تعلق النفس بالبدن ثم مع هذا التعلق حدثت حقيقةً ثالثة مغايرة لكل واحدة من الحقيقتين مركبة من لاهوتٍ وناسوتٍ موصوفةٌ بجمع ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من حيث هو اله وانسان وقد ارتكبوا في اثبات هذه الحقيقة فضائح كان الاخلاق بهم سترها، والاخراق اذا لم يستح قال ما شاء⁷²

They believe that God created the humanity of Jesus, on him be peace, then he appeared in it, and united with it. They mean by the Union that a connection occurred between him and it like the connective relationship between the soul and the body. Then with this connective relationship, a third reality occurred, different from each of the two realities, composed of divinity and humanity, and having the attributes of all that is required from each of them, with respect to him being God and man.⁷³

He also makes the following observation in *al-Maqṣad al-ʿasnā* connecting the way that Sufis are misled to the way that Christians are also misled in their belief in the Trinity:

اما ان يكون قد غلط في ذلك كما غلط النصارى في ظنهم في اتحاد اللاه بالناسوت⁷⁴

They are mistaken in this just as the Christians are mistaken in their supposition concerning the Union of the divinity and humanity.

al-Ghazālī uses the Christian expressions *nāsūt* and *lāhūt* in referring to the union between God and humanity, and these are also to be found in *al-Radd al-jamīl*.

All these examples show that the style of argumentation in *al-Radd al-jamīl* is similar to the thinking of al-Ghazālī.⁷⁵ We now turn to an examination of the arguments of those who reject the attribution of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī.

72 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

73 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

74 al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-ʿasnā*, p. 137.

75 Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, p. 307.

Arguments against the Authorship of al-Ghazālī

Lazarus-Yafeh was the first scholar to argue systematically that the literary style of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is different from that found in al-Ghazālī's works, though she admits that the text does also contain some expressions typical of them.⁷⁶

In her *Studies on al-Ghazzālī*, Lazarus-Yafeh presents the theory that al-Ghazālī used a substantial amount of philosophical terminology after his conversion to Sufism.⁷⁷ If *al-Radd al-jamīl* is genuinely the work of al-Ghazālī it must be connected with his visit to Egypt, which, if true, must have taken place during his Sufi period. She evaluates the style using this criterion and decides that *al-Radd al-jamīl* is pseudo-Ghazālī. However, this argument is not quite proven because al-Ghazālī used different styles, depending on his target readership. To give an example of this, his works *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *al-Iqtisād fī-l-I'tiqād* were written during the same period but in totally different styles. The philosophical language of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* is very different from the style that *al-Iqtisād fī-l-I'tiqād* is written in, as the latter is directed at theologians.⁷⁸

However, Lazarus-Yafeh's main argument against the authorship of al-Ghazālī is that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* appears relatively familiar with the Bible and different writings of Christian sects, a feature not found in any of al-Ghazālī's other works, which allows for the possibility that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* could well have been a Coptic convert to Islam.⁷⁹

76 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 467.

77 Ibid., pp. 468–469.

78 al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtisād fī-l-i'tiqād*, ed., H. Atay and I. Cubkcu, Ankara, 1962. See also the English translation by D.M. Davis, *On Divine Essence: a translation from the al-Iqtisād fī-l-i'tiqād*, Provo, 2005.

79 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, pp. 472–473. See also Reynolds, 'The ends', p. 55. It is quite clear from *al-Radd al-jamīl* that the author is fairly well acquainted with the New and Old Testaments, which demonstrates that he made a thorough study of the Bible before producing his criticism, a feature which well evokes al-Ghazālī when his efforts to master philosophy and his completing the important work *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* before writing his polemical work *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* are taken into consideration. Of course, this feature is not limited to the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, as Martin Accad demonstrates in his 2001 Oxford University PhD thesis, 'The Gospels in the Muslim and Christian exegetical discourse', but is common to all Muslim polemicists who demonstrated great knowledge of both the Bible and the early Christian writings of different sects, polemicists such as al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm, al-Jāhīz, al-Bāqillānī, 'Abd al-Jabbār, Ibn Ḥazm, and finally al-Ghazālī's teacher al-Juwaynī. Besides, most of them benefited greatly from the detailed works of Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq in refuting Christian concepts. See *Early Muslim Polemic against*

However, in which of his writings would al-Ghazālī have been expected to demonstrate Biblical knowledge? Although al-Ghazālī mentions Jesus in some parts of his *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, he mainly refers to him as a prophet presenting Sufi wisdom. Peta observes that in the authentic works of al-Ghazālī, there are only six quotations from the Bible, five quotations in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* and one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad*.⁸⁰ However, these quotations also show that the Bible was certainly not unknown to al-Ghazālī.

In addition, al-Ghazālī hints of knowledge of the Bible in the following passage in *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*:

فان قيل فلنعم صدق النصارى في نقل التثليث عن عيسى وصدقهم في صلبيه, قلنا لم ينقلوا التثليث توقيفا وسماعا عن عيسى بنص صريح لا يحتمل التأويل ولكن توهموا ذلك بألفاظ موهمة لم يفقوا علي مغزاها, كما فهم المشبه التشبيه من آيات و اخبار لم يفهموا معناها... اما قتل عيسى عليه السلام فقد صدقوا في انهم شاهدوا شخصا يشبه عيسى مقتولا ولكنه شبه لهم⁸¹

If it is said we know of the truthfulness of the Christians in transmitting the Trinity from Jesus and their truthfulness about his crucifixion, we say they did not transmit the Trinity from Jesus on the basis of direct hearing of a text which cannot be interpreted metaphorically. But they imagined this through metaphorical phrases whose reference they did not understand just like the anthropomorphists understand verses and reports without understanding their meaning, such as 'Jesus (on him be peace) was killed.' They were truthful in that they witnessed someone who looked like Jesus being killed, but 'it was doubtful to them'.

This remarkable passage mentions the main theme of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, where al-Ghazālī clearly argues that the problem is not with the text itself but in

Christianity, Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq's 'Against the incarnation', ed., D. Thomas, Cambridge, 2002.

80 I. Peta, 'Al-Radd Al-Jamīl: L'épineuse question de la paternité Ghazālienne: une nouvelle hypothèse', *MIDEO* 30, 2014, pp. 129–138, p. 130. Peta says that this last argument is the most significant. Having searched all of al-Ghazālī's accepted works, she found six biblical quotations introduced by the words, *ra'aytu fī-l-Īnjl*, 'I have seen in the Gospels', or similar words. Three of these come from Matthew's gospel. The first comes from Matthew 11:17, the second from Matthew 5:38–41, the third is from Matthew 6:3–4 and 17–18. See al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, ed., T. Badawī, 4 volumes, Cairo, 1957, vol. II, p. 279, vol. IV, p. 70, vol. IV, p. 328.

81 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*, Cairo, 1905–1908, vol. 2, p. 157.

how it is interpreted. If Christians interpret their Bible properly they would understand that the divinity of Jesus could only be meant metaphorically. He goes on to explain that the same problem arises for Muslims who understand the anthropomorphic verses in the Qurʾān literally. Similarly, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* accepts their testimony that they saw Jesus on the cross, but believes they were mistaken, interpreting Q4:157, *shubbiha lahum* as, 'It was doubtful to them'. This short passage does show clearly that al-Ghazālī dealt with the problem of the Trinity in the same way as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*.

Lazarus-Yafeh observes that the Hebrew and Coptic phrases in *al-Radd al-jamīl* are not found in any of al-Ghazālī's recognised works.⁸² Wilms notes several characteristics linking the work to a Coptic milieu. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* uses the words *اختلاط وامتزاج*, mixture and blending, *تركيب*, composition, *حقيقه*, reality, to explain the Trinity, and these are also found in the writings of the Coptic theologians Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 987) and Abū-l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324) in their explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Their appeal to the relationship between the soul and the body to illustrate this relationship is present in *al-Radd al-jamīl* in the discussion of the union between the Father and the Son.⁸³ However, if the author was a Copt who converted to Islam, then how could he have held the view that the Gospel of John was written in Coptic? No knowledgeable Copt would have entertained such a belief. Besides, the author's knowledge of Coptic and Hebrew is quite limited, as Arberry points out.⁸⁴ Nevertheless,

82 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 469. Lazarus-Yafeh maintains that al-Ghazālī never quotes verses in a foreign language in his recognised writing. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* includes two sentences in Hebrew and one in Coptic. She argues that it is very unlikely that al-Ghazālī knew Hebrew or Coptic, since no other source suggests that he did. The first sentence is the saying of Jesus on the cross in Matthew 27:46, 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me?' The author believes that Jesus spoke in Hebrew. The second sentence is the statement in John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh', which the author quotes in Coptic to argue that it should be interpreted as 'the Word was made flesh'. The third sentence is in connection with a miracle of Moses in Exodus 4:6, 'Behold his hand was leprous as snow', which the author quotes in Hebrew. While there seems to be no obvious reason for quoting the latter sentence in Hebrew, the former two sentences are quite famous and are used in many Muslim refutations of the concept of the divinity of Jesus. Thus it is possible that the author copied these sentences from other writers. Chidiac, nevertheless, considers the author to have had no thorough knowledge either of Hebrew or Coptic, for all three quotations are inaccurate.

83 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift*, pp. 41–42.

84 Arberry, *Aspects*, p. 300.

it is almost certain that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written within a Coptic milieu. Wilms concludes that al-Ghazālī must have been collecting, from Coptic Christian writing, any material which he would use in his polemical presentation, arranging these texts systematically and using them to construct his argument.

Thus, while Lazarus-Yafeh, Reynolds, Peta and Whittingham argue that the Coptic character of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is evidence for considering the author to be a Coptic convert to Islam, Wilms considers that the Coptic character of the work proves that al-Ghazālī must have written *al-Radd al-jamīl* in Egypt, and that this also is evidence that he travelled to Alexandria. Peta observes that the entire discussion in *al-Radd al-jamīl* is based on Jacobite thought. The author is familiar with Jacobite arguments against the Melkites and Nestorians and uses them to refute the latter two sects. The author also uses Jacobite Christological terminology, *ʿaql*, *ʿāqil* and *maʿqūl* to explain the Trinity, and *ḥaqīqa* to refer to the nature of Christ instead of *ṭabīʿa*.⁸⁵ Peta reaches the same conclusion as Reynolds in that such borrowing from Jacobite sources excludes al-Ghazālī as the author. Wilms, on the other hand, argues that this borrowing does not rule out al-Ghazālī as author, since he had the habit of refuting opponents by using their writings and arguments.⁸⁶

In addition, Peta claims that the first writer to use the term *ḥaqīqa* for the nature of Christ is the thirteenth century Coptic scholar Abū-l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324). Wilms, in contrast, shows that the tenth century Coptic theologian Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 987) used this term in his work *History of the Councils*.⁸⁷

Reynolds⁸⁸ and Peta⁸⁹ consider the author's attitude to Christians in *al-Radd al-jamīl* as quite negative while al-Ghazālī is moderate in his judgment of Christians. Peta mentions his tolerance in *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wal-zandaqa*,⁹⁰ yet it is in this very book that he accuses Christians and Jews of *kufr* (unbelief). He states that *kufr* should be applied to those, including Jews and Christians, who consider the prophet Muḥammad to be a liar, in the following passage:

85 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 136.

86 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift*, p. 23.

87 Wilms, p. 42, referring to Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Councils*, *Patrologia Orientalis* III p. 147, p. 186, and p. 213.

88 Reynolds, p. 52.

89 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 132.

90 Ibid.

قد وردت النصوص في اليهود والنصارى والتحق بهم بالطريق الاولى البراهمه و الثنويه و الزنادقه و الدهريه و كلهم مشتركون في انهم مكذبون للرسول فكل مكذب للرسول فهو كافر و كل كافر فهو مكذب للرسول⁹¹

‘The accounts that Jews and Christians are typically attached to first of all, including Hindus, and secondly the atheists and freethinkers, show that all of them are guilty of *shirk* in their lies about the Prophet, and every liar about the Prophet is an unbeliever and every unbeliever is a liar about the Prophet.’

Although al-Ghazālī tries to encourage tolerance, he condemns Jews and Christians for their mistrust of the Prophet’s mission. Nevertheless, he does not directly accuse them of corrupting their scriptures in this work.

Reynolds further argues that in accepting the integrity of the Bible, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* contradicts al-Ghazālī’s teacher, al-Juwaynī, who accused the Jews and Christians of corrupting the Bible. Reynolds thinks that al-Ghazālī would not have dared to adopt a concept which contradicted his teacher. However, this is to ignore the evidence presented by Margaret Smith, which clearly shows that al-Ghazālī did not follow al-Juwaynī in several issues.⁹²

In addition, Reynolds observes that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* hardly ever uses Ḥadīth in his refutation and when he does, he mentions no *isnād*.⁹³ This is, however, also observable in al-Ghazālī’s recognized polemical works. In *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* he uses very few Ḥadīth, and for one of these he did not give the *isnād*, but simply says, ‘The Prophet of God said this, the blessing and peace of God be on him.’ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.⁹⁴ In *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya* he gives a Ḥadīth saying, ‘He said this, the blessing and peace of God be on him.’ قال صلى الله عليه وسلم without mentioning whether the Ḥadīth comes from Muḥammad or from one of his companions.⁹⁵

91 al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wa-l-zandaqa*, p. 26.

92 M. Smith, *al-Ghazālī the Mystic*, London, 1944, pp. 15–20.

93 Reynolds, p. 53.

94 See *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* p. 42, and p. 237. On page 237, al-Ghazālī quotes the following Ḥadīth, سمعت، ما لا عين رأت ولا أذن سمعت، and later mentions the same saying as a Qur’ānic verse on p. 241!

95 See *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 30, p. 43, and p. 45. On page 45, al-Ghazālī quotes a Ḥadīth from ‘Alī but in *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* he says that the same Ḥadīth comes from the Prophet.

When was *al-Radd al-jamīl* Written?

Another argument for denying that al-Ghazālī could be the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is the rejection of the possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written in the lifetime of al-Ghazālī. Peta makes this argument by noting that the biblical quotations in *al-Radd al-jamīl* conform to the Arabic version of the Gospels known as the Alexandrian Vulgate.⁹⁶ According to Hikmat Kachouh, the Alexandrian Vulgate is an Arabic version, which possibly entered circulation from the tenth century onwards.⁹⁷ However, the earliest manuscript of this version dates to 1174. Vööbus mentions a tenth century copy, which had been kept in the Oriental Library in Beirut but today is lost.⁹⁸ Texts of this version are only available from the early twelfth century.⁹⁹ Peta believes that author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have used this version.¹⁰⁰ However, she notes that she could not find any author who quoted from this version before the thirteenth century. As a result, she argues that *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have been composed not earlier than this period, which would exclude al-Ghazālī as its author.¹⁰¹

Although this theory seems to present evidence against the authorship of al-Ghazālī, the case cannot be so easily resolved. There are several important questions that remain unanswered: Do the Biblical quotations in *al-Radd al-jamīl* come only from the Alexandrian Vulgate? Assuming this is the case, then when did the Alexandrian Vulgate start being circulated? Is it an independent version or is it mixed with other families? Is there a possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* provides evidence of its being in circulation in the tenth century, since Kachouh and Vööbus believe that it existed in the ninth century?¹⁰²

Dealing with the first question, Constance Padwick says in her article 'Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels: an Unsolved Problem' that she

96 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 130–132.

97 See H. Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: the Manuscripts and their Families*, p. 9. Kachouh studied about 200 Arabic manuscripts of the Canonical Gospels from the eighth to the nineteenth century. He used two methods to date them: examining the relationship between different families in the same period, and noting quotations in writings which enable an estimation of the circulation of a certain version in a certain period.

98 G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Vol. 1, Rome, 1944, p. 156. See A. Vööbus, *Early Versions of the New Testament: Manuscripts Studies*, Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile, No. 6, Stockholm, 1954, p. 289, and p. 294. See also Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 124 and p. 214.

99 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, pp. 214–215. See also footnote 3, p. 215.

100 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 132.

101 Ibid.

102 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, footnote 3, p. 215.

compared the Biblical quotations of *al-Radd al-jamīl* with several early Arabic versions of the Bible. She discovered that the Gospel quotations are identical to a manuscript of the Arabic Bible in the Coptic collection of the Vatican mark 'G' which has the Coptic version on one side with the Arabic translation on the other. She suggests that al-Ghazālī might have had this version as he looked at John 1:14 and compared the Arabic word *ṣāra* 'became' with the Coptic equivalent *afer*.¹⁰³ This version is dated 1204–1205, but there is the possibility that there were earlier versions. Kachouh investigated the bilingual version of the Vatican codex vat. Copt. 9 mark G but concluded that it is not the Alexandrian Vulgate.

This family, known as the 'Alexandrian Vulgate' or the 'Egyptian Vulgate', has been believed by scholars to be an eclectic recension of an Arabic version originally translated from the Coptic Bohairic similar to the text preserved in the Codex Vat. Copt. 9: a Coptic-Arabic bilingual manuscript copied in 1204/5.¹⁰⁴

Thus the argument that the quotations of *al-Radd al-jamīl* come only from the Alexandrian Vulgate is not reliable, as a result of comparing the text with early versions of the Arabic Bible. According to Kachouh, copies of different families have similarities to one another, which probably reveals that translators were not producing new versions but rather working on and refining old extant copies, as in the case of Ibn al-ʿAssāl.¹⁰⁵ In answering the second and third questions, namely when the Alexandrian Vulgate emerged and began being circulated and whether it is an independent version or mixed with other vulgates, Kachouh concludes that it is not possible to identify a fixed date for the emergence of the different versions of the Arabic translation families. One can only observe when a certain family was quoted or was being circulated, what he calls 'the witness of the family'. He points out that different family versions are often mingled with one another. For example, the Alexandrian Vulgate often agrees with Ibn al-ʿAssāl's version, known as family L, but sometimes has similarities with other families.¹⁰⁶

Thus it is not easy to confirm that a quoted text can only belong to one specific family version without taking into consideration the possibility that

103 C. Padwick, 'Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels: an Unsolved Problem' *The Moslem World* 29, 1939, pp. 130–140.

104 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 214.

105 Kachouh, pp. 290–292.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

it can also belong to another attached family unless there is other evidence beyond the text being studied.

However, the fact that Peta did not find any writer who quoted from the Alexandrian Vulgate before the thirteenth century does not necessarily confirm its non-existence in the eleventh century, it only proves that it was not quoted during this period.¹⁰⁷ Indeed it is quite strange that although the Alexandrian Vulgate appears to have existed from the ninth century, no one quoted from it until the thirteenth century. In short, assuming that the Biblical quotations come from the Alexandrian Vulgate and that no one quoted from it before the thirteenth century does not exclude the possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by al-Ghazālī.

Peta also observes that in the recognised works of al-Ghazālī, he quoted six times directly from the Bible. Five quotations in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, and one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad* all come from another version of the Bible not used in *al-Radd al-jamīl*.¹⁰⁸ She asks why, if the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was al-Ghazālī, did he use another Arabic version? The answer relates to the place where he composed or delivered *al-Radd al-jamīl*. If *al-Radd al-jamīl* was composed in a Coptic environment then it is obvious that the author would use the copy of the Arabic Bible in circulation among the audience of his lectures. It is very unlikely that al-Ghazālī, assuming he is the author, would have owned an Arabic version of the Bible which he carried from place to place. Therefore, it is highly probable that he would have used the Arabic version available in the place where he composed his work.

Who Wrote *al-Radd al-jamīl*?

There is agreement among the above authors that *al-Radd al-jamīl* did not originate from al-Ghazālī's pen. This is an assumption which both Chidiac and Lazarus-Yafeh share on the grounds of the literary style of *al-Radd al-jamīl*. The Coptic character of *al-Radd al-jamīl* has made several more recent scholars reject its connection to al-Ghazālī. The consensus among the majority of those who have examined *al-Radd al-jamīl* is that it was written by an Egyp-

107 Assuming with Peta that the author used the Alexandrian Vulgate in his quotations, and if there is evidence to prove that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by al-Ghazālī then this would provide evidence for the circulation of the Alexandrian Vulgate in the eleventh century.

108 Peta found six Biblical quotations in the recognised works of al-Ghazālī, one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad*, and five in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. None of them follow the Alexandrian Vulgate. See Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 130–131.

tian author who was well acquainted with Coptic Christology. While Lazarus-Yafeh, Reynolds, Whittingham and Peta consider this Egyptian to be a Coptic Christian convert to Islam, Chidiac, Sweetman, Wilms, and El-Kaisy Friemuth consider him to be a Muslim student of al-Ghazālī.

I defended the direct connection of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī in 2007 and 2011.¹⁰⁹ However, I am now inclined to believe, after all the evidence is taken into consideration, that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was writing the work independently of al-Ghazālī. The Coptic character of the work, which all the above authors agree upon, ultimately makes it difficult to maintain the claim that the work is directly related to al-Ghazālī. I have come to the conclusion that the most problematic question in linking it directly to al-Ghazālī is that of why he would make such an effort to adopt a Coptic position in arguing against the divinity of Jesus when his audience were exclusively Muslims? This is indeed a very difficult question to answer. The best response is that the author was a Muslim polemicist who was intent on refuting Coptic Christians with their own arguments. This is the most plausible answer for the question of authorship.

In outlining the possible characteristics of the author the following elements can be considered. First, the insulting language used by the author shows that he wrote from a clear distance to Coptic Christians. While his knowledge of the Bible could indicate that he was a Coptic convert to Islam, other Muslim polemicists have shown similar Biblical knowledge without them falling under the suspicion that they were once Christians. The fact that the author was very probably Egyptian made it easy for him to have access to Coptic writing, and it is highly probable that his focus was on learning all the arguments used by Coptic theologians to defend their Christological position against other Christian sects.

Second, the references to *al-Radd al-jamīl* by the Coptic theologian Ibn al-Ṭayyib are from a Muslim work which quotes from *al-Radd al-jamīl* and attributes it to al-Ghazālī.¹¹⁰ This observation confirms that the text was known in a Muslim milieu before it was known among Coptic authors, which adds

109 See M. El-Kaisy Friemuth, 'Al-Radd al-jamīl: al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's' in D. Thomas ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 275–294; and M. El-Kaisy Friemuth, 'al-Ghazālī', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 2, eds., D. Thomas and A. Mallett, Leiden, 2011, pp. 363–369,

110 He says in the first quote: *ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر* وقد حكى هذا الرأي في كتابه الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل، فقال عنهم الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل، فقال: *ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر* the quotation in the quotation starts with *وقد حكى هذا الرأي* في كتابه الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل، فقال عنهم الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل، فقال: *ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر*. Thus there is no doubt that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is quoting someone who is quoting al-Ghazālī. See the text below.

confirmation of the likelihood that the author was a Muslim and not a Coptic Christian convert to Islam. Thus the argument that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was a Coptic convert to Islam on the basis of his knowledge of the Bible, Coptic Christology and Coptic arguments against other Christian sects is not proven.

If the author was a Muslim polemicist who had deep knowledge of Coptic theology, why did he write in al-Ghazālī's name and how faithful was he in his presentation of al-Ghazālī's thinking and worldview? The answers to these questions may be speculative, but attempting to answer them might enable readers of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to better understand the context of the work.

Firstly, why would such a good author prefer to write in someone else's name? The answer must take into account that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written before the death of Ibn al-Ṭayyib in around 1270. al-Ghazālī died in 1111, so the desire of the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to represent al-Ghazālī means that the work must have been written after al-Ghazālī had become a famous Islamic scholar, whose name would attract readers for *al-Radd al-jamīl*. During this period in Egypt, the Fāṭimid caliphate gave way to Ayyūbid rule between 1171 and 1199. Christians had been privileged under the Fāṭimid rulers, with the exception of the rule of al-Ḥākim (r. 996–1021). Therefore, it is possible that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written in the Fāṭimid period, with the purpose of producing a plausible work that could help Muslims in their arguments against Coptic Christians. Such a refutation had to be carefully written in order to survive the Christian intellectuals who in that period probably enjoyed a good degree of authority. It is possible that an author as knowledgeable as this would have had access to the writings of al-Ghazālī, especially his polemical works. The author could have seen *al-Radd al-jamīl* as an additional polemical work to *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, which would further increase the fame of al-Ghazālī and, at the same time, enable the work to reach a vast number of his followers.

In this light, it is possible to understand the author's noble aims. But was he successful in being faithful to al-Ghazālī? No doubt the author adopted al-Ghazālī's thought world fully and wrote in the way he believed that al-Ghazālī would have written. He used every chance to imitate the ideas al-Ghazālī's polemical works. The above section containing the analysis of those who argued for the authorship of al-Ghazālī, describes how Wilms identified the author's way of mirroring the various themes of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, trying to imitate the polemical character of al-Ghazālī's writing. Wilms also demonstrated how the author exemplified the Sufi character of al-Ghazālī's writing in his refutation of the union of the divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ.

However, the author was not completely successful in imitating al-Ghazālī's style of writing, since his language was more complicated and sometimes unclear. He also failed to present a well-structured book, unlike as was typical of al-Ghazālī, most of whose books contained a table of contents dividing his work into chapters, sections and subsections. This structure is completely missing in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. The author's knowledge of al-Ghazālī was relatively limited, appearing unaware of the fact that al-Ghazālī most probably did not master Hebrew and Coptic, because none of his works demonstrate his acquaintance with these languages.

Finally, on the grounds of the discussion above we can safely say that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by a Muslim polemicist before the thirteenth century. The author wrote in such a way that it fits into al-Ghazālī's thought patterns. However, *al-Radd al-jamīl* also strongly reflects a Jacobite Christology, which shows that the author used Coptic material in his refutation. Therefore, unless further evidence is discovered which could prove that *al-Radd al-jamīl* belongs to al-Ghazālī's works, we will describe *al-Radd al-jamīl* as attributed to al-Ghazālī.

Appendix

Below is the complete article of Ibn al-Ṭayyib:

قال¹¹¹ "بعض المسلمين: ان المسيح قال للرسول: "امضوا وتلهذوا كل الأمم وعمدوهم باسم الآب والابن والروح القدس" فهذا قد صرح بأنكم تعتقدون بثلاثة آلهة"، أجبناهم: لا خلاف في أن علوم الشريعة المسيحية هي ثمرات لثلاثة أشياء أي الانجيل المجيد ورسائل بولس الرسول وقصص الرسل الحواريين الاطهار، وهذه الكتب الثلاثة شاهدة في أقطار الوجود بأن الله إله واحد وأن الآب والابن والروح القدس اوصاف لذاته الواحدة، وجميع موضوعات علمائهم في اربع زوايا المعمور شاهدة بذلك، ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر اقاويلهم على ما سيأتي بيانه فاقول: (beginning of the quotation from *Al-Radd al-jamīl*)

111 Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Maqāla fī-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i'tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha', in P. Sbath, *Vingt Traités*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 176–178.

(III) ان النصارى يقولون: ان البارئ تعالى جوهر واحد موصوف بصفات الكمال وانه يوصف بثلاثة اوصاف ثبوتية ذاتية امر بها الشارع وهي: الآب والابن والروح القدس، ويشيرون الى الآب باسم الجوهر الذي يسمونه البارئ ذا العقل المجرد، وبالابن الى الجوهر المذكور الذي يسمونه ذا العقل المعقول لذاته، ويشيرون هنا الى الجوهر القائم بذاته الغني عن الحلق. وانما سمحت الشريعة المسيحية بوصفه تعالى بذلك مخاطبةً للأمم من حيث يفهمون. (end of quotation) وقد حكى هذا الرأي عنهم الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل¹¹²، "فقال (new quotation): "يعتقد النصارى أن ذات البارئ تعالى واحدة في الموضوع ولها اعتبارات: فان اعتبرت مقيدة بصفة لا يتوقف وجودها على وجود صفة قبلها كالوجود، فذلك يُسمى عندهم أقنوم الآب. وإن اعتبرت بصفة يتوقف وجودها على وجود صفة قبلها كالعلم، فان اتصاف الذات يتوقف على اتصافها بالوجود، فذلك هو المسمى عندهم أقنوم الابن او الكلمة. وإن اعتبرت (112) بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها، فذلك يسمى عندهم أقنوم الروح القدس، لكون ذات البارئ معقولة له. وحاصل هذا الاصطلاح أن الذات الالهية واحدة في الموضوع موصوفة بكل أقنوم من هذه الأقسام¹¹³.

ومنهم¹¹⁴ من يقول: ان الذات من حيث هي الذات لا باعتبار صفة، هي عبارة عن معنى العقل، وهو المسمى عندهم بأقنوم الآب. وإن اعتبرت من حيث هي عاقلة لذاتها، فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن معنى العاقل، وهو المسمى عندهم بأقنوم الابن أو الكلمة. وإن اعتبرت بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها، فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن معنى المعقول، المسمى عندهم بالروح القدس. فعلى هذا الاصطلاح يكون العقل عبارة عن ذات الله¹¹⁵ فقط، والآب مرادف له. والعاقل عبارته عن ذاته بقيد كونها عاقلة لذاتها والابن والكلمه مرادف

112 The words of the Muslim scholar who is quoting al-Ghazālī and who is quoted by Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

113 This part is not in Aya Sophia.

114 Aya Sophia adds a section which explains the above paragraph:

فيقوم إذاً من الاب معنى الوجود ومن الكلمة والابن معنى العالم ومن روح القدس كون ذات البارئ معقولة له. هذا حاصل هذا الاصطلاح فيكون ذات الاله واحدة في الموضوع موصوفة بكل أقنوم من هذه الأقسام. ومنهم من يقول

115 The same as in footnote 93 above.

لها. والمعقول عبارة عن الاله الذي ذاته معقولة له، والروح القدس مرادف له“¹¹⁶ ثم قال مشيراً الى ما تقدم¹¹⁷ (113) ”فاذا صحَّت المعاني فلا مشاحة في الألفاظ ولا في ما يصطلح عليه المصطلحون.“

(end of the quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl*)

وقد حكى الشيخ أبو حامد الغزالي رضي الله عنه اعتقاد النصارى في المسيح من حيث هو الانسان المأخوذ من مريم في كتابه المقدم ذكره¹¹⁸، فقال: ”هم يعتقدون أن الباري تعالى¹¹⁹ خلق ناسوت عيسى عليه السلام، ثم ظهر فيه متحداً، فهم يعنون بهذا الاتحاد أنه صار له به تعلق النفس بالجسد“¹²⁰ فأبان رحمه الله بتصريحه بهذين القولين حقيقة اعتقادهم لمن يحاول معرفة العلوم الحكيمية.¹²¹

Refutation of Muslims who accuse Christians of believing in three gods Composed by the excellent father and scholar, the priest Abū al-Khayr ibn al-Ṭayyib¹²²

Some of the Muslims say, ‘Christ said to the apostles, “Go forth and make apostles of all the nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”, so here it is said openly that you believe in three gods!’

We respond to them: There is no doubt that the sciences of the Christian Law are the fruits of three things—the glorious Gospel, the letters of the Apostle Paul, and the stories of the pure apostles and disciples. These three books testify in all the corners of existence that God is one god, and that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are attributes of His one essence. All the writings of their scholars in the four corners of the inhab-

116 The complete quotation is in Chidiac, pp. 44–45.

117 ثم قال مشيراً الى ما تقدم this phrase is added from the Muslim source which is quoting the text above and shows clearly that the text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is in front of the writer and he is only quoting from the points which he needs in his discussion.

118 This statement is from the one who is quoting *al-Radd al-jamīl* and not from Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

119 In Aya Sophia, الاله

120 In *al-Radd al-jamīl*, بالبدن p. 20.

121 This whole paragraph is clearly not from Ibn al-Ṭayyib but is quoted from the Muslim source which is quoting al-Ghazālī.

122 Translated by S. Noble. See http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/sbath_18_Abu_al-Khayr_ibn_al-Tayyib.htm

ited world testify to this. If not for fear of it taking too long, I would recount their beliefs in detail, but I will be brief here and summarize their statements as will become clear, and I will say:

The Christians say that the Creator, may he be exalted, is one substance endowed with the attributes of perfection and that He is endowed with three eternal essential attributes which the Lawgiver has commanded, and they are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They indicate by 'the Father' the name of the substance which they call the Creator, who possesses pure intellect. By 'the Son' they indicate the aforementioned substance which possesses an intellect that intelligizes itself. By 'the Holy Spirit' they indicate the aforementioned substance which possesses an intellect that is intelligible in itself. Here they indicate the substance that is subsistent in itself and is free of location. The Christian Law only permitted Him (Jesus), may He be exalted, to be described in this way in order to speak to the nations in the way in which they understand.

The scholar and imam Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī gave this opinion about them in his book known as *al-Radd al-Jamīl*: "The Christians believe that the essence of the Creator, may He be exalted, is objectively one and that it has aspects. If it is regarded with relation to an attribute whose existence does not depend on an attribute prior to it, such as existence, then they call this the hypostasis of the Father. If it is regarded in relation to an attribute whose existence depends on the existence of a prior attribute, such as knowledge, since the essence's having attributes depends on its having the attribute of existence, then they call it the hypostasis of the Son and the Word. If it is regarded with relation to its essence being intelligible to itself, then they call this the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, because the essence of the Creator is intelligible to Himself. This usage of terminology means that the divine essence is objectively one and is characterized by each of these hypostases.

Some of them say that the essence qua essence without regard to attribute is an expression for the intellect and they call this the hypostasis of the Father. If it is regarded from the perspective of it intelligizing itself, then this perspective expresses for them the intelligizer, which they call the hypostasis of the Son or the Word. If it is regarded with relation to it being itself, then this perspective is for them an expression of the intelligible, which they call the Holy Spirit. According to this usage of terminology, "the intellect" only expresses the essence of God and the Father is synonymous with it. "The intelligizer" expresses of His essence with regard to its intelligizing itself, and the Son or the Word is synonymous with it. "The intelligible" expresses the God whose essence is intelligible to Himself,

and the Holy Spirit is synonymous with it.' Then he says, with reference to the above, 'If these meanings are true, then the terms are indisputable, as are the technical terms that those who set them down agree upon.'

The shaykh Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, may God be pleased with him, recounted the belief of the Christians about Christ with regard to His being the human taken from Mary in his previously mentioned book. He said, 'They believe that the Creator, may He be exalted, created the human nature of Jesus, peace be upon him, then He appeared united in him. They mean by this the union that He became in him by this in the way the soul is attached to the body.' By making these two statements openly, he, may God have mercy on him, made clear the truth of their belief to those who attempt to gain knowledge of the sciences of wisdom.

Outline of *al-Radd al-jamīl*—A Fitting Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus from the Evidence of the gospel

The manuscript is said to be written by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who promises at the outset to critique the Christian doctrine of the union of the divine and human in Jesus Christ, particularly to refute those who depend on philosophy to apply the analogy of the union of the soul and the body to the union of the divine and human in Christ.

The opening section has three arguments

There is a false use of analogical reasoning to connect divinity and humanity in Jesus. No connection can be made between God and the essence of any human being, in a similar way to the connection between a soul and a body. Even if it is proven that there is a connection between the soul and the body, Christians can make no use of it to establish the divinity of Jesus, because God has a directive relationship with each creature and not just with one particular one such as Jesus Christ.

Christian attempts to prove Jesus' divinity from his performance of miracles are futile. Moses performed similar miracles, but Christians do not argue that he is divine. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead but Christians do not believe that makes them divine.

Christians are misled in their reliance on philosophy. Depending on philosophy for the union of the divine and human in Christ surely means that Christians must accept other beliefs of the philosophers, such as the eternity of the world and the limitations imposed on a creator of that world.

The author concludes by introducing his study of the teaching of Jesus in the gospels which will demonstrate to Christians that need to understand the metaphorical meaning of those passages that they have interpreted literally.

The second section of the work is an interpretation of Jesus' teaching from John's gospel

The author precedes this investigation by announcing his interpretive method. Reason should be the principle guide to understanding meaning. What Jesus says should be understood either literally or metaphorically by applying reason to the interpretation. Seemingly contradictory passages should be reconciled by the use of reason.

Jesus claims to be one with his Father

John 10:30–36 is quoted. Jesus says ‘I and the Father are one’, but the Jews picked up stones to throw at him, because they accused him of blasphemy, claiming to be God.

The author argues that the Jews understood Jesus to be making a literal claim to union with God, but that Jesus himself did not. He was merely suggesting that the word he shared with God was being declared to them. This is like the saying of the Prophet,

Whoever wants to come close to me will come closest by performing what I have prescribed for him. Then the worshipping servant will continue to come close to me by performing more than I have prescribed, and so I will love him. When I love him I will be the ear with which he hears, the eye with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks, and the hand with which he strikes.

God is not present in any of these members of the body, so the saying is metaphorical in meaning rather than literal. God enables the believer to speak with the tongue and strike with the hand. Jesus intended such a meaning by offering help to others to come close to God.

Jesus prays that his followers will be one as he is one with his Father

The second saying of Jesus is from John 17:11, where he prays for his disciples that they be one as he and his Father are one.

The author argues that if Jesus saw his unity with God to be unique to him then how could he ask for the same unity to be granted to the disciples? Thus Christians are simply wrong to claim that the unity of Jesus with his Father makes Jesus divine. He is talking of friends being one.

The author quotes from the apostle Paul, from 1 Corinthians 6:17, 'Whoever clings to our Lord becomes one spirit with him', as support for his metaphorical reading of unity.

Jesus passed on the glory given to him by the Father to his followers so they could be one

The third passage is taken from John 17:17–22, where Jesus prays that just as the Father dwells in him so might the Father dwell in his disciples, and that the glory he shares with his Father be granted to the disciples.

Jesus is really asking that the glory given to him by God will also be given to the disciples so that they can love what God loves, hate what God hates, and will what God wills. He did not intend that his disciples be made into divine beings.

John 12:44 supports this interpretation. Jesus says there, that 'whoever believes in me does not believe in me alone but also in the one who sent me, and whoever has seen me has seen the one who sent me'. He means that he speaks the truth about God: Jesus' command is God's command and his prohibition is God's prohibition.

John also wrote in such terms in his first epistle, in 1 John 4:12–14, where he says that God dwells in us and we dwell in him. If he thought that the dwelling of God in Jesus implied that he was divine, then he must also have thought that the believers shared that divinity. It is certain that John did not think this.

When Jesus speaks of the glory of God given to him he means the glory given to prophets. This is confirmed by many statements in the gospels showing the humanity of Jesus, such as Mark 15:34 where he says, 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' He demonstrated hunger in Mark 11:12–13 when he approached a fig tree looking for fruit to eat. Upon finding no fruit he cursed the tree. This demonstrates that Jesus was like a Sufi master who endures hunger as a test of faith. It is not evidence of his power to cause death.

Jesus confesses ignorance about future events

The author diverges from the gospel of John for his choice of the fourth passage, which he takes from Mark 13:32, where Jesus says that does not know the hour of judgment; 'Concerning that day and that hour, no-one knows, not the angels that are in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father alone'.

The author interprets this to mean that Jesus denies having knowledge of the future that only God has, which supports his argument that Jesus confesses to being human and not divine.

Jesus claims to be sent by the one true God

The fifth passage comes in John 17:1–3, where Jesus asks the Father to grant eternal life to the disciples, and to grant them to 'know that you alone are the one true God and that the one you sent is Jesus Christ'.

Jesus clearly said that God is one and that God sent him. Jesus ascribed divinity and oneness to God not to himself.

The apostle Paul held the same view when he said in 1 Corinthians 15:28, that at the resurrection 'the Son will be subject to the one who subjects all things to himself'. Jesus is subject to God at the resurrection. Paul also states in his epistle to the Ephesians 1:16–17, that he is praying to the God of Jesus Christ. Paul says in his first epistle to Timothy 2:5, 'There is one God and there is one mediator between God and humans, the man Jesus Christ'. Paul's testimony is to the humanity of Christ and his submission to God.

Various passages in the gospels point clearly to the humanity of Jesus, particularly, his sayings at the time of his death, as it is portrayed in the gospels. He is supposed to have implored God in Mark 14:36, on the night of the crucifixion, 'if it is possible then take this cup from me'. He is represented as saying, in Mark 15:34, when he was crucified, 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' The author does not understand how Christians fail to see that Jesus saw himself as separated from God rather than united with him. Only the blind can persist in the belief that the union of Jesus with God is literal rather than metaphorical.

Jesus says he is a man who has listened to God

The sixth passage is also from John's gospel at 8:39–40, where Jesus claims to be, 'a man who has told you the truth that he heard from God.' This admission of human status is backed up by other sayings of Jesus from John 8:26, 'the One who sent me is Truth and what I have heard from him I speak in the world,' and John 12:49–50, 'for I do not speak for myself, because the Father who sent me gave me the command about what I should say.'

Paul agrees with this in his epistle to the Hebrews, when he said, 'consider this messenger, the great high priest of our faith, Jesus Christ, entrusted by the one who sent him and he is like Moses in all of his house.' Paul sees Jesus as God's messenger, like Moses, and that God guides the nation through them.

The terms 'father' and 'son' must be understood metaphorically. Jesus never intended that they be taken literally. Those who argue that Jesus regarded himself as divine as a result of using these terms for God and himself are blind to the true meaning of his teaching.

The union of divinity and humanity in Jesus according to the three main Christian communities

The author turns from Biblical exegesis to a refutation of the Christology of the three main denominations in his day. The first Christian group is the miaphysite Copts, who are named as Jacobites at the end of the author's discussion of them.

The union according to the Jacobites

They believe that God created the humanity of Jesus and then God united with the humanity in the same way that a human soul is united with a human body. As a result of this union, a third reality comes into being, composed of divinity and humanity, and called 'the Messiah'.

But this means that God needs the human being, and that is impossible, because God would then be bound to his creation. He would also be adding a new attribute to himself, which would compromise his eternal nature.

The so-called third reality cannot exist since it is a combination of perfect divinity and perfect humanity, which is impossible. They try to use the analogy of the soul in the human body, but this analogy cannot be applied to God uniting with a human body. The only use for this analogy is to say that there is a spiritual connection between God and a human being, which is precisely what the author is arguing for. He will not allow a union of being.

The union according to the Melkites

The second group is called 'the Melkites' by the author. They were the upholders of the Chalcedonian definition, and a minority group in Egypt. They believe that the Messiah is the union of the divine hypostasis with the universal humanity.

This concept of universal humanity resides only in the mind but not in actuality. They believe that God was crucified, which is absurd. If they argue that only the universal humanity was crucified this does not make sense because there is no such thing as 'universal humanity', only individual human beings.

More recently Melkites have begun to argue that the union took place between the divine hypostasis and an individual human being. But they still are bound to admit that the divine hypostasis is crucified. They try to put all the suffering of the crucifixion onto the humanity of the Messiah, to prevent the divine hypostasis from being affected, but this is impossible, if there is a true union between them.

The union according to the Nestorians

The Nestorians are the third denomination to be considered. They were hardly present in Egypt but were the majority Christian population in Mesopotamia and Persia. They say that the union of divine and human in Christ occurs in the will.

The author questions the validity of this notion given that Nestorians claim that God willed the crucifixion of Jesus. But the gospels show that Jesus felt abandoned by God on the cross. So how could Jesus' will be the same as God's will when there was such separation between them?

The next section deals with names that Christians give to Jesus implying his divine status.

Titles applied to Jesus by Christians

'God' applied to Jesus

When Christians apply the term 'God' to the Messiah, they are guilty of the greatest folly if they believe this literally. Some Sufi masters have expressed similar sentiments, such as al-Ḥallāj, who said, 'I am God, and there is nothing in my robe except God'. He probably intended a metaphorical rather than a literal meaning since he spoke in an ecstatic state.

'Lord' applied to Jesus

The title, 'the Lord', could refer either to God or to a human owner, as in the sayings, 'lord of the house' and 'lord of the property'.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8:4–6 that, 'there is no God but God alone ... since many gods and many lords are found, we have only one God; He is God the Father from whom everything comes, and we are in him, and there is one Lord; he is Jesus Christ who holds everything in his hand, and we are also in his grasp'.

Paul called Jesus 'Lord' rather than 'God' because he made a distinction between God the creator of all and Jesus, the 'owner' established by God the creator.

The author proceeds to refute the notion of inherited sin and the redemption they believe comes from the sacrifice of Christ for sin. He asks God to forgive them for their stupidity.

'Sonship' applied to Jesus and 'fatherhood' applied to God

They attribute the fatherhood to God, and the sonship to Jesus. But the concept of sonship is also found in the Torah where the voice of God calls Jacob 'my first born son, Israel'. Moses is commanded by God, 'Say to Pharaoh, if you do not send my first born son to worship me in the desert, I will surely kill your first born son', meaning by 'my son', the children of Israel. David said to them, 'you are all sons of the Most High'. Jesus applied this to himself and to them, when he said, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'.

Jesus employed a metaphor when he called God his 'father', meaning that God was merciful and affectionate towards him. He also employed a metaphor in applying 'sonship' to himself, meaning that he revered and glorified God. The sonship of Jesus does not affirm any characteristic which distinguishes him from other people, because John 1:12 says, 'He gave them authority to become sons of God.'

The author turns back to the exposition of John's gospel in the following section, since there are three passages there that Christians rely on for their belief in the divine nature of Jesus.

Three passages in John's gospel that Christians suppose support the divinity of Jesus

Jesus entitled 'word of God' in the opening chapter of John's gospel

The first passage is John 1:1, 'In the beginning was the word and the word was God'. The author describes the Trinitarian language used by Christians to interpret this passage. From the Father originates the status of existence, and from the word and the Son the status of the knowledgeable one, and from the Holy Spirit the essence of the Creator being intelligible to himself. The essence of God is one in substance having the attribution of each of these hypostases.

So when he said, 'in the beginning was the word', he meant, in the beginning was the knowledgeable one. When he said, 'and God was the word', his meaning was, this word that indicates the knowledgeable one, this knowledgeable one is God. There is no indication at all of the divinity of Jesus.

John 1:10 says that, 'the word was in the world and was made by him yet the world did not know him.' Christians are wrong to understand Jesus as the word here, because these attributions belong to God alone and cannot be identified with Christ.

John 1:14 says, 'the word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory'. According to the Coptic version, the meaning is, 'the word made a body' because '*afer*' means in Coptic, 'he made'. In other words, this body which God made was Jesus, who appeared and whose glory was seen.

Christians interpret the saying to mean that the word became human. But how can Christians believe that the knowledgeable one, God, was buried? In other words, a metaphorical meaning must be adhered to in order to protect God from being demeaned in this way.

In the end the Christians are talking about three gods, not one God.

Jesus' claim to have existed before Abraham

The second passage is John 8:56–58, 'Abraham your father wanted to see my day, he did see it and he rejoiced. The Jews said to him, you have not yet reached fifty years and you have already seen Abraham, and Jesus said to them, truly, truly I say to you, I am before Abraham was.'

The author argues that these words were spoken as a metaphor because Jesus existed after Abraham. 'Seeing' refers to perception but not to physical vision.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:7, 'but we speak by the hidden wisdom of God, by the secret which is always hidden from the worlds, and God who is eternal decreed it before the worlds existed.' Paul perceived the secret, but he did not do this with his physical eyes.

Peter said in the Acts of the Apostles 2:2, 'O children of Israel, listen to these words; Jesus of Nazareth was a man who appeared among you from God with power and signs which God performed by his hands among you, as you yourselves know, and this is what was decreed for him from the prior knowledge of God and his will.' Peter declared that Jesus was a man whose signs were not done by him but by God.

Jesus' claim that whoever saw him had seen the Father

The third passage is John 14:8–12, 'Philip said to him, "Master" show us the Father and it will be enough for us, and Jesus said to him, I have been with you all this time and you have not known me, Philip; whoever has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? These words which I speak are not from me but from my Father who dwells in me, he performs these deeds; believe in me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, if not, believe as a result of the deeds; truly, truly, I say to you that whoever believes in me will perform the deeds that I perform, and even greater than them he will do, because I am going to the Father.'

When he was asked to show them God he said, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.' He meant that, since God cannot be seen He ordained the prophets to transmit his decrees instead of himself, just like kings who are hidden from sight but convey commands and prohibitions through intermediaries.

When he said, 'But my Father who dwells in me performs these deeds,' he meant that all of the deeds that were witnessed he performed by means of God's power. He intended a metaphorical meaning since it could in no way be conceived by any human being that his deeds would be greater than the deeds of God.

If he was himself really the Father why did he say, 'because I am going to the Father'. It cannot be conceived that anyone would say, 'I am going to Zayd' when he is actually Zayd himself.

Christian appeal to Jesus being called 'word from God' in the Qur'ān to support his divinity

Some Christians suppose that 'the word' implies the divinity of Jesus because of the use of this expression in the Noble Book, the Qur'ān 4:171, 'O people of the book, do not exaggerate in your religion, and only speak the truth about God. Surely the Messiah is Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God, and his word cast into Mary and a spirit from him; so believe in God and his messengers, and do not say three, Desist! It will be better for you; surely God is one.'

A human person is created from one of two causes; the testicles which are the indirect cause and the power in the sperm which is the direct cause. Jesus had no direct but only an indirect cause, the word of God, because everyone is created by the word of God, the One who says to every creature 'Be and it exists' [Qur'ān 7:43]. The saying, 'cast it into Mary', means that although a child is usually created from the sperm cast into its mother, this child was only created by the casting of the word into his mother. So then the word 'cast' is metaphorical.

Jesus and Adam share in not being created by normal causes. The Qur'ān 3:58 says, 'Jesus is the same in the sight of God as Adam whom He created from dust'. The phrase, 'and a spirit from him', means Jesus is a spirit whose creation originated from God but is not connected with the normal causes to which this would usually be attributed.

The author enters into a discussion of Arabic grammar. Is the phrase 'Be and it came to exist' a command or a statement? The author argues for the position of the Traditionalists who consider the word by which the command is made to be a cause. What happens after the command is the effect of the command even if the real cause is beyond the command. So God is the ultimate cause, though his word of command is the proximate cause of Jesus' existence.

al-Radd al-jamīl in the Context of Muslim Refutations of Christianity

al-Radd al-jamīl comes after several centuries of Muslim refutations of Christianity and repeats themes common to previous treatments of Christian beliefs by Muslim writers. To make a comparison of the arguments of this Muslim polemicist with those of others who preceded him, it is necessary to reflect on the way he presents them. The six sections of the refutation do not have an obvious coherence, since the writer seems to move abruptly from one topic to another, and then to return to an already discussed theme after a detour. However, a further look shows that he is perhaps attempting to introduce topics that can with profit be discussed in greater detail at later stages in the treatise. Two examples are his repeated references to the Christian argument that the union of the soul and body is an analogy for the union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and the way he keeps returning to Christian scripture to refute the divine nature of Jesus. With both topics there is a spiral of intensity of engagement with the argument, from the more straightforward in earlier parts of the work to the more complex in later sections. As a result of this intensification of debate as the work progresses, it is best to make comparisons with earlier refutations in the light of the complete presentation of each theme.

The opening section briefly covers three foundational arguments; Christians misguidedly use analogical reasoning to defend the divinity of Jesus, they mistakenly rely on Jesus' performance of miracles to support his divine nature, and they are selective in their appeal to philosophical thought to undergird their faith. Section two attempts to show that the Christian gospels, and in particular the fourth gospel, provide evidence that Jesus did not claim to be divine. Sayings of Jesus that Christians have interpreted as Jesus' claims to divine status have been misunderstood because they have been taken literally. On the contrary, Jesus spoke in metaphors, but Christians have failed to follow his intention. The third section offers a critique of the way the three main Christian communities understand the union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus. The 'one nature' Christology of the Jacobites receives the most detailed criticism for appealing to the union of the soul and the body as analogous to the union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus. This is a mistaken argument because the union of aspects of the created world cannot be analogous to a union of the created and uncreated in Jesus. The 'two nature' Christology

of the Melkites is regarded as deficient in logic since they believe that the divine and human natures of Jesus are fully united, yet the divine nature did not suffer death on the cross. Therefore, the Melkites actually hold to the separation of the two natures. The Nestorian conceptualisation of a union of divine and human wills is quickly passed over as being contradicted by the testimony of the gospels that Jesus' will was not always in conformity to the will of God. The fourth section analyses three titles applied to Jesus by Christians, 'God', 'Lord' and 'Son of God'. The mistake that Christians make in giving Jesus these titles is that they think of language in too literal a way, failing to make room for symbolism. A perusal of the way these terms are actually used in the scriptures of the Christians confirms that a metaphorical interpretation of the titles is intended. Section five studies three passages in the gospel of John that Christians believe clearly teach the divinity of Jesus. The first of these is the prologue of the gospel, John 1:1–14 in which Jesus is identified with the eternal word of God become human. The critique offered is the most detailed of any of the textual interpretations in *al-Radd al-jamil*, showing the author's realisation of the central significance of these verses for Christian faith in the incarnation. The author attempts to show that the word of God is not the pre-incarnate Son of God but is rather the speech of God which Jesus utters. The second passage is John 8:56–58, where Jesus claims to have existed before Abraham, and which Christians believe is evidence for the pre-existence of Jesus. However, if Abraham could see the future coming of Jesus in his prophetic role then Jesus did not actually exist before Abraham. The third passage is John 14:8–12, in which Jesus proposes that whoever has seen him has seen the Father. Christians take this as fact, but they should be reminded that Jesus elsewhere makes a distinction between himself and the Father, so that in this passage he must be referring to the unity of thought and will between himself and the Father. The final, sixth section refutes the appeal of Christians to Jesus being called 'a word from God' in the Qur'an to support his divinity. A correct reading of the Qur'an is that God created Jesus through his word without the normal means of a human father, in a similar way that he created Adam without human means.

The following themes emerge from the above outline. Jesus' miracles do not confirm his divinity. The gospels provide evidence for the fact that Jesus was a messenger sent from God. Passages in the fourth gospel that Christians propose as literal proof for the divinity of Jesus should be interpreted metaphorically. The Jacobite belief that the union of the soul and body is an analogy for the union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus is inappropriate. The Melkite separation of the divine and human natures in Jesus at the point of his death is irrational. The Nestorian conviction that the will of Jesus was united with the

will of God is not supported by the Christian gospels. Christian scriptures show that titles given to Jesus that Christians believe point to his divine status should be taken as symbols of his spiritual eminence as a messenger of God. Christian appeal to the Qurʾān to support the divinity of Jesus is mistaken.

Jesus' Miracles Do Not Confirm His Divinity

The writer denies that the miracles performed by Jesus are a sign of his divinity on the grounds that others produced similar prodigies. The scriptures read by Christians have stories of Elijah and Elisha raising the dead, and Moses changing a staff into a snake, dividing the sea, and withdrawing his hand leprous from his cloak, and then returning it to its former state. The latter event is used to clarify miraculous actions. 'God empowered Moses to make his hand leprous without harm, and to return it to the colour of his body without any modifying power, so that through a special capacity he was able to perform unprecedented miracles in conflict with well-known custom'.¹ In other words, according to the author, the miraculous actions of Jesus fit into a pattern in which God grants power to certain individuals to perform signs that conflict with normal expectations. There is no extra dimension in the miracles of Jesus that warrant Christian belief that Jesus' miracles are a product of his divine nature.

Debate over the miracles of Jesus in similar terms is found in earlier Muslim refutations of Christianity as well as in Christian defences against Muslim polemic. From the Christian side, the eighth century *Anonymous Apology for Christianity* argues that the Qurʾān supports the divine power of Jesus by stating that Christ spoke and created from clay what looked like a bird. Since only God creates then Christ must be divine when it is said that he created.² A

¹ Section 1:3.

² See M.D. Gibson, *A Treatise on the Triune Nature of God*, London, 1899, p. 84. The writer of this *Anonymous Apology* says at the end of the treatise, 'If this religion was not truly from God, it would not have stood firm nor stood erect for seven hundred and forty-six years'. S.K. Samir calculates 750 from the birth of Christ, while M. Swanson suggests 788 based on the ending of Jesus' life. See S.K. Samir, 'The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity', in S.K. Samir and J.S. Nielsen, eds, *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)*, Leiden, 1994, pp. 57–116, p. 61, and M. Swanson, 'Some Considerations for the Dating of *fi Tatlit allāh al-wāhid* (Sinai Ar. 154) and *al-Gāmi' wuḡūh al-īmān* (London, British Library op. 4950)' in *Parole de l'Orient* 18, 1993, pp. 118–141, p. 140. However, S.H. Griffith argues that Palestinian scribes were more likely to compute the date from the beginning of the year of the incarnation, thus

ninth century contribution comes from Theodore Abū Qurra (d. circa 830), a Melkite theologian from Harran who had a reputation for debating with Muslims. He compared the miracles of Moses and Jesus and concluded that Moses accomplished miracles by the power of God and not by his own ability, whereas Jesus had the divine power in himself to perform miracles and to empower others to perform miracles in his name.³

Muslim response to such arguments can be seen in the *Refutation of the Christians* by the ninth century convert to Islam, ‘Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. circa 860). He counters the Christian claim that Jesus’ miracles prove his divinity by pointing out that Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, and that Moses parted the sea, and brought plagues on the Egyptians.⁴ A similar denial of the Christian argument for the divinity of Jesus based on his miracles is found in the tenth century Ash‘arī writer Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013). His *Book of the Introduction* includes a refutation of Christianity in which he understands Christians to argue that Jesus’ miracles demonstrate his divine nature. His first response is to assert that God performed the miracles through Jesus. But supposing the Christian argument is granted then Moses must also be divine since his miracles are not of a different kind from those performed by Jesus. If Christians subsequently reply that Moses had to ask God to perform the miracles through him, then the Christian gospels record Jesus imploring God to act. There is no escape for the Christians if they then plead that Jesus asked God to act for the sake of his disciples since this only shows that Jesus was as dependent on the action of God as Moses was.⁵

placing the composition around 755; see S.H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, Princeton, 2008, p. 54.

- 3 Abū Qurra, ‘Maymar fī taḥqīq nāmūs Mūsa al-maqaddus wa-l-anbiyā’ aladhīna tanab‘u ‘alā al-Masīh’ (Treatise on the Holy Law of Moses and the Prophets who Predicted the Messiah), ed., C. Bacha, *Un Traité des Oeuvres Arabes de Théodore Abou-Kurra*, Paris, 1905, pp. 8–9. For biographical information see S.H. Griffith, ‘Reflections on the Biography of Theodore Abū Qurrah’, *Parole de l’Orient* 18, 1993, pp. 143–170, and for English translations of his treatises see J.C. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, Provo, 2005.
- 4 ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, eds, I.-A. Khalifé and W. Kutsch in *Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph* 36, 1959, pp. 113–148, p. 144. For biographical information see D. Thomas, ‘Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī: a Convert’s Assessment of his Former Faith’, in M. Tamcke, ed., *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages*, Beirut, 2007, pp. 137–155, and for his treatment of the Bible, D. Thomas, ‘The Bible in Early Muslim Anti-Christian Polemic’, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7, 1996, pp. 29–38.
- 5 Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, ed., R.J. McCarthy, Beirut, 1957, pp. 98–99. See D. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 144–203 for the Arabic text

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* adopts the same kind of arguments as al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī, which shows that he is familiar with this type of Muslim polemic. The fact that the debate about Jesus' miracles is the first theme in the refutation and that the topic is never mentioned again may be an indication that the author regarded the miracles of Jesus as introductory to his main arguments, or as ground clearing work that needed to be done before the more important work of the treatise. Nevertheless, this repetition of Muslim insistence that the miracles of Jesus are to be understood as similar to those performed by Moses or other prophets points to a continuing need to counter claims made by Christians that the divinity of Jesus can be seen in his miracles, and that a complete refutation of the divinity of Jesus required a rebuttal of this Christian argument.

**The Gospels Provide Evidence for the Fact That Jesus was a
Messenger Sent from God. Passages in the Fourth Gospel That
Christians Propose as Literal Proof for the Divinity of Jesus Should
be Interpreted Metaphorically**

At the heart of this treatise is the presupposition that the Christian gospels can be accepted as evidence for the fact that Jesus claimed only to be a messenger of God and that he did not believe that he was the incarnate Son of God. The author argues that the gospels portray the humanity of Jesus, but that Christians have tended to read claims to divinity into some of the sayings of Jesus. This sort of Christian interpretation is most frequent in their reading of the gospel of John and therefore he intends to concentrate on passages from that gospel. His method is to analyse supposed claims to divine status on the part of Jesus as metaphors rather than literal statements in order to align them with the basic humanity of Jesus. Thus when Jesus says 'I and the Father are one' [John 10:30] he must have intended a metaphor for the unity of will and love between himself and God. When he prayed for his disciples that 'They may be one with you as we are' [John 17:11] he clearly meant a unity of will and love since if he had meant a divine status then he must have prayed that his disciples become gods. This is backed up by Jesus' subsequent prayer that those who would come to believe in him would also 'Become one as we are one' [John 17:21]. He intended to ask that the words and deeds of future disciples be

with an English translation of al-Bāqillānī's refutation. The comparison of Moses and Jesus' miracles is found on pages 192–195.

in accord with God's will, otherwise once again he would be asking for them to become divine like him, which would be impossible. Ultimately, his saying 'Whoever has seen me has seen the one who sent me' [John 12:44] can only be taken in a metaphorical sense of seeing. Jesus' commands and prohibitions are what God commands and prohibits, so listening to him is like listening to God. The author uses evidence from other gospels to back up his argument that Jesus claimed to be a human messenger sent by God. He confessed ignorance of the future, which he said was known only to God [Mark 13:32] and he felt forsaken by God during his crucifixion [Mark 15:34]. So when John's gospel contains Jesus' prayer that people come to 'Know that you are the one true God and that you sent him, Jesus Christ', it is clear that Jesus prays that they will believe that he is God's messenger and not that he is divine.

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* stands out from previous Muslim polemicists in his willingness to accept the whole range of sayings of Jesus in John's gospel including all the texts in which Jesus seems to claim divine status. Of the Muslim writers who quoted from John's gospel, only al-Bāqillānī accepted the possibility that such texts could be authentically from Jesus if interpreted metaphorically rather than literally. *al-Radd al-jamīl* extends this figurative reading to the whole corpus of Jesus' teaching in order to prove that Christians are misguided in their understanding of the one who spoke about his relationship with God in the first place. al-Bāqillānī and the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* represent one attitude to the Christian gospels among Muslims in the 'Abbasid period. Another approach was to find supporting evidence for the Qur'ānic account of Jesus in the gospels. Thus any texts in the gospels that showed Jesus to be a human messenger sent by God were referred to in a bid to show the continuity between the gospels and the Qur'ān. Only texts from John's gospel that obviously refer to Jesus' sense of submission to God are quoted by al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī al-Rassī (d. 860) and 'Alī al-Ṭabarī, who follow this method. A third attitude to the gospels was expressed by 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (d. 1025) and Abū Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), who accepted only literal interpretations of the gospels. Ibn Ḥazm concluded that hardly any of the sayings of Jesus were genuine, having been put into his mouth by people who set out to deliberately deceive others about his true character.⁶

6 See for more detail, see M. Beaumont, 'Muslim Readings of John's Gospel in the 'Abbasid Period', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19, 2008, pp. 179–197, and 'Appropriating Christian Scriptures in a Muslim Refutation of Christianity: the Case of *al-Radd al-jamīl* attributed to al-Ghazālī', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, 2011, pp. 69–84. For a Christian response to the deception theory, see M. Beaumont, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī on the Alleged Corruption of the Gospels', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 241–256. For

al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī al-Rassī is the earliest known Muslim polemicist to accept that much of Jesus' teaching found in the gospels was authentic. In his *Refutation of the Christians*, written possibly as a result of debating with Christians in Egypt between 815 and 826, he quotes virtually the whole of the 'Sermon on the Mount' from Matthew's gospel as evidence for his argument that Jesus did not think of himself as the exclusive Son of God but included himself among his disciples as children of God, since Jesus continually asked his disciples to call God their Father. al-Qāsim refers to two texts from John's gospel to support this interpretation. John 1:12 shows that those who believed in Jesus were born of God and so God has many sons, and in John 8 Jesus told his audience that if they obeyed God then they would be God's sons. As a result Christians must interpret the fatherhood of God and the sonship of Jesus and other believers as the gospels present them.⁷ However, al-Qāsim does not consider the texts from John's gospel that take up so much attention in *al-Radd al-jamīl* and that were used by Christians precisely to argue for an exclusive sonship for Jesus with his Father over against a more general sonship for disciples with their Father.

The same is true of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī when he appeals to texts from John's gospel to support his contention that Jesus did not teach that he was divine. He selects those texts that appear to show the humanity of Jesus and studiously avoids the texts discussed by the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*. His list begins with John 17:3 where Jesus says, 'You are the one true God and you sent Jesus Christ', which al-Ṭabarī takes to be a statement of oneness (*al-tawḥīd*).⁸ This is confirmed by Jesus in 6:38, 'I did not come to do my will but the will of the one who sent me'. 20:17, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' is the clearest evidence that Jesus regarded himself as subordinate to God so how could Christians make out that Jesus had the status of God himself? He lists several other texts where Jesus speaks of being sent by his Father; 14:24, 'My words are those of the one who sent me', 14:31, 'As my Father commanded me so I do', 14:28, 'My Father is more glorious and greater than I am', and 15:1 where Jesus says that he was the true vine and his Father was the vinedresser,

discussion of Muslim attitudes to the Bible and Christian responses see S.H. Griffith, 'Arguing from Scripture: the Bible in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in the Middle Ages', in T. Hefferman and T. Burman, eds, *Scripture and Pluralism*, Leiden, 2005, pp. 29–58, and D. Thomas, 'The Bible and the *Kalām*', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 175–192.

7 al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm, *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, ed., I. De Matteo, 'Confutazione contro i cristiani dello zaydita al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9, pp. 301–331, pp. 322–324.

8 'Alī al-Ṭabarī, *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, p. 122.

making a distinction between himself and God.⁹ This extraction of suitable texts from John's gospel becomes almost reckless when he quotes 1:18, 'No one has ever seen God', along with 8:40, 'I told you the truth I heard from God Almighty' to prove that God did not reveal 'himself' but only his 'word'. He finds the hidden-ness of God in the very context of 1:14–18 where John speaks about the word becoming flesh and being seen by humans and the one and only Son who is truly God making him known.¹⁰ Therefore, al-Ṭabarī uses the gospel of John in a one-sided way to back up his assertion that Jesus never claimed to be divine, but fails to deal with Johannine texts that appear to make that claim.

'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (d. 1025) in *The Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophecy*, written in 995, counsels caution with the notion of a metaphorical interpretation of statements allegedly made by Jesus in John 8:58, 'I am before Abraham' and John 17:21, 'I am in my Father and my Father is in me'. He advises his Muslim reader, 'You do not need a recounting of this or knowledge of it ... You have no need for speculative interpretation of revelation.'¹¹ In the final analysis, if metaphorical interpretations are given by Muslims to alleged sayings of Jesus this will not satisfy Christians who take them literally. Therefore Muslims should be aware that Christians are not content to say 'Christ is the son of God in that he is honoured, as a metaphor', but they confess that Christ is 'Entire god from entire god, true god from true god, from the substance of his Father.'¹² 'Abd al-Jabbār rejects the Christian scriptures as largely spurious. In the four gospels there are 'Many impossibilities (*al-muḥāl*), falsehoods (*al-bāṭil*), absurdities (*al-shukḥf*), manifest lies (*al-kidhb al-ẓāhīr*), and clear contradictions (*al-tanāquḍ al-bayyin*) ... There is a little in them of the speech of Christ, his commandments, and his works.'¹³ For this polemicist, the detailed attention given to metaphorical readings of Christian scripture by the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is simply a futile exercise.

Ibn Ḥazm shares this attitude of 'Abd al-Jabbār towards the gospels. In the second of four volumes of his *Book of the Classification of Religious Communities, Sects and Creeds* he issues a severe attack on their reliability, arguing that they were written by people who had few witnesses to Jesus. The gospel that Jesus

9 Ibid., pp. 124–125.

10 Ibid., p. 129.

11 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī, *Critique of Christian Origins, Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, eds, and trans., G.S. Reynolds and S.K. Samir, Provo, 2010, p. 41.

12 Ibid., p. 46.

13 Ibid., pp. 96–97.

brought was lost with only a few fragments to be found in the four extant gospels.¹⁴ The search for genuine fragments of the true gospel produces meagre results. There are numerous discrepancies between the Qurʾān and the gospels, as well as inconsistencies between gospels in the telling of the same stories, such that the real Jesus is hardly seen. This is especially the case with John's gospel which he regards as 'The greatest of the gospels in unbelief (*kufṛ*), the biggest in contradictions (*tanāquḍ*) and the most complete in frivolity (*ru'ūna*).¹⁵ Therefore, when Jesus is reported as saying that the Father has handed over judgment to the Son in John 5:22–23, this cannot be authentic because God does not give such authority to humans but retains it to himself. In 14:20 Jesus says that he is in his Father and the disciples are in him and he in them, but he could not have said this because God would be confined to a human body. Nevertheless, John's gospel does contain authentic fragments, such as the sayings in 6:38, where Jesus says he has come not to do his own will but the will of the one who sent him, and in 10:29, where he says that his Father is greater than he is.¹⁶ At this point, Ibn Ḥazm resorts to the same arguments as al-Qāsim, al-Ṭabarī and 'Abd al-Jabbār. It is notable that none of these four accepts the genuineness of texts in John's gospel that suggest a divine status for Jesus.

However, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī does refer to texts from John's gospel that Christians interpreted as evidence for the divinity of Jesus. John 10:30, 'I and my Father are one' and 14:9, 'Whoever has seen me has seen my Father' are two such texts, but al-Bāqillānī thinks that they can be understood as metaphorical statements by Jesus. So Muslims should say to Christians that Jesus was referring to God as his teacher and sender when he used the metaphor of father, and that people encountered God when they saw Jesus in the sense that they 'Had seen him and heard his wisdom and his commands and his prohibitions'.¹⁷ If these sayings are taken literally then Jesus would be claiming to be one with his Father with the result that birth and death would be attributed to the Father and the Father would have a human body. Thus al-Bāqillānī appears to be the first Muslim to argue for metaphorical intentions in the sayings of Jesus in John's gospel that Christians took to be literal claims to divinity.

14 ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-faṣl fī-l-mīlāl wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥāl*, vol. 2, Cairo, 1900, p. 5. See further, T. Pulcini, *Exegesis of Polemical Discourse: Ibn Hazm on Jewish and Christian Scriptures*, New York, 1998.

15 Ibid., p. 61.

16 Ibid., p. 65.

17 al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, p. 102. See also Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, pp. 198–201.

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* follows al-Bāqillānī's lead in a systematic way by interpreting in a metaphorical sense all the texts that taken literally would support the divinity of Jesus. He even uses the same interpretation of 14:9 as the earlier polemicist in arguing that seeing the Father in Jesus is hearing his commands and prohibitions. The resort to metaphorical interpretation is therefore not unique to *al-Radd al-jamīl*, but no previous Muslim polemicist is as thorough in his treatment of Johannine texts. Perhaps the most important passage for the Christian assertion of the divinity of Jesus is the opening prologue of John's gospel 1:1–18, where the only begotten Son of the Father became human to confer sonship on others. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* understands the significance of these verses for Christians who take 1:1, 'In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God' to mean that the word is the second person of the Trinity who is the Son of the Father. Even if this interpretation is granted, the Christian view that the word is identified with Jesus is not secure despite the fact that 1:14, 'The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory' is understood to make that identification. The author accepts that the text in Coptic can be read to teach that the word fashioned a human body in which to dwell among humans, but this translation must be wrong since it leads to the conclusion that God made a human body for himself in which to dwell among humans. No intelligent person could possibly accept that such an event could take place. The correct reading must be that the word was in human beings in the sense that they received the word of God and became his children as in 1:12, where those who received the word were given the right to be God's children. This understanding is supported by the concept of the light of God coming to humans in verses 4–9. God shone his light on humanity yet many remained in darkness, another way of saying that God spoke by His word of truth to bring humanity out of darkness. So verse 10, 'The word was in the world' means that God spoke to humanity and enabled those in darkness to be His sons.

This metaphorical interpretation contrasts with Ibn Ḥazm's literal reading which accords with the Christian understanding of the passage that the word is both God and human.¹⁸ Ibn Ḥazm understands John to say that God became flesh (*šara laḥm*) and lived among them (*sakana fī-hīm*), but this cannot have happened because 1:18 says that no-one has seen God, and how can they have not seen God if God really became human?¹⁹ The contrast between the literal and figurative interpretations is very vivid. Ibn Ḥazm follows the Christian

18 Ibn Ḥazm, op. cit., pp. 61–62.

19 Ibid., p. 63.

reading of the passage and denounces it. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* denies the validity of Christian literalism by finding metaphor in John's writing that can be made to cohere with Muslim presuppositions of the humanity of Jesus and the transcendence of God. Ibn Ḥazm accepts the Christian reading of 1:14 that the word entered the world in human flesh, not as inspired speech given to Jesus by God, but as the very nature of God in Jesus. His adherence to literalism in hermeneutics accords with the natural meaning of the text, and his rejection of the truth of the teaching follows an accurate reading of the verse. However, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* relies on Islamic thought to interpret the concept 'became' in 1:14. Since God and the created world are absolutely separate, God cannot 'become' human, and therefore the 'becoming' of the word of God has to be read as a metaphor if the text is to be accepted as making a truthful contribution to the understanding of Jesus. Ibn Ḥazm's interpretation is in line with the semantics of the text, but the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* fails to pay proper regard to the obvious meaning of the phrase.

Another text that is singled out in *al-Radd al-jamīl* is 8:58, where Jesus says 'I am before Abraham was'. While 1:14 is a confession of faith by the writer of the gospel, and could possibly be regarded as not truly representative of Jesus' own teaching about himself, this saying of Jesus that he existed prior to Abraham could be taken as more direct evidence for Jesus' own view of his status as much more than a messenger sent by God. Indeed, Christians referred to this text in dialogue with Muslims to support their claim that Jesus himself taught that he was divine. One example is Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'īṭa, a Jacobite theologian active in the early ninth century, who was a contemporary of al-Qāsim and al-Ṭabarī. In his *Letter on the Incarnation* he accepts that John's gospel includes sayings of Jesus that Muslims can use to argue that Jesus did not claim to be God. Two of these are 20:17, where Jesus said to his disciples 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God', and 14:28, 'The Father is greater than I'. However, he lists another group of sayings of Jesus from John's gospel that Muslims must recognise as proof for his divinity.

He whom you describe as saying: 'I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' ... is he who said: 'The one who sees me sees my Father' [John 14:9], 'I am in my Father, and my Father is in me' [John 10:38], and 'I and my Father are one' [John 10:30] ... and that he always was, before Abraham existed [John 8:58], and other sublime statements that point to his divinity (*lāhūt*).²⁰

20 Abū Rā'īṭa, 'al-Risāla fī-l-tajassud', in S.T. Keating, ed., and trans., *Defending the "People*

The final text in the list is 8:58, in which Jesus claims to pre-exist Abraham, and is probably placed last as the strongest evidence for Jesus' claim to be divine. Abū Rā'īṭa was familiar with Muslim use of texts in John's gospel that supported the subordination of Jesus to God. But his quotation of the above group of sayings shows that Muslims tended to ignore any texts that implied his divinity.

The author of *A Fitting Refutation* takes 8:58 to mean that when Jesus said to his Jewish audience 'Your father Abraham wanted to see my day and he saw it and rejoiced', he intended that Abraham saw Jesus in his mind rather than through his physical eyes. So then Jesus was in Abraham's mental vision. In other words, when Jesus said, 'I am before Abraham', he meant that Abraham came to know about the appointment of Jesus as God's messenger and this led him to rejoice. According to this interpretation, Jesus had an existence for Abraham in a visionary sense, and this removes the need to think of Jesus actually existing at the time of Abraham. This figurative reading can be compared with the treatment of this saying by al-Bāqillānī, who knows that Christians think Jesus means to say that he was a descendent of Abraham as a human being but that he existed before Abraham as divine. Muslims should reply that Jesus may have meant that there were many of his religion and law before Abraham who followed previous prophets, or that he may have meant that he was known before Abraham by the angels, or that he would be raised on the day of resurrection before Abraham.²¹ al-Bāqillānī offers both literal and metaphorical interpretations here, but the literal reading relates to the future resurrection rather than the past life of Abraham, so removing the notion of Jesus' existence prior to that of Abraham. For al-Bāqillānī, the saying does not 'Provide evidence for the divinity (*rubūbiyya*) of a human being who eats food and walks around in the streets'.²² Both Muslim writers seek for alternatives to the traditional Christian assumption that Jesus must be referring to his pre-existent state as the divine word not yet incarnate as Jesus Christ. While there are indications that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* may have been familiar with al-Bāqillānī's work, since he follows closely the latter's choice of Biblical miracle stories and the interpretation of John 14:9, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father', he takes an independent line on the interpretation of this text.

of Truth" in the Early Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa, Leiden, 2006, pp. 268–271. For Abū Rā'īṭa's biography see S.H. Griffith, 'Ḥabīb ibn Khidmah Abū Rā'īṭa, a Christian *mutakallim* of the First Abbasid Century', *Oriens Christianus* 64, 1980, pp. 161–201.

21 al-Bāqillānī, p. 103. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines*, pp. 200–201.

22 Ibid.

In summary, of the three main attitudes to Christian scripture among Muslim polemicists, the approach of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is the most inclusive in the sense that passages that seem to support the divinity of Jesus are accepted as authentic testimony to him, while being interpreted to support only his humanity. al-Qāsim and al-Ṭabarī were only willing to accept as genuine those texts that could fit into an Islamic view of Jesus. As a result they attempted to argue that the developed creedal faith of the Christians was a dramatic departure from the original teaching of Jesus. Thus al-Qāsim's appeal to virtually the whole of the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew's gospel as illustrative of the true Jesus could only work because he ignored claims to divine status made by Jesus in the gospel of John. Similarly, al-Ṭabarī culled a considerable number of verses from all four gospels including a significant number from John's gospel yet never quoted any verses that might bear witness to Jesus as divine.

The second attitude to the gospels, exemplified by 'Abd al-Jabbār and Ibn Ḥazm, was to regard virtually the whole enterprise of gospel writing as fiction. Like al-Ṭabarī, 'Abd al-Jabbār gives a list of gospel texts that prove the humanity and disprove the divinity of Jesus. When Jesus said in John 20:17, 'God is my Lord and your Lord, my God and your God', he meant he was 'A servant of God, subject to a Lord'.²³ He repeats al-Ṭabarī's appeal to John 17:3, concluding in identical fashion, 'Look at how he clearly proclaims monotheism and claims to be a prophet!'²⁴ He then quotes John 8:37, 6:38, 14:24, Matthew 20:28, John 12:45, 17:25–26, 5:36, 5:30, Matthew 24:36, 10:16–17, Luke 12:13–14, John 11:41–42, and Matthew 26:39 before concluding that Jesus 'Acknowledged in himself servanthood, weakness, need, poverty, and want'.²⁵ If Christians quote other texts from their gospels such as Matthew 28:19, where Jesus is reported as calling his disciples to baptize followers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or John 8:58, in which he claims to have existed before Abraham, then Muslims should say to them, 'This is not the first time Christ has been lied about'.²⁶ Here is the seed of Ibn Ḥazm's wholesale rejection of sayings of Jesus in which he appears to claim divine status. 'Abd al-Jabbār's brief dismissal of such texts as inauthentic shows how common a literal interpretation of the sayings of Jesus was among Muslim polemicists in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Ibn Ḥazm pointed out the particularly deceptive nature of John's inventions in comparison with the other three gospel writers. This is because John explicitly taught the incarnation of the word of God, something not spoken about

23 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Critique of Christian Origins*, p. 40.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 36.

26 Ibid.

by the other gospel writers. Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the disappearance of Jesus' original teaching immediately after his life meant that it was not likely that he would find any genuine teaching in the four gospels. Surprisingly, he was able to dig out fragments of the real Jesus even from the detestable gospel of John, showing that the influence of the earlier attitude of al-Qāsim and al-Ṭabarī remained. Nevertheless, he did not place much value on these fragments as offering a fuller portrait of Jesus than provided in the Qur'ān. The upshot of Ibn Ḥazm's position is that the Christian faith has no firm origin in the teaching of Jesus.

The third attitude adopted by al-Bāqillānī and the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was to treat the sayings of Jesus in the four gospels as largely genuine, thus making possible a more realistic dialogue with Christians by treating their scriptures with respect. By arguing for a metaphorical intention on the part of Jesus when he implied his divinity and of John when he wrote about the word in human nature, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was able to align such passages in the gospel of John with Islamic presuppositions of the teaching of Jesus and of correct belief about him. For example, if God can indwell believers in a spiritual rather than physical sense as Jesus seems to teach, then the indwelling of God in Jesus himself may be of the same character, and any claim to a unique indwelling of God in Jesus is undermined. So if he asks for his disciples to be one with God as he is one then Jesus is admitting that his union with God can in principle be experienced by others. The turn to metaphor could only work well if the literal sense was obviously not intended. Therefore, in the end the third attitude fails the hermeneutical test of contextual understanding by an arbitrary insistence on the priority of metaphor for all those claims to a transcendent status for Jesus in the gospel of John. Nevertheless, this approach was much more open to Christian regard for the gospel of John than Ibn Ḥazm's denunciation or the reductionism of al-Qāsim, al-Ṭabarī and 'Abd al-Jabbār.²⁷

27 For a complete inventory of Muslim references to texts from the gospels see M. Accad, 'The Gospels in the Muslim Discourse of the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: An Exegetical Inventorial Table', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, 2003, Part 1; pp. 67–91, Part 2; pp. 205–220, Part 3; pp. 337–352, Part 4; pp. 459–479.

The Jacobite Belief That the Union of the Soul and Body is an Analogy for the Union of the Divinity and Humanity of Jesus is Inappropriate

The Jacobites represented one of the three main Christian views of the union of the divinity and humanity in Jesus and are treated first in this refutation, before the Melkites and the Nestorians. They were named after Jacob Baradaeus who became the leader of those in the Near Eastern churches that could not accept the definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which the Emperor Justinian I sought to impose in 536 by condemning 'one nature' Christology as heresy. Under the patronage of the Empress Theodora, Jacob ordained many clergy with miaphysite convictions.²⁸ Jacobites did not accept the way the union of the divinity and humanity was expressed by those who followed the Chalcedonian definition, which entailed 'one hypostasis in two natures; unity on the level of the hypostasis; difference on the level of the physis.'²⁹ Jacobites held to the unity of hypostasis and physis, so that the one physis was equivalent to the hypostasis of the incarnate word.³⁰ In other words, Jacobites rejected the Chalcedonian conception of two natures (*physeis*) in Christ, one divine and the other human, preferring to believe that Christ had one divine nature in a human body. They agreed with the Chalcedonian definition in confessing the hypostasis of the Son, together with the hypostasis of the Father and the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

al-Radd al-jamil defines Jacobites as those who believe that God created the humanity of Jesus and then united with it, in such a way that a third reality occurred by the connection of divinity and humanity, which shares all the attributes of divinity and humanity. They point to the connection between the soul and the body in a human being as an analogy for the connection between the divine and the human in Jesus. The author argues that the analogy is unworkable because any connection between the divine and human would necessitate the divine having human components, and this is impos-

28 See A.S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, London, 1968, p. 182, and H. Murre-Van Den Berg, 'Syriac Christianity', in K. Parry, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 249–268, pp. 252–253.

29 See A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2:2, London, 1995, p. 507. See further, for a defence of 'one nature' Christology against those who held a 'two nature' Christology, S.T. Keating, 'Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'īṭa al-Takrītī's "The Refutation of the Melkites concerning the Union [of the Divinity and Humanity in Christ] (111)"', in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 39–53.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 504.

sible because God cannot have any contingent attributes but only necessary ones. Therefore no created thing can exist in the essence of God. When the Jacobites say that the properties of the divinity and the humanity come together in a new reality which contains all the properties of divinity and humanity, they are speaking in contradictory language. Even to claim that divinity in its completeness is connected to humanity implies that the essence of God needs the humanity for its existence. If Jacobites argue that in a human being there are bodily attributes such as sensation, growth, changeability, passing away and possessing a location, as well as attributes of the soul such as speech, perception and understanding, and that these different attributes are united in the one human being, they should be told that the analogy does not apply to God who does not have bodily attributes.

Muslim engagement with Jacobite Christology is found as early as al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm, who understands that Jacobites believe that the Son took a body from Mary and became incarnate in it as one united being, as humans are a uniting of body and spirit.³¹ However, he does not single Jacobites out from Melkites and Nestorians in his critique of the incarnation. The earliest sustained Muslim criticism of Jacobite concepts is by Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq (d. 861) in his *Refutation of the Incarnation*. He subjects the union of divinity and humanity in one nature to a thorough logical analysis. If Jacobites believe that Christ was eternal in divinity and temporal in humanity then he cannot be one nature but has to be two. If Christ is divine and human in one nature then Jacobites must concede that 'One who has always been was one who was not. This is confusion of expression'.³² If they claim that Christ is a third entity as a result of the union of the divine and human then the third entity is 'Different from this human born of Mary, who was brought up, ate, drank, commanded and prohibited, and different from the eternal word'.³³

A defence of Jacobite Christology in the early ninth century came from Abū Rā'īṭa in his *Letter on the Incarnation*. In order to commend the incarnation of the word he uses several analogies to show that the word can be incarnated without changing its state. Fire does not change when it is embodied in wood or candles, light does not change after it is embodied in the sun, and the soul does not change when it is embodied in a human.³⁴ However, a Muslim might

31 al-Qāsim, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

32 Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, 'al-Radd 'alā al-ittihād', in D. Thomas, ed. and trans., *Early Muslim Polemic against Christianity, Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Incarnation'*, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 242–243.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 260–261.

34 Abū Rā'īṭa, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–231.

protest that God is then limited to a human body, which is impossible. The answer should be that as the light in the sun, the fire in the coal, and the soul in the body are embodied without change or limitation, so it is with the word of God who is incarnate without being changed in essence, or being limited by the human body.³⁵ Thus by the ninth century Muslims were interrogating Jacobites about their distinctive view of the union of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and Jacobite Christians were attempting to provide adequate answers. Perhaps the most eminent Jacobite in the period before *al-Radd al-jamīl* was Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (893–974), a native of Takrit, who distinguished himself in Baghdad as a translator, philosopher and theologian. He produced a passage-by-passage response to Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq’s treatise on the incarnation, defending not only Jacobites like himself but also Melkites and Nestorians criticised by al-Warrāq. His specific answers to the latter’s two fundamental objections quoted above are firstly, that Jacobites do not speak about Christ being eternal in divinity and temporal in humanity, but they refer to Christ as ‘One substance (*jawhar*) from two substances (*jawharayn*), one of them is divinity and the other is humanity’. For Jacobites, Christ’s one substance is composed from two substances just as one horse is composed of soul (*naḥs*) and body.³⁶ In other words, the two separate substances of divinity and humanity have been taken up into a united substance so that there is no question of Christ being one or other but always both together in a united entity, and this is not confusion of expression. The answer to the second objection of al-Warrāq is that the third entity composed of the two substances of divinity and humanity is affected by events in different ways, such that it is possible to speak of them as occurring to either the divinity or the humanity in the third entity. ‘It is evident that whoever touches one of the members of a body without touching the other members still touches the body’. With respect to Christ, whatever affects him can be described as touching a particular part of him, or ‘One of the two substances apart from the other as much as the substance constituted from these two substances’.³⁷ Yaḥyā’s explanation shows how Jacobites could believe that the third entity ate and drank and suffered and died, yet was the incarnate word who lives eternally without splitting into two separate substances as a result of these different realities.

35 Ibid., pp. 234–235.

36 Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq-Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, *De l’Incarnation*, ed., and trans., E. Platti, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vol. 491, Louvain, 1987, p. 164. See further, E. Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, Théologien Chrétien et Philosophe Arabe: sa Théologie de l’Incarnation*, (*Orientalia Louvensia Analecta 14*), Leuven, 1983.

37 Ibid., p. 195.

al-Warrāq hardly refers to the analogy of the soul and body in his critique of Jacobite Christology, but a Muslim contemporary of Yaḥya, Abū-l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī attacks the concept strongly in a dialogue with Yaḥya recorded in his *Polemic against the Nestorians*.³⁸ al-Miṣrī argues that the use of the analogy of the union of the soul and the body is inadequate to establish the union of divinity and humanity in Christ. He alleges that Jacobites rely on Aristotle for their conception of human nature as soul and body, but that there is no proof for this.³⁹ Yaḥya denies that he is dependent on Aristotle for his understanding of human nature, but concedes that men of science agree with the Jacobite view. 'I have not used the example that I have given concerning humanity, his being constituted of soul and body because Aristotle said so, but because it is true.'⁴⁰ al-Miṣrī's argument is reflected in *al-Radd al-jamīl*, where the author believes that Christians have a tendency to rely on the authority of philosophers in their conception of the union of the divine and human in Jesus. They think that the connection between the soul and the body put forward by them is proof for the union of divinity and humanity. However, the philosophical construction depends on complicated and enigmatic thinking which is not self-evident. Then also, like al-Warrāq and al-Miṣrī, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* thinks that the notion of a union of divinity and humanity in a third entity is simply impossible because human characteristics would inevitably be attributed to the divinity, and contingent attributes would be predicated of the eternal God. Thus, the refutation of the Jacobites in *al-Radd al-jamīl* shows familiarity with the kinds of arguments articulated by previous Muslim polemicists such as al-Warrāq and al-Miṣrī.

The Melkite Separation of the Divine and Human Natures in Jesus at the Point of His Death is Irrational

The second Christian community considered in *al-Radd al-jamīl* was named 'Melkites', from the Syriac *'malkanyia'*, or 'followers of the Emperor', because they adhered to the Chalcedonian definition imposed as orthodoxy by the Emperor Justinian I in 536.⁴¹ The earliest known reference by a Christian

38 See E. Platti, ed., and trans., *La Grande Polémique Antinestorienne de Yaḥyā b. 'Adī*, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vols 427–428, 437–438, Louvain, 1981–1982.

39 Abū-l-Ḥusayn al-Miṣrī, in *La Grande Polémique Antinestorienne de Yaḥyā b. 'Adī*, vol. 427, pp. 97–99.

40 Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, in *La Grande Polémique Antinestorienne de Yaḥyā b. 'Adī*, vol. 427, p. 101.

41 See A Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2:4, London, 1996, p. 63.

writing in Arabic to '*al-Malakiyya*' is by Abū Rā'īṭa in his *Refutation of the Melkites*, in which he defends his own Jacobite beliefs.⁴² As for the earliest Muslim writers to refer to them, al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm calls them '*al-Rum*',⁴³ while al-Warrāq describes them using Abū Rā'īṭa's term '*al-Malakiyya*'.⁴⁴

The distinctive Christology of the Melkites is conveniently presented in Arabic by Theodore Abū Qurra (d. circa 830), sometime Bishop of Harran and noted debater with Jews and Muslims, in his *Confession of the Orthodox Faith*.⁴⁵ He outlines the definition of Chalcedon, stressing that the eternal Son became a perfect man (*insānan kāmilan*) like one of us, except without sin, and also perfect God (*illāhan tamman*) as he is eternally. He has two natures (*ṭabī'atayn*) and one hypostasis; the divine nature which the Father and the Spirit have, and the human nature which each of us has.⁴⁶ He defends this 'two nature' Christology against the 'one nature' Jacobite view by arguing that they are wrong to hold that Christ only had one divine nature but not a human one. By doing so they introduce change, suffering and death into the divine nature.⁴⁷

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* represents Melkites as believing that the humanity and divinity in Christ are two distinct realities that are not mixed or blended, but that Christ is a hypostasis of the divinity alone, taken from the two realities and united with the universal humanity. He criticises them for saying that the divine is taken from the human since that would imply that the temporal is a condition of the eternal, and also for speaking of a universal humanity which has no actual existence but remains only a mental concept. The author notes that some more recent Melkites have moved away from the concept of the universal humanity in favour of a union of the divine with a particular human being. However, both types of Melkites have similar difficulties with the crucifixion, in that since Christ is a hypostasis of the divine reality only, it must mean that the crucifixion of Christ affected that divine reality. The author reports that Melkites admit that the union of the divinity and humanity is not capable of full explanation, but they do explain that Christ, who is a hypostasis of the divine reality, was crucified yet the suffering of the

42 See Abū Rā'īṭa, '*al-Radd 'alā al-Malakiyya*', in G. Graf, ed., *Die Schriften des Abū Rā'īṭah*, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vols 130–131, Louvain, 1951, vol. 130, pp. 105–130.

43 al-Qāsim, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

44 al-Warrāq, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–87.

45 See Abū Qurra, '*Imāna al-Urthūduksiyya*', ed., I. Dick, in '*Deux Écrits Inédits de Théodore Abuqurra*', *Le Museon* 72, 1959, pp. 53–67.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

crucified Christ did not affect that divine reality but only touched the human reality. But this is irrational and not supported by the testimony of their gospels.

The substance of these arguments goes back to earlier Muslim critique. al-Warrāq, for example, considers that the concept of the universal humanity is unworkable. After all, the individual Christ was born and grew up and died, so then the universal humanity would have been born and grown up and died. 'If this verdict about him is real and not metaphorical, then the universal increased and decreased, ate and drank, grew fat and thin, went and came, was sick and healthy, died and lived, and accidents and events affected it'.⁴⁸ In the end, Melkites are forced by the logic of what actually happened to acknowledge that Christ was an individual human being, and that 'There is no more than the birth and sonship of the individual'.⁴⁹ al-Bāqillānī develops the criticism that the eternal would be compromised by union with the temporal. If the word indwells the created body then they are claiming that the eternal is affected by the temporal. He poses the question, 'Since in the eternal there is no touching or mixing or blending, how can you deny that the activity of the bodies, touching, mixing and moving is eternal?'⁵⁰ The basic problem with the union of divine and human natures is precisely that the attributes of the one nature affect those of the other and there is no escape from this confusion. The third criticism in *al-Radd al-jamīl* concerning the effect of the crucifixion on the divine hypostasis is also given by al-Warrāq, who has an unerring capacity to unmask the internal contradictions of Melkite beliefs about the suffering of Christ.

If eyes cannot behold the eternal hypostasis nor hands touch him, and the general substance which is the universal human is not an individual being subsisting of itself whom eyes might behold and hands touch, and the Messiah, according to you, is these two things or is the eternal hypostasis possessing the two substances, as you frequently say, then eyes cannot behold the Messiah nor hands grasp him. So how could he be crucified, killed or buried?⁵¹

al-Warrāq attempts to drive a wedge between the union of divine and human natures in the eternal hypostasis by forcing Melkites to admit that the united natures would have been crucified and put to death with all the dreadful consequences for the divine nature so trapped in union with the humanity.

48 al-Warrāq, op. cit., pp. 132–133.

49 Ibid., pp. 136–137.

50 al-Bāqillānī, op. cit., p. 89. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 176–177.

51 al-Warrāq, pp. 162–163.

‘Allowing such things to happen to him would, according to your principles, bring him within the attributes of temporal and created beings—may our God and Lord be exalted far above attributes of weakness and limitation!’⁵²

Such Muslim concern to protect God from suffering and death was dealt with by Melkite apologists by claiming that the hypostasis of the word was a union of divine and human natures, with the result that only the human nature suffered and died. Abū Qurra’s criticism of the Jacobites was that their belief in Christ as one divine nature entailed the suffering and death of God. This criticism is repeated by Buṭrus, Melkite Bishop of al-Bayt Ra’s in the late ninth century, who alleges that Jacobites make the suffering and death of Christ affect the nature of God.⁵³ His own explanation of the crucifixion is that Christ experienced suffering and death in his humanity (*fī-nāsūti-hi*) but that he was not ‘Crucified or put to death in his divinity’ (*fī-lāhūti-hi*).⁵⁴ In other words, the Melkite understanding of two natures in one hypostasis allows a distinction to be made between actions of the humanity and divinity that seem much more difficult for Jacobites, who hold that the one divine hypostasis acts, thus leaving no escape from the conclusion that God suffers and dies. Melkites then thought that they were in a stronger position to defend God from the Muslim accusation that he is subject to change and limitation and death than Jacobites were. For their part, Jacobites like Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī could explain that the divine hypostasis is constituted of divinity and humanity such that the actions of Christ were capable of being divine or human just as the Melkites argued.

Christ is one hypostasis (*jawhar*) constituted from two hypostases (*jawharayn*), one of them is the divinity which cannot be affected or influenced by any kind of suffering, nor can killing, death, burial, or anything like these reach him; and the other one is the humanity that all of this reaches. It is clear that each of these hypostases is part of the one hypostasis that is Christ.⁵⁵

52 Ibid.

53 See *Eutychius of Alexandria. The Book of the Demonstration*, part 1, ed., P. Cachia, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vol. 192, Louvain, 1960, p. 74. Although often attributed to Eutychius Sa’īd ibn al-Biṭrīq, Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (877–940), the oldest manuscripts attribute the work to Buṭrus, Melkite Bishop of al-Bayt Ra’s who was probably active in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. See M. Swanson, ‘Folly to the *Ḥunafa’*’, PhD, PISA, Rome, 1992, p. 67.

54 Ibid., p. 101.

55 Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, *De l’Incarnation*, p. 33.

Jacobites, like Melkites, conceived of Christ's actions being either divine or human and so both communities sought to distance the divine from suffering and death in the face of Muslim polemic. It is curious that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* singles out the Melkites for special criticism over the involvement of the divine nature in the crucifixion. al-Warrāq alleges that Jacobites as well as Melkites share the same erroneous teaching that the divinity is so united with the humanity that there is no separation at the moment of Christ's death, and therefore the divinity must have suffered death.⁵⁶ However, both Muslim polemicists agree that the supposed crucifixion of Christ inevitably results in Christian contortion of language about how God is thought to be involved in the event. Christian talk about the cross cannot but be contradictory.

The Nestorian Conviction That the Will of Jesus was United with the Will of God is Not Supported by the Christian Gospels

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* criticises Nestorian Christians for believing that the will of God and the will of Jesus were united, for it is plain in the gospels that this was not always the case. If Christians claim that the crucifixion was willed by God, then the story about Jesus pleading for the cross to be taken away and his speaking of being rejected by his Father on the cross prove that Jesus' will was not in line with God's will. There are many instances in the gospels that show the same result, such as Jesus' intention to gather the children of Israel to follow him, but his lack of success in this demonstrates a disconnection with God's will. Another example is his confession that he did not know the future time that God had willed.

The Nestorian Church was named after Nestorius, the Bishop of Constantinople, who was anathematized at the Council of Ephesus in 431 for refusing to confess that Mary was God-bearer (*theotokos*), and exiled in 436. Nestorians did not accept the definition of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which stated that Christ was one hypostasis in two natures. Nestorians preferred to speak about two hypostases rather than two natures.⁵⁷ Emperor Zeno expelled Nestorians from the Roman Empire between 474 and 491 and they settled mainly in Mesopotamia and Persia.⁵⁸

56 al-Warrāq, pp. 120–124.

57 See A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2:4, London, 1996, p. 504.

58 See A.S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 252. Sebastian Brock thinks that that the Church of the East should have been named not after Nestorius but Theodore of

As a result, when Caliph al-Manṣūr established the capital of the Islamic empire in his new city of Baghdad in 762, the main Christian community in the area was Nestorian. Thus it is not surprising that when his successor al-Mahdī wanted to have an audience with a Christian leader he should summon the Nestorian Patriarch, Timothy I. The latter mentions in a letter to a priest called Sargis in 782–783 that he had been invited by the Caliph to discuss Christian teaching.⁵⁹ A report of the dialogue was subsequently produced in Syriac and in Arabic.⁶⁰ Timothy answers questions posed by al-Mahdī on a wide range of Christian beliefs and practices including the incarnation, which the Caliph understands to imply a biological connection between God and Jesus through Mary. Timothy's denial is met by the assertion that Christians surely believe that Jesus is God's son. The Patriarch's response is to make a distinction between Christ's eternal sonship and his temporal one. 'We believe that the Messiah was born of the Father as his word and that he was born of the Virgin Mary as a man; and that his birth from the Father is eternal before time, and that his birth from Mary took place in time without a human father'.⁶¹ al-Mahdī sees two separate Christs in this confession of faith, one temporal and the other eternal, but Timothy argues that although there are two separate points of origin for the divine and human natures of Christ, there is unity after the incarnation. 'There are not two Messiahs or two Sons but one Messiah and one Son who has two natures (*tabī'atayn*), divine and human, because he is the word of God who took a human body and became a man (*ṣāra insānan*)'.⁶² The Caliph cannot accept that two different types of nature could unite without losing their distinctiveness, but the Patriarch appeals to the unity of the mind

Mopsuestia (d. 428) whose Christology is foundational for the church. See S.P. Brock, 'The Nestorian Church: A Lamentable Misnomer', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 78, 1996, pp. 23–35. W. Baum and D. Winkler also regard the connection to Nestorius as misleading in *The Church of the East: A Concise History*, New York, 2003, pp. 30–31. Nevertheless, the name Nestorian was used by other Christian communities of the Church of the East, and Muslim writers followed suit.

59 See Epistle 59 in *Les Lettres du Patriarche Nestorien Timothée I*, ed., R.J. Bidawid, Rome, 1956, pp. 42–43. Since Timothy became Patriarch in 780, the meeting probably took place in 781.

60 The Syriac text is edited and translated into English by A. Mingana as 'The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph al-Mahdī', *Woodbrooke Studies II*, 1928, pp. 1–162. The Arabic text is edited by L. Cheikho in *Al-Mashriq* 19, 1921, pp. 359–374, and pp. 408–418. This Arabic text is reproduced with a French translation by H. Putman in *L'Église sous Timothée I*, Beirut, 1975.

61 See H. Putman, *L'Église sous Timothée I*, appendix, p. 9.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

and body in a human being as an analogy for the unity of two natures without loss of distinctions. While the appeal to the mind-body union is characteristic of Jacobite miaphysite Christology, Timothy shows that Nestorian diophysite thought could make use of the same example.

The assessment of the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* that Nestorians believe that the union of divinity and humanity occurs in the will is less true of Timothy than of a Nestorian of the next generation, ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, who produced the most complete extant Nestorian defence of the incarnation in the face of Muslim challenge in the period before *al-Radd al-jamīl*. Little is known about ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī apart from the fact that he was a contemporary of the Muslim scholar Abū-l-Hudhayl al-‘Allāf (d. circa 850) who wrote a ‘Book against ‘Ammār the Christian in refutation of the Christians’ according to the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm.⁶³ Therefore, it can be said that ‘Ammār was active as a Nestorian theologian in the first half of the ninth century and was able to attract the attention of a leading Muslim writer. His defence of the incarnation comes in two works, a *Book of the Proof* and a *Book of Questions and Answers*, with the latter containing the most detailed account.⁶⁴

Among 51 questions about the incarnation answered by ‘Ammār in his *Book of Questions and Answers*, comes question 26, namely, Was it possible for Christ to lose his purity after becoming human? The answer is yes it was possible, but he did not lose his purity. He was not prevented from sinning by God’s decree because he had to obey God’s will like any other human being. He was not protected from temptation to rebel or go astray. ‘He was sinless through his desire (*hawān*) and his will (*mashā’a*).⁶⁵ This stress on the continuous testing of the obedience of Christ set Nestorians apart from Jacobites and Melkites, who together held that the purity of Christ was established at the point of union between divinity and humanity, and that the divine mind in Christ would never countenance the possibility of sinning. For example, Abū Qurra, ‘Ammār’s Melkite contemporary, writes of ‘The divinity abiding in the incarnate word, not subject to any limitation, suffering or death which belong to the human nature.’⁶⁶ Thus it was Nestorian Christology that made room for a dynamic

63 ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed., M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971, p. 204, trans., B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, New York, 1970, vol. 1, p. 388.

64 ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, ‘Kitāb al-burhān’, ed., M. Hayek, in *‘Ammār al-Baṣrī: Apologie et Controverses*, Beirut, 1977, pp. 19–90, ‘Kitāb al-masā’il wa-l-ajwiba’, in Hayek, pp. 91–266. See further, S.H. Griffith, ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s *Kitāb al-burhān*: Christian *kalām* in the First Abbasid Century’, *Le Museon* 96, 1983, pp. 145–181.

65 ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, ‘Kitāb al-masā’il wa-l-ajwiba’, pp. 220–221.

66 Abū Qurra, ‘Imāna al-Urthūduksiyya’, p. 59.

relationship between the Son and the Father that depended on the moment by moment unity of will between Father and Son, rather than a relationship whose shape was fully determined from the moment of the uniting of the eternal Son with the humanity. Question 30 probes this exact issue by asking, Was the outcome of the union not already decided before it took place? ‘Ammār’s answer involves the analogy of a son who inherits from his father needing to prove his faithfulness to his father throughout his life. In the same way, the human nature of Christ has to prove by action that it is worthy of union with the divine.⁶⁷ The gospels provide an example of this reality in the life of Jesus. In Matthew 11:27, Jesus claims that his Father has given him all things, whereas only in 28:19, after his resurrection, does he claim to have all authority in heaven and in earth. Jesus possessed authority during his life but he could only exercise that authority after fully obeying the will of his Father, which included death and resurrection.⁶⁸ In other words, there was potential for perfect union between the divine and human from the moment of conception, but the actuality of that union depended on harmony of Christ’s will with his Father’s will even under the severest testing.

Muslim criticism of the unity of will between the divinity and humanity is seen very fully in al-Warrāq’s *Refutation of the Uniting*. He challenges the notion that the will of Christ uniquely corresponds to the will of God. Surely other angelic and human beings can will in concord with the will of God. If Nestorians reply that only Christ’s will was perfectly conformed to the will of God, then they should be asked if the perfect will of God was manifest at the moment of uniting. ‘Could his entire will have become manifest, so that he had no will left to appear at the time when he was in the difficulty of death or weakness, when there was no more strength?’⁶⁹ If they say that he merited honour by bringing his will into conformity with the will of God step by step, then they admit that his will was not perfectly united at the moment of union. And if his will continued to be in agreement with the will of God during the progress of his life then, ‘It is recognised that no human prophet or saint had a will that did not concur with the will of his Lord, so they must be reckoned the same.’⁷⁰ Then they should be asked whether the human nature (*nāsūt*) of Christ could will what was contrary to the will of the divine nature (*lāhūt*).⁷¹ If they deny the possibility, they deny their conviction that humans obey God through free

67 Ibid., pp. 225–227.

68 Ibid., pp. 227–228.

69 al-Warrāq, *The Refutation of the Uniting*, pp. 208–209.

70 Ibid., pp. 210–211.

71 Ibid.

choice rather than compulsion and they cancel any merit that Christ gained by obedience. But if they accept the possibility they deny the union of the wills at the moment of uniting since 'The human nature was able to undo the uniting of the divine nature and destroy it'.⁷² In the final analysis, they have to admit that 'Every other individual under command and prohibition has then power to ensure that he and the eternal are one will. So if this is the sign of the uniting then everyone under command and prohibition is able to be united with the eternal'.⁷³

This process of argumentation is reflected in *al-Radd al-jamīl*, where the difference between Christ and other prophets and saints is blurred, showing that there is a developed tradition in Muslim response to Nestorian Christology. Reaction to such criticism on the part of Nestorians is reflected in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's reply to al-Warrāq. Despite being a Jacobite miaphysite, Ibn 'Adī argues in defence of Nestorians in dealing with al-Warrāq's points listed above. He represents Nestorians replying to al-Warrāq that the union of the will of the human nature with the will of the divine nature comes into effect 'When all of the manifestations of the will of the human nature are one after another in agreement with the will of the divine nature'.⁷⁴ If al-Warrāq insists that the belief that the human nature of Christ was capable of defying the will of the divine nature implies that the human nature could destroy the union with the divine nature, it should be said to him that he has to accept the following argument. 'If someone is capable of cutting off the hand of a man then he is capable of cutting off what God, may he be glorified and exalted, has united'.⁷⁵ Ibn 'Adī puts the Muslim in a corner by showing that it is not necessary to accept that human decisions and actions do actually defy the will of God, so Nestorians should not be castigated for arguing that the possible defiance of the divine will did not in fact take place. Finally, it does not follow from the Nestorian presentation of the two wills in Christ that the will of any human being can be perfectly united with the divine will, since Nestorians do not claim that Christ is similar to other humans who have only one will and not a union of two wills.⁷⁶

The section on the union according to the Nestorians is much briefer than those concerned with the Jacobites and Melkites. This may reflect the author's conviction that the Nestorian approach is actually closer to his own view than

72 Ibid., pp. 212–213.

73 Ibid.

74 Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, *De l'Incarnation*, p. 120.

75 Ibid., pp. 122–123.

76 Ibid., p. 131.

the other two, since the Nestorian understanding of the need for the humanity to be tested for compliance with the divine will in Christ makes room for a human Jesus who responds to God on a moment by moment basis. The Jacobite and Melkite conceptions of the eternal word indwelling the humanity made little space for true development in the life of Christ, since after the union of divinity and humanity the obedience of Christ was thought to be safeguarded. Such thinking provoked a more robust response in *al-Radd al-jamīl*, issuing in the attempt to argue that Jesus himself in the gospels saw himself as a servant of God who continually sought to perform the will of God just like any other prophet or saint. There was no need then to labour the point with respect to the Nestorians.

Christian Scriptures Show That Titles Given to Jesus That Christians Believe Point to His Divine Status Should be Taken as Symbols of His Spiritual Eminence as a Messenger of God

The titles ‘Lord’, ‘God’ and ‘Son of the Father’ given to Jesus in Christian scripture that are taken to refer to his divinity by Christians are treated as marks of his spiritual state as a messenger of God by the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*. ‘Lord’ can refer to God or to a human owner of property. ‘God’ is applied to that which people worship whether they worship the true ‘God’ or not. The author finds a good example of these distinctions in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 8:4–6, where he states that ‘There is no God but God alone, and although there are things in heaven and on earth that are called gods, and many gods and lords are found, yet to us there is one God, God the Father from whom everything comes, and we are in him, and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ who holds everything in his hands, and we are also in his grasp’. The passage is interpreted as establishing the oneness of God and the denial of divinity to any other. Therefore, the lordship of Jesus means ‘the hand of ownership’ without him having any of the ‘attributes of God’.

As for Jesus being the Son of his Father, the author repeats what he has pointed out already that Jesus himself calls his disciples sons of the Father, adding here another saying of Jesus from Luke 6:35–36, ‘Do not cut off the hope of anyone, for your reward will be great and you will be the sons of the Most High, because He is merciful to those who are not generous, who are evil, and be merciful like your Father’. The author understands Jesus to be teaching that God is the best father, ‘Eager to bring about in his son all kinds of benefits and to keep all kinds of evils from him’, and also that such a son should be respectful towards his father, submitting to what he has commanded and prohibited, knowing that

his father is 'Giving him success in doing what is required'. Christians show that they think in these terms when they give the title 'father' to their monks and priests. He is not actually their father but they give him the status of a compassionate father and see themselves as sons who respect him. As a result, the title 'Son of the Father' given to Jesus does not indicate a status unique to him among other humans.

Similar discussions of the supposed divine titles of Jesus can be found in earlier Muslim refutations. al-Qāsim goes to great lengths to demonstrate that Jesus did not think of himself as divine according to the testimony of the gospels. Jesus' references to sonship and fatherhood should not be interpreted as making distinctions between himself and his disciples. He suggests that titles such as 'son' and 'father' have three possible references. The names could be 'Natural (*ṭabīʿiyya*), essential (*dhātīyya*) and substantial (*jawhariyya*), or individual (*shakhṣīyya*), and hypostatic (*uqnūmiyya*), or contingent (*ḥāditha*) and non-essential (*ʿaradīyya*).⁷⁷ In normal usage 'father' and 'son' refer to the third category as contingent. Because they come into being and cease to exist, they do not refer to the first category as essential, and since they are generic terms they do not refer to individuals such as Abraham or Moses.⁷⁸ However, Christians apply the first category to 'son' by calling Jesus both the 'Son of God' and 'God'. For al-Qāsim this contradictory way of interpreting language confirms how misguided the Christians are when 'In their teaching they make this son his father and then they do the opposite when they make the father his son'.⁷⁹ Among the examples he cites is the debate Jesus has with his audience in John 8:31–58, where Jesus calls them sons of Satan because they do not accept his teaching, and to whom Jesus says, 'If you obeyed God then you would be sons of God'. al-Qāsim points out that Jesus 'Made God father of the one who obeys him and pleases him', and insists that Christians 'Must interpret everything in their gospels concerning fatherhood and sonship according to the way the gospels present them'.⁸⁰

ʿAlī al-Ṭabarī contrasts the titles given to Christ in the Nicene Creed with those given him in the gospels. The creed says that he is true God from true God, but he himself says that he is a believer in God.⁸¹ The creed calls him the Creator who is uncreated, but the gospels report that he was killed, and

77 al-Qāsim, *Refutation*, p. 318.

78 Ibid., p. 319.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., p. 324.

81 al-Ṭabarī, *Refutation*, pp. 122–123.

crucified.⁸² So if they state that he is the eternal Creator according to the creed then they contradict the gospels and do not believe what they say. 'The one who is born in time and is contained in a place is a man, a son of man, and a servant, son of his mother, and this contradicts the creed'.⁸³ Sonship and fatherhood are also misunderstood by Christians who do not pay sufficient attention to their use in the gospels. For example, in Matthew 3:16–17, when the voice came from heaven after Jesus' baptism saying, 'This is my beloved son who I have chosen', the meaning of sonship is equivalent to being chosen by God. Indeed 'Jesus did not prefer himself over anyone else, nor did he reject what may have been objectionable about servanthood because it was for God, and he was a submitted servant'.⁸⁴ al-Ṭabarī attempts to lead Christians back from their creed to the scriptures they revere in order to demonstrate the disjunction between the articles of faith and the sources on which they are built.

The appeal of these two ninth century refutations to Christian scripture to undermine titles given to Jesus that express his divine status is later repeated by al-Bāqillānī, who ends his treatment of the various Christian sects with a critique of the divine titles they give to Jesus. If they say that Christ is 'God' because scripture calls him 'God', then they should be reminded that in their scriptures God says to Moses, 'I have made you God to Aaron and God to Pharaoh', meaning that Moses is their leader (*mudabbir*), their authority (*amr*), and they must obey him.⁸⁵ If they say that Jesus is 'God' because he was not born of a man, then Adam has to be 'God' since he came into existence without male or female parents, and Eve must be 'Lord' because she was created from Adam's rib without male or female parents.⁸⁶ If they say that the lordship of Christ is proved because he said in the gospel, 'I and my Father are one, and whoever has seen me has seen my Father', it is to be suggested to them that he means that whoever obeys him obeys his Father, the one who sent him and taught him wisdom, and whoever disobeys him disobeys his Father. This metaphorical interpretation must be correct because if he and his Father are literally one then the birth, and death, the eating and drinking, must apply to the Father.⁸⁷ The same metaphorical use of language applies to Jesus' saying, 'I am before Abraham', which can be understood in several ways, such as, many of his religion and law were devoted to God before Abraham, or he was known

82 Ibid., p. 123.

83 Ibid., p. 126.

84 Ibid., p. 141.

85 al-Bāqillānī, *Book of Introduction*, p. 101. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines*, pp. 196–199.

86 Ibid.

87 *Book of Introduction*, p. 102. *Christian Doctrines*, pp. 200–201.

before Abraham among the angels, or he was to be raised in the resurrection before Abraham. 'These do not permit the establishment of the lordship (*al-rubūbiyya*) in a human body eating food and walking in the streets'.⁸⁸

Christian responses to such Muslim reductionist readings of Christian scripture were focused on establishing the appropriate background context for texts about Christ. As described earlier, Abū Rā'īṭa fielded the Muslim question, how could Christians say that Christ is God and Lord when he said to his disciples that his Father was his God and was greater than he was, that he did not know the future hour, that he could not give places to disciples in his kingdom and when he felt forsaken by God on the cross? Clearly by the early ninth century, Christians were used to Muslims selecting sayings of Jesus from the gospels to affirm his subordination to God. Abū Rā'īṭa's answer was to quote alternative sayings of Jesus that implied a claim to divine status. Jesus said that he thought the same as his Father who was in him, that he and his Father were of one nature, that he was Lord of the Sabbath and of his disciples, and that he existed before Abraham.⁸⁹ The Muslim tradition of culling the gospels for evidence for the sheer humanity of Jesus was therefore already well established over three centuries before the appearance of *al-Radd al-jamil*.

Abū Rā'īṭa's concern to situate sayings of Jesus in their true place was shared by his contemporary Abū Qurra, who wrote a treatise defending the incarnation entitled, *A Reply to the One who Refuses to Attribute the Incarnation to God*.⁹⁰ The true situation for understanding Jesus is the fact that Christ is the eternal Son of God become human. But this Christian conviction provokes opposition from Muslims who cannot accept that God could possibly become embodied in his creation. Abū Qurra opens his treatise with a question from a representative Muslim, 'Tell us how this Son who is divine and equal with God wanted to be enclosed in a body and experience suffering'.⁹¹ The answer is that God was not enclosed or limited or restricted, but he wanted to reveal his love for those he had made. He backs up this answer from four Old Testament texts that speak of God being seated on his throne and in control of the whole world at one and the same time and compares them to the belief that God is embodied in Christ.⁹² 'The eternal Son is in every place ... He is not at all limited or restricted ... apart from being in the body in which he experienced pain and

88 *Book of Introduction*, pp. 102–103, *Christian Doctrines*, pp. 200–201.

89 Abū Rā'īṭa, in Keating, pp. 266–271.

90 Abū Qurra, 'Maymar fi-l-radd 'alā man yankaru li-llāh al-tajassud' in C. Bacha, ed., *Les Oeuvres Arabes de Théodore Aboucarra Évêque d'Harran*, Beyrouth, 1904, pp. 180–186.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

92 The texts are 2 Chronicles 18:18, Isaiah 6:1–3, Daniel 7:9–10, Psalm 102:19.

suffering'.⁹³ His references to God's throne were probably inspired by discussion among Muslims in the late eighth and early ninth centuries of the texts in the Qur'an that referred to God sitting on a throne.⁹⁴ Abū Qurra is asking Muslims to agree that both the Qur'an and the Bible teach that God limits himself to one particular place, a throne, while at the same time being everywhere. If Muslims accept this joint testimony to the unlimited God limiting himself to a throne, then they might be persuaded that the eternal Son retained his divinity after taking a human body.⁹⁵ However, the Muslim conviction that God cannot indwell his creation remained a blockage to such Christian argumentation.

Another attempt to support divine titles for Jesus comes from another contemporary of Abū Qurra, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, who argues that 'sonship' and 'fatherhood' can be applied to Jesus and God without being regarded by Muslims as mistaken. In his *Book of the Proof* he opens his defence of the incarnation by quoting two texts from the Qur'an that Muslims understand deny the 'fatherhood' of God and the 'sonship' of Christ. These are *sūras* 72:3, 'Our Lord is highly exalted, He did not take a female companion nor did He take a son', and 112:3, 'God does not beget nor was He begotten'. 'Ammār reports that Muslims interpret 72:3 to mean that Christians are wrong to hold that God 'Took up residence (*ḥalla*) in Mary's womb thus restricting his essence (*dhāt*) within her'.⁹⁶ They think that 'sonship', according to 112:3, implies procreation with a woman, but Christians do not speak of 'sonship' as a physical or temporal category but rather as a spiritual and eternal characteristic. 'The Son for us does not have a body with members and flesh and blood ... he is the word of God who is not limited or controlled ... He is eternal outside of time and with no beginning'.⁹⁷ Therefore the titles 'Father' and 'Son' refer to an eternal relationship in which 'The Son is not a product of the Father but is from his substance (*jawhar*), so 'fatherhood' does not precede 'sonship'.⁹⁸ In other words, there is no problem with 'sonship' if it is understood in an eternal context. Muslims do not interpret names given to God such as 'knowing' and 'wise' according to human knowledge and wisdom, so they should be able to accept that Christians likewise do not understand 'father' and 'son' according to human fatherhood

93 Ibid., p. 182.

94 There are eighteen references to God's throne in the Qur'an. See *sūras* 7:52, 9:130, 10:3, 13:2, 17:44, 20:4, 21:22, 23:88 and 117, 25:60, 27:26, 32:3, 39:75, 40:15, 43:82, 57:4, 81:20, and 85:15.

95 See M. Beaumont, *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims*, Carlisle, 2005, pp. 33–36.

96 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, 'Book of the Proof', ed., M. Hayek, in *'Ammār al-Baṣrī: Apologie et Controverses*, pp. 19–90, p. 56.

97 Ibid., p. 57.

98 Ibid., p. 58.

and sonship. 'The names adhere to God in their true sense, and are given to us from him on a temporary basis, so that they belong to him eternally'.⁹⁹ 'Ammār's appeal to Muslim understanding of the attributes of God is an attempt to shift the debate about 'fatherhood' and 'sonship' onto ground familiar to Muslims, in the hope that they would be able to see these concepts in a different light. The difficulty with this approach lay in the fact that the Qur'ān rules out the very attributes that Christians applied to God, namely begetting and fatherhood.¹⁰⁰

Arguments about appropriate titles for Jesus between Muslims and Christians reflect different views of his status according to the Qur'ān and the New Testament. While Muslim criticism of Christians was based on Qur'ānic presuppositions, some Muslim polemic in the period up to and including *al-Radd al-jamīl* sought to interpret the New Testament in the light of the Qur'ān. The reverse process is also found in some Christian apologists who attempted to interpret Qur'ānic texts from a Christian point of view. A critique of this Christian use of the Qur'ān is offered in the final section of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, perhaps reflecting the conviction of the author that this was the final issue to be dealt with in countering the claims of the Christians.

Christian Appeal to the Qur'ān to Support the Divinity of Jesus is Mistaken

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* refers to Christians who read *sūra* 4:171, 'Surely the Messiah is Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God, and his word cast into Mary and a spirit from him' to support their belief in the divinity of Jesus. He claims that they interpret 'word' to mean one of the hypostases in the essence of God, and mentions that he feels obliged to remove any possible doubt from someone who looks at this text. Examples of such a Christian reading are found in the earliest extant apologetic writing and this counter argument provides evidence for the longevity of the interpretation among Christians over several centuries. The earliest Christian writer to refer to the Muslim belief that Christ is endowed with 'word' and 'spirit' from God is John of Damascus (d. circa 750) in the second volume of 'The Fount of Knowledge' (*Pēgē gnōseōs*) entitled 'On Heresies' (*De Haeresibus*). The hundredth heresy to be described is 'the

99 Ibid., p. 59.

100 See M. Beaumont, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī on the Incarnation' in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 55–62.

Heresy of the Ishmaelites', here John mentions that Muslims accuse Christians of associating Christ with God in a false way 'By saying that Christ is the Son of God and God'.¹⁰¹ He counsels fellow Christians to respond to this by quoting the Muslim belief that 'Christ is word and spirit of God' and to argue that 'If the word is in God it is obvious that he is God as well'. Supposing Muslims reject this argument, John advises Christians to say, 'If, on the other hand, this is outside of God, then God, according to you is without word and without spirit ... thus trying to avoid making associates to God, you have mutilated him'.¹⁰² This appeal to the Qur'ānic titles for Christ of 'word' and 'spirit' from God shows how some near eastern Christians were beginning to interpret the Qur'ān in order to defend Christianity from Muslim polemic. Of course a Muslim could have replied to this type of reasoning by reading 'A word cast into Mary' as the message God entrusted to him as his messenger, and 'A spirit from him' as the empowerment granted by God to all his prophets. However, John's connection of 'word' and 'spirit' with the word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ was to become a feature of early Christian apologetic writing.¹⁰³

Another eighth century example comes from *The Anonymous Apology*, which answers Muslim concerns about the incarnation being unacceptable for God by referring to the teaching of the Qur'ān that Christ is identified with God's word and spirit. The author flatly denies that Christians connect God with human procreation as Muslims allege. 'We do not say that God brought forth (*walada*) his word as humans give birth to offspring'.¹⁰⁴ On the contrary, Christians believe that the Father brings forth his word as the sun produces rays, or the human mind utters words, or fire generates heat. Each of these examples demonstrates that there can be no separation between the two realities mentioned. Just as there cannot be rays without the sun or words without the mind or heat without fire so there cannot be the word of God without God. The author argues that Islam supports the identity of God with his word and spirit. 'The Qur'ān says, Believe in God and his word, and also his spirit sent down from your Lord as mercy and guidance'.¹⁰⁵ The author has amalgamated two different *sūras*, 4:171 and 16:102, to give backing to his claim for authentic

101 John of Damascus, 'The Heresy of the Ishmaelites' in D.J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, Leiden, 1972, p. 137. Sahas presents the Greek text with English translation.

102 Ibid.

103 For John's place in Christian apologetics for Muslims see S.H. Griffith, 'Melkites, Jacobites and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-century Syria', in D. Thomas, ed., *Syrian Christians Under Islam*, Leiden, 2001, pp. 9–55.

104 *A Treatise on the Triune Nature of God*, ed., Gibson, p. 77.

105 Ibid.

Qur'ānic support for the essential unity of the word with God. He concludes, 'You find in the Qur'ān that God and his word and spirit are one God and One Lord'.¹⁰⁶

Then to safeguard the incarnation of the word of God from suspicion of mingling with impure human nature, the author argues that the word took on human nature, which was untouched by sin or defilement. 'Christ was born of the pure Mary by the Holy Spirit without her being touched by man, God from God, light from light, word and spirit, a perfect human with mind and body, yet without sin'.¹⁰⁷ Here are phrases from the Nicene Creed, 'God from God, light from light', and from the Chalcedonian definition, 'a perfect human with mind and body, yet without sin' woven into the presentation so that Muslims can at least understand that the incarnation does not imply God uniting improperly with human nature.¹⁰⁸

The use of *sūra* 4:171 in Christian apologetic writing is seen particularly clearly in the work *Abū Qurra in the Maḡlis of al-Ma'mūn*, which presents Abū Qurra in dialogue with a representative unnamed Muslim.¹⁰⁹ According to an anonymous Syriac chronicle, the Caliph al-Ma'mūn came to Harran where Abū Qurra was bishop and they had a debate about the Christian faith which was recorded in a book.¹¹⁰ The Arabic version of a debate between Abū Qurra and a Muslim is probably not written by Abū Qurra, but does represent early Christian-Muslim dialogue. *Sūra* 4:171 is referred to by Abū Qurra seven times in the debate showing the central importance of this text in Christian apologetics, as Griffith points out, 'Because on the face of it the verse affirms that in some true sense Christ is both word and spirit from God'.¹¹¹ One of these references comes in the answer of the Muslim, 'the Hashemite' to a question posed by Abū Qurra, 'Tell me about the Messiah, is he created of something or not?' The reply is, 'He is the word of God and his Spirit'. Abū Qurra asks whether the word of God is Creator or created. The Muslim is reported as being troubled and silent until he could only utter one word, 'Creator'.¹¹² While this Muslim response is completely improbable, the construction of the dialogue shows how Christians

106 Ibid., pp. 77–78.

107 Ibid., p. 83.

108 See Beaumont, *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims*, pp. 17–21.

109 See S.H. Griffith, 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christian Texts; The Development of an Apologetical Argument: Abū Qurrah in the Maḡlis of al-Ma'mūn', *Parole de l'Orient*, 1999, pp. 203–233.

110 *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens*, ed., I.-B. Chabot, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vol. 15, Paris, 1916 p. 23.

111 Griffith, 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christian Texts', p. 229.

112 *Abū Qurrah in the Maḡlis of al-Ma'mūn*, Paris Arabic 70, f153, in Griffith, p. 229.

were attempting to exploit the Qur'ānic connection of God's word and spirit with Christ in order to defend his divinity on grounds that might be acceptable to Muslims.

The decision of the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to refute this appeal in the final section of his work is understandable. For this text of the Qur'ān, more than any other, was exploited by Christian apologists in the period before the appearance of *al-Radd al-jamīl*. He argues that Christ's creation by the word of God is similar to the creation of Adam since they both lack creation by normal means as *sūra* 3:58 indicates, 'The example of Jesus with God is like the example of Adam whom he created from dust'. Therefore, the Qur'ān testifies to the word of God creating more than one human being without the normal means of human sperm, and this must be the meaning of 'A word from him cast into Mary' in *sūra* 4:171. This interpretation is supported by *sūra* 16:40, 'We only have to command something when we want it; we say to it, be! And it exists'. In other words, each aspect of creation is the product of God's word, so there can be no special activity of the word in Jesus that distinguishes him from the rest of creation.

Conclusion

The impact of the approach to the interpretation of the gospels in *al-Radd al-Jamīl* can be seen in subsequent Muslim writing. The move to understand sayings of Jesus that Christians held to support his divinity in a metaphorical way, rather than simply ignore or deny their connection to Jesus, was followed by Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 1316). In his commentary on the gospels, written as a response to a Christian refutation of Islam entitled *The Sharp Sword in Refuting the Qur'ān*, al-Ṭūfī argues that the gospels are similar to the biography of Muḥammad, as stories told about Jesus by others.¹¹³ In dealing with the stories that suggest a divine status for Jesus, the reader should be encouraged to understand them metaphorically. When Jesus called God 'Father', this does not mean that Jesus thought of God as his literal father but rather that 'Since Christ did not have a father, God undertook his care and upbringing as a father would do to his child; hence, the metaphorical relationship'.¹¹⁴

113 L. Demiri, 'Hanbalite commentary on the Bible: Analysis of Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) al-ta'liq', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 295–313, pp. 305–306.

114 Ibid., pp. 310–311. See also L. Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo: Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary on the Christian Scriptures*, Leiden, 2013.

A similar view can be found in the lengthy refutation of Christianity by another more famous Ḥanbalī scholar, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who accepted that the gospels witness to Jesus, but that Christians have corrupted the meaning of his words by interpreting literally what Jesus intended metaphorically.¹¹⁵ This approach is also seen in the treatise on the Bible written in Cairo by Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar ibn Ḥasan al-Ribāṭ al-Biqā‘ī (d. 1469), in defence of his appeal to the Bible in his Qur’ān commentary. He too argues for a metaphorical sense for ‘fatherhood’ and ‘sonship’ in the gospel accounts.¹¹⁶

As Sidney Griffith points out in *The Bible in Arabic*, this way of reading the gospels has had limited appeal among Muslims until modern times when they have returned to interacting with the Bible by using the results of Western Biblical scholarship to uphold a Qur’ānic view of Jesus.¹¹⁷ In recent times, Muslim polemicists have opted for the methodology of *al-Radd al-jamīl* by reading the gospel accounts metaphorically rather than literally and challenging Christians to follow their lead in re-assessing Christ as a submitted servant of God.¹¹⁸

115 T.F. Michel, trans., *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Delmar, 1984, p. 213.

116 See W.A. Saleh, ed., *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqā‘ī's Bible Treatise*, Leiden, 2008.

117 S.H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, Princeton, 2013, p. 202.

118 See for example, M. ‘Ata al-Rahim, *Jesus—A Prophet of Islam*, London, 1977, and A. Hamid, *Islam and Christianity*, New York, 1967.

The Manuscripts of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

Of the three manuscripts that are extant, two of them mention Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī as the author and are located in the Aya Sophia Library in Istanbul, classified as numbers 2246 and 2247. The third copy is found in the University of Leiden under the classification OR828.

In 1932, L. Massignon discovered the manuscripts in the Aya Sophia Library and published an article with the title 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī' in *Revue des Études Islamiques*¹ giving a good summary of this treatise and accepting its attribution to al-Ghazālī. Later, in 1939, R. Chidiac² edited and translated the Aya Sophia texts into French. In the same year, we hear from C.E. Padwick³ that K. Henrey prepared an English translation in Beirut, but it seems that this translation was never published. In 1945, J.W. Sweetman gave a detailed summary of *al-Radd al-jamīl* with a translation of many passages in his work *Islam and Christian Theology*.⁴ A.J. Arberry also translated some parts of the text of the *Radd* in his book *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, in 1964.⁵ Franz-Elmar Wilms produced a German translation of the Arabic text, as edited by Chidiac, in 1966,⁶ and the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Sharqāwī edited the Arabic version of the same Chidiac edition in 1986.⁷ The English translation presented here is the first complete English translation based on a new critical Arabic edition of the three manuscripts.

To assist further research into the three manuscripts we have followed Chidiac's designation of the three manuscripts. Thus, Aya Sophia 2247 is represented by S (س), Aya Sophia 2246 by B (ب) and the Leiden Manuscript by J (ج).

2247 S (س) is clearly the oldest of all three. It is written in very clear *Naskhī* script, and can be easily identified as Middle Arabic, which tends to write

1 L. Massignon, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī', pp. 523–536.

2 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Isā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl*, ed., and trans., R. Chidiac, Paris, 1939.

3 C.E. Padwick, 'al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of Gospels', p. 132.

4 J.W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, part 2, vol. 1, London, 1945.

5 A.J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, London, 1964, pp. 300–307.

6 F.-E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*, Leiden, 1966.

7 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Isā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl*, ed., M. al-Sharqāwī, Cairo, 1986.

hamza as *ya*, for example, *ṭāyfa* instead of *ṭāʿifa*, sometimes omits the long *i* (*ya*), for example, *talamdha* instead of *talāmīdh*, as well as *alifmamdūda*, for example, *thaltha* instead of *thalātha*. The manuscript is bound with another manuscript entitled *Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl* (or *al-Ghalīl*) *fīmā waqaʿa fī-l-Tawrāti wa-l-Injīl*, attributed to Abū al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī Imam al-Ḥaramayn. The two manuscripts have the same style of writing, suggesting that they were copied by the same person, or at least in the same period. At the end of *Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl* there is a colophon with a clear identification of the name of the copier, Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Shafʿī, and it is dated 20 *dhū al-qaʿda* 672AH, Cairo. If the two manuscripts were written in the same period, then 2247 S can be traced to the same year or at least the same period, about 167 years after the death of al-Ghazālī in 505AH. This would make 2247 S older than Chidiac had estimated, as he believed it to have been written in the fifteenth century. It seems, however, that he did not examine *Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl* in relation to the *Radd*.

Aya Sophia 2246 B (ب) is a much later manuscript, since, as Chidiac rightly noted, it is written in fine Turkish *Naskhī* script from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. It consists of 54 folios and is grouped among a collection of manuscripts of al-Ghazālī's works. Although it is again bound with Abū al-Maʿālī's *Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl*, there is no colophon, either at the end of *al-Radd al-jamīl* or at the end of the last book in the collection. Nevertheless, the work is attributed to al-Ghazālī.

A comparison of manuscripts S and B shows clearly that B usually follows S, even to the extent of copying two mistakes in two verses from the Qurʾān. Both manuscripts, however, appear to have undergone more than one edition, because mistakes in S are copied in B, and corrections in S are also corrected in B. We agree with Chidiac that sometimes B does not copy from S but from a different manuscript unknown to us. It follows that there must have been more copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, from the same family as S and B, which were in circulation until the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.⁸

Let us now turn to the third manuscript J (ج), which comes in 22 large folios and is written in a thin and compact script. It has been edited and corrected in many places. This manuscript is dated 1065AH (1685CE). It is clearly an independent manuscript and not a copy of either B or S. While J follows B and S

8 According to Chidiac, although S and B are largely similar, B sometimes omits some of S, and sometimes has a variant text. The two manuscripts seem to have different sources, especially on pp. 22–23, 24, 51 and 52. In other instances B tends to complete S, meaning that S cannot be the only source for B. The most important of these lacunae is on page 19, where the two manuscripts offer very different texts, and we had to combine the two versions to obtain an intelligible text. See Chidiac, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 98–99.

for the most part, it has alterations and omissions amounting from several lines to two pages, which are indicated in the footnotes to the Arabic edition. When J deviates from B and S there is an impression that it is correcting them or giving a more suitable meaning.⁹ The fact that it contains so many mistakes would indicate that it must have been copied from either a defective manuscript or from a manuscript with a totally different character.

In conclusion, the differences between the three manuscripts point to the existence of other manuscripts in circulation up until recent times. It seems that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was copied several times in different periods. In addition, it is highly probable that there was an early copy of *al-Radd al-jamīl* which circulated in a Muslim milieu before being used in a Christian context, and that Ibn al-Ṭayyib referred to this early copy.

In editing this manuscript, we followed the rules of modern standard written Arabic. Therefore, *hamza*, *alif mamdūda* and long *i* (*ya'*) are added where omitted in the manuscripts. Here are some examples:

طائفة = طائفة

قابل = قائل

ثلاثة = ثلاثة

تلمذة = تلاميذ

9 See page 2, for example, where J gives the word *fikr* instead of *kufṛ*, as given in B and S.

al-Radd al-jamīl—A Fitting
Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus
from the Evidence of the Gospel



الرد الجميل لاهية عيسى بصريح الانجيل
تأليف الشيخ الامام حجة الاسلام
ابن حامد الغزالي محمد بن محمد بن محمد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه ثقني¹

اما بعد حمدا لله والصلاة على محمد خير خلقه وآله.

فاني رأيت مباحث النصارى المتعلقة بعقائدهم ضعيفة المباني واهية القوى وعرة المسالك² يقضى المتأمل من عقولٍ جنحت اليها غاية عجزه، ولا يقف من تعقيدها على اليسير من اربه. لا يعولون فيها الا على التقليد المحض، عاضين بالنواجذ على ظواهر أطلقها الأتولون ولم ينهض بايضاح مشكلها لقصورهم الآخرون، ظانين بان ذلك³ هو الشرع الذي شرعه لهم عيسى عليه السلام معتردين عن اعتقادها بما ورد من نصوص يعتقدون انها قاهرة للفكر⁴ غير قابلة للتأويل وان صرفها عن ظواهرها عسير⁵.

وهم في ذلك طائفتان: طائفة- وهم الأكثر- لم يمارسوا شيئاً من العلوم التي يقف بها الناظر على استحالة المستحيل فيجزم باستحالة وجوده، وايجاب الواجب فينفي عدم وقوعه، وامكان الممكن فلا يعتقد محالاً لازماً لطرفي وجوده وعدمه. بل ارتسمت في اذهانهم صوراً منذ صغرهم واستمرت بهم الغباوة الى ان صار ذلك فيهم ملكة⁶. فهذه الطائفة برؤها من دائها عسير.

¹ وبه ثقني سقطت في ب وج ² في ج: المسلك ³ ج: ان ذلك ⁴ ب و س: للكفر ⁵ ب و س:
عسيرة ⁶ ج: صار لهم ذلك ملكة

A Fitting Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus from the Evidence of the Gospel

Written by Sheikh Imām, Proof of Islam,
Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad, bin Muḥammad, bin Muḥammad

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, and in him is my trust.

To begin with, praise be to God and blessing on Muḥammad, the best of his creatures, and his family.

Introduction

I have found the opinions of the Christians related to their doctrines to be weak in construction, lacking in power, and shameful in method. The one who researches them is filled with amazement at intelligent people so inclined to them, and he is unable to achieve his aims with ease as a result of the complexity of them. They only rely on following bare tradition in them, clinging stubbornly to the literal meaning which the earlier Christians gave to them, while Christians of the present day, due to their indolence, do not endeavour to explain their obscure aspects, thinking that this is the divine law which Jesus, on him be peace, gave them. They offer as an excuse for holding to their opinions what is mentioned in texts they take as controlling their thinking, which are not susceptible to metaphorical interpretation.¹ Therefore dissuading them from a literal interpretation is difficult.

In this they are two groups; one group, the larger, is made up of those who do not practise any intellectual disciplines which might enable an observer to see the impossibility of the impossible so that he asserts the impossibility of its existence, the necessity of the necessary so that he denies its non-existence, and the possibility of the possible so that he does not believe that there is no possible necessity for either its existence or non-existence. But pictures have been engraved on their minds since their childhood and their ignorance has persisted until it has become their natural disposition. So healing this group from their malady is difficult.

¹ Metaphorical interpretation is a method widely used among Muslim theologians in the twelfth century in their interpretation of the Qurʾān. This method was first used by the Muʿtazilite rationalist theologians of Baghdad in their arguments against the anthropomorphic understanding of the characteristics of God according to some Qurʾānic passages which were interpreted literally by a group called al-Mushabbihā.

وطائفة لهم ادنى معقول، وقد ألموا بيسير من العلوم فتجدهم ناكصين عن هذا المعتقد لا يسامحون أفكارهم بمقاربتة يعولون تارةً على تقليد الفيلسوف في مسألة الاتحاد لاعظامهم ما يؤدي اليه من هدم قواعد تظافر¹ على ثبوتها صرائح العقول فارين من هذه المعضلة الى التقليد المحض. معتقدين ان الفيلسوف قد حاول العلوم الخفية فابانها جلية مبرهنة ظانين بان من هذا شأنه جدير بان يعول على اقواله ويقلد في المعتقدات، فلذلك ينفصلون عن مسألة الاتحاد بردها الى مسألة تعاقب النفس بالجسد. ولوراجع هؤلاء المساكين عقولهم وتركوا الهوى والتعصب لعلوا انهم قد نكبوا عن محجة الصواب واخطأوا سبيل الحق لوجه:

احداها أنهم ان جعلوا ذلك من قبيل القياس فغلط؛ لأن القياس ردّ فرع الى اصل بعلة جامعة هي مناط الحكم. وأي علة عقلها هذا القائل مقتضية لحقيقة التعلق الذي يقول به² الفيلسوف، ثم بعد ذلك يعيدها الى ذات البارئ ليصح له القياس؟ وان جعل ذلك من قبيل التشبيه والتمثيل فغلط

¹تظافرت في شيدياك ²ج: يقوله

The other group has a little intelligence and is a little acquainted with intellectual discipline so you will find them turning away from this belief and not tolerating that their thoughts come close to it. Sometimes they rely on the authority of the Philosopher² in the question about the union. They elevate the consequences of destroying theories which were approved by evidently rational minds so that they flee from this difficulty to following mere traditions. They believe that the Philosopher had already explained esoteric sciences by demonstrating them with clear proofs, and they think that a philosopher such as this is worthy to be relied on in his teaching and so they blindly follow his opinion about doctrine. For this reason they distance themselves from the question of the union and attach it to the question of the connection between the soul and the body.³ If these poor people would turn to their intelligence and give up their passion and fanaticism, they would understand that they had departed from the right way and had missed the true path for a number of reasons, as follows:

[False use of analogical reasoning to connect divinity and humanity in Jesus]

One reason is that if they did that by way of analogical⁴ reasoning then they were mistaken because the analogy leads a secondary premise back to its primary through a common cause on which the judgement depends. But this cause, according to this teaching, conforms to the reality of the connection of which the Philosopher speaks, then afterwards he applies it to the essence of the Creator in order to justify this analogical reasoning. If they did that by way of comparison and example, then they were also mistaken, because what

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- 2 It is possible that the author refers here to Aristotle because most probably the Coptic Christians of Egypt adopted the concept of the Aristotelian soul in its relationship to the body.
 - 3 The earliest known Christian use of the analogy of the union of the soul and body to explain the union of the divine and human in Christ to Muslims can be found in the late eighth-century dialogue between the Caliph al-Mahdī and the East Syrian Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I, see H. Putman, *L'Église sous Timothée I (780–823)*, Beirut, 1975, appendix, 10, and in the early ninth century 'al-Risāla fi-l-tajassud', (Letter on the Incarnation) by the Jacobite Theologian Abū Rā'īta, see G. Graf, *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Ḥabīb Ibn Hidma Abū Rā'īta*, (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*), vol. 130, Louvain, 1951, pp. 47–48. See also the Arabic text with English translation in S.T. Keating, *Defending the 'People of Truth' in the Early Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'ītah*, Leiden, 2006.
 - 4 Aristotelian logic was adopted first by Muslim judges in the Umayyad period, and later by Muslim theologians who devoted a section of their study to Aristotelian logic.

ايضاً، لان المشبه به لا بدّ أن يكون معلوماً متصوِّراً حتى يكون العلم به مقتضياً للعلم بالمشابهة. والقائل منهم بهذه المقالة لو بذل جهده على ان يأتي بأدنى شبهة تفقهه على حقيقة النفس وحقيقة التعلّق القائل بهما الفيلسوف لأقرّ بالعجز عن ادراك ذلك، فكيف يصح له القياس والحقائق غير معلومة له؟

ثم ان مثل هذا القياس لا يسامح الفروعى نفسه في استعماله بل هو من الاقيسة المهجورة المسمّى بقياس التعقيد وهو أن يُحاول اثبات حكم خفي فيثبته بما هو أخفى منه او بما يحتاج في اثباته الى اعمال الفكر واستخراجه بالأدلة الغامضة كالنفس القائل بها الفيلسوف التي لا يتخيّل وجودها الا بتعقيدات وغموض في المأخذ. واذا كان هذا مهجوراً في الفروع المبنية على أيسر ظنّ فكيف يُعول عليه في الاصول المتعلقة بذاتٍ واجب الوجود؟ وكيف يتمّ ادعاء ذلك ومناط الحكم لو عثر عليه¹ لاقتضى ان لا يكون للإله تعلقٌ بذاتٍ أحدٍ من البشر على حدّ تعلق النفس بالبدن، لانهم يقولون ان كل نفسٍ تعلّقت ببدنٍ فشرط تعلقها به ان يكون بينها وبينه مناسبة وملائمة لأجلها كان التعلق. والإله جلّ اسمه منزّه عن مثل ذلك.

ثم لو سلّم لهم ذلك وانّ التعلُّق الذي حاولوه متصوِّراً على وفق الأراء الفلسفية، لم يحصل لهم به غناء ولم ينهض ذلك بمقصودهم في اثباتهم الالهية لعيسى عليه السلام. لأنّ الفيلسوف يقول ان للنفس بالبدن تعلقاً تديرياً² وأن اللذة والألم يحصلان لهما بواسطة تعلقها به، اذا انفعلت القوة الحساسة

¹ج: لو غير عليه ²ج: النفس بالبدن تعلقها تديرياً

something is compared with must be knowable and imaginable to enable the knowledge of it to be conformed to the knowledge of its comparison. If the proponent of this doctrine makes a great effort to provide a vague likeness that pertains to the reality of the soul and the reality of the connection of which the Philosopher has spoken, he would confirm his inability to achieve that, therefore, how can he make use of analogy when these realities are unknown to him?

Moreover, a legal expert does not allow himself to use such an analogy, but it is one of the rarely used analogies called 'a complicated analogy'; that is trying to establish the clarification of an obscure judgement by using even what is more obscure, or by what requires intellectual effort and deduction from enigmatic proofs for its establishment, like the soul that the Philosopher taught the existence of, which could not be imagined except by complicated and enigmatic thinking. If this is rarely used in secondary premises which are based on easier suppositions then how can it be relied upon concerning the primary principles connected to the essence of the Necessary Existence? How can that claim be made when the basis of the judgement,⁵ supposing it can be detected, requires that no connection can be made between God and the essence of any human being, in a similar way to the connection between a soul and a body? For they say if each soul is connected to a body then the condition of its connection to it is the existence of suitability and harmony between the soul and the body through which the connection occurs. And God, may his name be exalted, is far above such things!

Then even if it is proven for them, and if the connection which they have suggested is conceivable in accord with philosophical ideas, they can make no use of it and it does not advance their aim of establishing the divinity of Jesus, on him be peace. The Philosopher teaches that there is a directive connection between the soul and the body, and that pleasure and pain happen to them by means of the connection between them when the sensory power is affected by harmony or its opposite,⁶ and it is impossible that this connecting relationship

5 The basis of the judgement here is *manāt al-ḥukm* in the Arabic version, which refers to the middle term or the middle premise which usually is decisive in a logical argument to deduce a result.

6 Here the author refers to Ibn Sīnā's teaching on the soul in its relationship to the body that uses the body as its instrument without being itself influenced by the bodily senses but rather receives from the senses messages which it turns to pure immaterial images through its own imaginative faculty. Ibn Sīnā, following Aristotle, was careful to show that the rational soul is not influenced by the bodily senses, and therefore, the author here shows the inconsistency of the Christian theologians, borrowing only partly the Aristotelian concept of the soul.

بالملائم والمنافى، ومحال ان يراد هذا التعلق بجملته مع ما ذكر لأن حصول اللذات لذات البارئ محال. بقي¹ ان تؤخذ هذه النسبة التدييرية مجردة عن حصول اللذات، وهذا أيضاً غير مجدٍ لأن الخالق مدبر لكل فردٍ من أفراد العالم، وله الى كل مخلوق نسبة تدييرية.

فان قيل المراد نسبة ظهر اثرها في خرق العوائد؛ كاحياء الميت وغير ذلك فيدلّ اذ ذاك على المقصود. فالجواب أن مثل هذه النسبة التي يتمكن المتّصف بها من الأتيان بخرق العوائد، ثابتةٌ لغير عيسى عليه السلام. فانهم معترفون بأن موسى عليه السلام قلب العصا ثعباناً وهل احياء الميت الا عبارة عن اتصاف الجماد بالحيوانية؟ بل هذا أدلُّ على المعجز لأن جعل ما لم يتّصف بحياة قط حياً أدلُّ على القدرة من اعادة الشئ الى حالته الأولى. ثم انشقاق البحر وجعل كل فرق كالطود العظيم، من غرائب المعجزات. وقد شهدت التوراة التي يصدّقونها بأن موسى عليه السلام أخرج يده برصاء² كالثلج ثم أعادها الى لون جسده. وفي اسفار الملوك والقضاة، وهو من جملة كتبهم العتيقة التي تقرّأ في كتابهم، أنّ ايلياً واليشع تلميذه أقاما الميت، واحياء ايليا لابن الأرملة عندهم غير منكور. ووقوف الشمس ايضاً ليوشع الى أن أخذ المدينة أريحا من بدائع المعجزات. ثم لنا من الأنبياء، أنبياء لم ترسل

¹ج: نقي ²ج: بيضاء

applies to all that is above described, because the occurrence of pleasure in the essence of the Creator is impossible. It still remains that this directive relationship could happen without the occurrence of pleasure, but this also is useless because the Creator is the director of all the individuals in the world, and he has a directive relationship with each creature.

[Futile attempts to prove Jesus' divinity from his performance of miracles]

If it is said that what is intended is a relationship which appears in the violation of normal events like raising the dead and similar happenings, and that these show exactly what is intended by this relationship, the reply is that such a relationship which enables the one who possesses it to perform a violation of normal events is found in others apart from Jesus, on him be peace.⁷ For they confess that Moses, on him be peace, changed the staff into a snake. Is raising the dead not equivalent to an inanimate object becoming animate? Surely this is more evidently a miracle because he made alive what had no life at all, so more evidently powerful than restoring the thing to its original state. Then dividing the sea and making each part stand like a great mountain is among the most striking miracles. The Torah, which they believe in, testifies that Moses, on him be peace, withdrew his hand leprous like the snow, and restored it to the colour of his body.⁸ It is stated in the books of the kings and judges, which are among the collection of their ancient books read in their churches, that Elijah and his disciple Elisha raised the dead; Elijah's giving life to the son of the widow is not denied by them. The stopping of the sun by Joshua during the capture of the town of Jericho is one of the most astonishing miracles. Moreover, there were prophets among the prophets who were not sent with a message, so what

7 An early Christian appeal to Jesus' miraculous deeds as evidence for his divinity in apologetic writing for Muslims can be found in the eighth century *Anonymous Apology for Christianity*, see Gibson, *A Treatise on the Triune Nature of God*, pp. 84–85.

8 For an early ninth century Christian comparison of the miracles of Moses and Jesus designed to demonstrate that although Moses was able to perform miracles by God's power but not by his own ability, Jesus was able to perform miracles in his own name and to 'empower others to do similar work in his name', see Abū Qurra, 'Maymar fi taḥqīq nāmūs Mūsā al-muqaddas wal-anbiyā' aladhina tanadā'u 'alā al-Masīḥ' (Treatise on the Holy Law of Moses and the Prophets who Predicted the Messiah).

فما المانع ان تكون هذه النسبة ثابتة لكل واحدٍ منهم، لكنّها لم تظهر لعدم الرسالة المُوحجة الى البراهين الصادرة عنها؟

دقيقة يجب التنبيه عليها لفظ الكتاب العزيز: "واضمم يدك الى جناحك تخرج بيضاء من غير سوء" ولفظ التوراة "وهنا ياذو مصورا عث كالثولغ" وتفسير هذا اللفظ العبراني¹ بالعربية: "وهذه يدك برصاء كالثلج" صرحت التوراة بالبرص وصرح² الكتاب العزيز بان بياضها من غير سوء.

وفي القلب حسيكة³ من ذلك في بادئ الرأي، لكن الجمع على الممارس الفهم غير عسير، وبيانه أن البرص عبارة عن عرض ينشأ عن⁴ سوء مزاج يحصل بسببه تلزج بلغم تضعف القوة المغيرة عن حالته الى لون الجسد. ومعلوم ان بياض يد موسى عليه السلام ما نشأ عن سوء مزاج لأن كل أحد اذا ساء مزاجه على نهج ما وصفناه حصل له ذلك واذا قويت القوة المغيرة أحواله فحينئذ تذهب خصوصية الاعجاز. بل بياضها انما كان من قبيل المعجز الخارق. وشأن المعجز الخارق ان يكون مخالفاً للمعهود المؤلف والى هذا المعنى اشارة الكتاب العزيز بقوله "من غير سوء" أي ان الله أقدّر موسى على ان يجعل يده برصاء⁵ من غير سوء وان يردها الى لون جسده من غير قوة مغيرة ليحصل له⁶ بذلك خصوصية باجراء المعجز الخارق المخالف للمعهود على يده وانما يكون معجزاً مخالفاً للمعهود اذا أتى بالمسبب⁷ منفكاً عن سببه العادي الذي لا ينشأ الا عنه، والا لم يكن معجزاً⁸، ثم عبّر عنه بالبياض الذي هو من لوازمه، هذا جمع واضح.

¹ج: بالعبرانية ²ج: وصرح ³في ب: حسيله ⁴عرض ينشأ عن—سقط في ج ⁵ج: بيضاء ⁶في س: لهم ⁷ج: بالسبب ⁸الا لم يكن معجزاً—سقط في ب و س

prevents this relationship being established in every one of them, except that it was not manifested due to the lack of any need for a message which provides the evidence originating from it?⁹

There is a delicate issue on which it is necessary to remark concerning a formulation in the Noble Book, 'Put your hand into your side, you will withdraw it white without harm',¹⁰ along with a formulation from the Torah, '*we hinneh yādhū mesūrā'th kālshūlagh*',¹¹ and the meaning of this Hebrew phrase in Arabic is, 'and this is your hand leprosy like the snow;' the Torah states 'leprosy' and the Noble Book clearly states that it is 'white without harm'.

Though the heart may be pricked by this on first sight, it is not difficult for the practised intellectual to hold them together. It is proved that leprosy means a symptom arising from an unhealthy condition occurring because of a weakening mucous which weakens the strength and it is this which is altered from that state to the colour of the body. It is known that the whiteness of the hand of Moses, on him be peace, did not arise from an unhealthy condition, because whoever has an unhealthy condition, such as we have described, is actually harmed, and when his strength increases the condition changes, therefore, in this case the particularity of miracle disappears. However, the whiteness was from an unprecedented miracle, and the nature of an unprecedented miracle is to be different from well-known custom, and the Noble Book indicates this meaning when it says, 'without harm'. In other words, God enabled Moses to make his hand leprosy without harm, and to return it to the colour of his body without any modifying power, so that through a special capacity he was able to perform unprecedented miracles different from well-known custom. For it is a miracle different from well-known custom when it has a cause different from a habitual cause that arises only from it; otherwise it would not be a miracle. Then, this is expressed by the whiteness which was one of its attributes. This is a clear argument.

9 For the tradition of Muslim argument with Christians that the miracles of Jesus are not a proof of his divinity but are continuous with miracles performed by other prophets see D. Thomas, 'The Miracles of Jesus in Early Islamic Polemic' *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39, 1994, pp. 221–243.

10 Qur'ān 27:12.

11 Exodus 4:6.

ومما يوهي معتقداتهم في هذه المسئلة قاعدة¹ الفيلسوف في النفس وتعلقها اذ كانوا جازمين بثبوتها ومستند جزمهم حسن الظنّ بالقائلين بها، وهم غير قادرين على الاتيان ببراهينها ظناً منهم ان القائلين بها قد اخترعوا من العلوم الخفية ما يرجع الفكر ناكصاً عن ادراكها لخباء مأخذها وصعوبة مبانيها وأن من هذا شأنه تكون اقواله مبرأة من الخطأ. فيجب على هذا القائل ان يقلد الفيلسوف في: ان النبوات مكتسبة، وان العالم قديم لا يقبل الكون والفساد، وان البارئ لا يعلم الجزئيات، وان الواحد لا يصدر عنه الا واحد، وان اله الخالق وجود مجرد لم يقم بذاته علم ولا حياة ولا قدرة، الى غير ذلك مما نقضوا به قواعد المتشرعين وصرّحوا فيه² باكذاب الانبياء المرسلين.

ومن العجب تقليدهم قوماً، يمنعون تصوّر ما يثبت به خصوصية صاحب شرعهم لنصّهم على استحالة انعقاد³ الولد من محض مني امه من غير مشاركة مني رجل اما عاقد على رأي كبيرهم او مشارك له في الجزئية على رأي جالينوس.

فان حمل قائلاً تعصبه وهواه المحرضان له على عدم تركه ما ألفه قائلاً: ان ما ذكر، قامت البراهين على خطئهم فيه، فنَبَقى⁴ فيما وراءه على مقتضى حسن ظننا بهم. فالجواب ان من ظهر تارة خطأه وتارة صوابه كانت اقواله ممكنة الخطأ والصواب. فلا يصار الى تقليد من هذا شأنه مع عدم الوقوف على مستند أقواله ونبذ أقوال المتشرعين وراء ظهره وعدم التفاته الى التعويل على ظواهر كتابه الدالة على انسانية صاحب شريعته، الا لنصوص أبت التأويل، دالة على ما يدعونه من الالهية مستعصية

¹ ب وس: ان قاعدة ² سقط في س ³ ب: اعتقاد ⁴ ج: فينفي

[Misleading reliance on philosophy]

In addition, what weakens their belief in this issue is the theory of the Philosopher¹² concerning the soul and its connection, since they assert its establishment, and the reason for their confidence is their good opinion of that teaching, even though they are not capable of presenting proofs for it. They suppose that those who taught this had devised it from the esoteric sciences, which baffles the intelligence because of its obscure sources and difficult construction, and that such a person's teaching is free from error. However, those who accept this teaching must also follow the Philosopher in saying: that prophecy can be acquired, that the world is eternal and does not experience becoming and decay, that the Creator does not know particulars, that the One only gives rise to one, and that the God of creation is pure existence who does not possess knowledge or life or power or similar things in his essence, by which they reject the injunctions of the legislators and make liars out of the prophets who were sent.¹³

It is strange that they emulate people who forbid the conception of the particular characteristics of the founder of their divine law those who stipulate for them the impossibility of the formation of the child solely from the sperm of his mother without partnership with the sperm of a man, either following the opinion of their leader or, in this particular case, following the opinion of Galen.¹⁴

If his fanaticism and passion leads someone to hold onto what he is accustomed to by saying, 'Concerning what has been described, proofs have been provided of their error, yet our good opinion of them remains firm', then he should receive the reply that whoever appears to be sometimes in error and sometimes in truth, his teaching can be false as well as true. Nobody should emulate such a person without the support of proofs of his teaching, a person who rejects out of hand the teaching of the legislators¹⁵ and who does not accept the literal meaning of his book that shows the humanity of the founder of his divine law, but who rejects any metaphorical interpretation of passages

12 This is probably another reference to Ibn Sīnā's teaching on the soul in its relationship to the body.

13 Here the author presents all the issues which al-Ghazālī discussed in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* in which he showed that the philosophers erred when they applied demonstrative methods to religious concepts and that the consequences would be the rejection of prophecy.

14 The author here refers to Galen because all his medical works were well known among the Christians, especially of Alexandria, as well as to the Muslim philosophers and physicians.

15 In Arabic, *al-mutasharrīn*, meaning here the prophetic or the revealed text.

على العقول استعصاء بيّنا. كيف! وفي الانجيل نصوص مصرّحة بانسانية عيسى عليه السلام المحضة ونصوص شاهدة بأن اطلاق الالهية عليه على ما يدّعونه محال. وهذه النصوص في أوضح¹ الاناجيل عندهم انجيل يوحنا بن زبدا.

وها انا اذكرها نصاً نصاً مبيناً فصولها المسطرة فيه حذراً من المناكرة لأن كتبهم غير محفوظة في صدورهم وقبل الشروع في ذكرها² فلا بد من تقديم أصليين متفق عليهما بين اهل العلم:

احدهما ان النصوص اذا وردت فان وافقت المعقول، تركت وظواهرها، وان خالفت صريح المعقول، وجب تأويلها واعتقاد أن حقائقها ليست مرادة فيجب اذ ذلك ردها الى المجاز.

الثاني ان الدلائل اذا تعارضت، فدلّ بعضها على اثبات حكم وبعضها على نفيه³، فلا تتركها متعارضة⁴، الا وقد أحسّسنا من انفسنا العجز باستحالة امكان الجمع بينها⁵ وامتناع جمعها متظافرة على معنى واحد.

واذا تقرر ذلك، فلنشرع الآن في ذكر النصوص الدالة على التجوّز في إطلاقه ما يوهم الإلهية على نفسه، والنصوص الدالة على التجوّز في مسألة الاتحاد كقوله: "انا والاب واحد" و"من رأي فقد رأى الاب وانا في الاب والاب في". ثم تتبع ذلك بذكر النصوص الدالة على انسانيته المحضة ونجمع

¹ ب وس: اصح ² ج: في ذلك ³ ب: نفيها ⁴ ب: معارضة ⁵ ج: بينهما—سقط في ب وس

that show divinity, according to what they claim, which is to utterly reject rational thinking. How is this possible? In the gospel are passages that make clear the sheer humanity of Jesus, on him be peace, as well as passages testifying that attributing divinity to him, as they claim, is impossible, and these passages are in the clearest of their gospels, the gospel of John the son of Zebedee.

[Interpretation of John's gospel]

Here, I will describe them passage-by-passage, showing their chapters which are written in it, taking care that they will not disapprove, because their books are not stored in their hearts. Before beginning to describe them, it is necessary to set out two principles agreed upon by knowledgeable people.

The first principle is: passages that appear in agreement with reason should be left as they appear, and if they are in opposition to sound reason then they must be interpreted in the belief that literal meanings are not intended and therefore they must be considered as metaphors.

The second is: if passages are contradictory, some of which affirm sound judgement and others negate it, we should not leave them in conflict, unless we had already sensed in ourselves an utter incapacity for reconciling them and an impossibility of connecting them together in one meaning.

If that is agreed then let us begin now to describe the passages showing the use of metaphor applying to himself what might be misinterpreted as his divinity, as well as passages showing the use of metaphor in the issue of the union, such as his sayings 'I and the Father are one',¹⁶ 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father'¹⁷ and 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me'.¹⁸ Then we will continue by describing passages showing his sheer humanity and we will put

16 John 10:30.

17 John 14:9. The presentation of the author appears to be very close to Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī (d. 1014) who quotes John 10:30 and John 14:9 together as texts which Christians claim support Jesus' proclamation of his divinity (*rubūbiyya*). He argues that Christians should be told that 'the meaning of "my father" is my teacher and my sender, and his saying "whoever has seen me has seen my father" means whoever saw him and heard his wisdom and his commands and prohibitions', *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, p. 102. He goes on to say that 'there is no doubt about this metaphorical interpretation because if he and his father were (literally) one it would entail the pregnancy, the birth, the being killed, the crucifixion, the eating, the drinking, and the movement being applied to the father' (ibid.). See also the Arabic text and English translation in Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*.

18 John 14:10.

بينها وبين النصوص المثيرة لهم شبهاً نكصت¹ افهامهم لتصورها عن تأويلها فعموا بها وضلوا بالغين في ايضاحها وكشف الغطاء عن مشكلاتها مبلغاً يرجع معه الحق باهر الرواء ظاهر السناء.

النص الاول ذكره يوحنا في انجيله في الفصل الرابع والعشرين: "انا والاب واحد فتناول اليهود حجارة ليرجموه فاجابهم قائلاً: أريتمكم اعمالاً كثيرة حسنة من عند أبي ومن أجل أي الاعمال ترجموني فاجابه اليهود قائلين: ليس من أجل الاعمال الحسنة نرجمك ولكن لأجل التجديف واذ أنت انسان تجعل نفسك آلهاً. فأجابهم يسوع: أليس مكتوباً في ناموسكم اني قلتُ وانتم آلهة فان كان قد قال لأولئك² آلهة لأن الكلمة صارت اليهم وليس يمكن ان ينتقض المكتوب فيكم احرى³ الذي قدسه الاب⁴ وارسله الى العالم" هذا آخر كلامه.

فنقول: هذا النص بالغ في تحصيل غرضنا الذي نحاوله في مسألة الاتحاد. وبيانه ان اليهود لما أنكروا عليه قوله "أنا والاب واحد" وهذه هي مسألة الاتحاد نفسها—ظانين بأنه اراد بقوله "انا والاب واحد" مفهومه الظاهر فيكون إلهاً حقيقةً انفصل عليه السلام عن انكارهم مُصرحاً بان ذلك من قبيل

¹ج: ركضت ²فان كان قد قال لأولئك—سقط في ج ³في س، ب، ج: فيكم بالحرا ⁴الاب—سقط في س وج

them together with passages that have provoked obscurity in them, that have turned them away from their understanding on account of their inability to interpret them, so that they have become blind and gone astray. By explaining them clearly, and lifting the veil from their difficulties we will restore the truth, splendid to sight and visible in majesty.

[Jesus claims to be one with his Father]

The first passage is described by John in his gospel in chapter 24, as follows:¹⁹

'I and the Father are one'. So the Jews picked up stones to throw at him, and he replied to them saying: 'I have shown you many good deeds from my Father. For which of them are you going to stone me?' The Jews replied to him saying: 'it is not because of the good deeds that we are going to stone you, but because of blasphemy, for although you are a man you make yourself God'. Jesus replied to them: 'is it not written in your law, I said you are gods, and if it was indeed said of them that they were gods because the word had come to them, and it is not possible that what is written may be refuted, how much more appropriate is it that the Father made him holy and sent him into the world?'²⁰

This is the end of his words.

We say this passage enables us to attain our goal for which we have striven concerning the issue of the union. It shows that the Jews opposed his saying, 'I and the father are one', and this related to the issue of the union itself, because they believed that he intended his saying 'I and the Father are one' to be understood literally as meaning that he was truly God. But he, peace be upon him, rejected their denial by announcing clearly that his statement was metaphorical. Then he showed them the metaphorical aspect by offering them

19 The author is following the chapter divisions found in Copto-Arabic versions of the gospels in which there are 101 chapters for Matthew, 54 for Mark, 68 for Luke and 46 for John. His quotations from John's gospel are very similar to Vatican Coptic 9, a version in Bohairic Coptic with parallel columns in Arabic dated 1204/5. His quotation of John 1:14 in Bohairic Coptic suggests the possibility of the author's access to such a version. See C. Padwick, 'Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels: an Unsolved Problem', p. 139, and F.-E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*, pp. 161–164.

20 John 10:30–36.

المجاز¹ ثم² أبان لهم جهة التجوز بضره لهم المثل فقال: قد أطلق عليكم في ناموسكم انكم³ آلهة ولستم آلهة حقيقة وانما أطلق عليكم هذا اللفظ لمعنى وهو صيرورة الكلمة اليكم وانا قد شاركتكم في ذلك.

وقد ورد مثل ذلك في شريعتنا، قال سيد المرسلين صلى الله عليه وسلم حاكياً عن الحق جلّ اسمه: "ولن يتقرب اليّ المتقربون بأفضل من اداء ما أقرضت عليهم ثم لا يزال العبد يتقرب اليّ بالنوافل حتى أحبه فاذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به ولسانه الذي ينطق به ويده التي يبطش بها" ومحال ان يكون الخالق حالاً في كل جارحة من هذه الجوارح او يكون عبارة عنها لكن لما بذل العبد جهده في طاعة الله كان له من الله قدرة ومعونة بهما يقدر على النطق باللسان والبطش باليد الى غير ذلك من الاعمال المقرّبة. ولذلك يقول من أقدر شخصاً على ان يضرب بالسيف ولولاه لما قدر على ذلك: انا يدك التي ضربت بها فهذا ضرب من المجاز استعماله حسن سائغ غير منكور.

وقد صرح عيسى عليه السلام في هذا النص بجهة المجاز بقوله: "لأن الكلمة صارت اليهم" ومحال ان يريد بالكلمة لفظاً ذا حروف وانما يريد بالكلمة سرّاً منه يهبه لمن يشاء من عباده يحصل لهم به التوفيق الى ما يصيرهم غير مباينين لله عز وجل بل يصيرهم لا يحبون الا ما يحب ولا يبغضون الا ما يبغضه ولا يكرهون الا ما يكرهه ولا يريدون الا ما يريد من الاقوال والاعمال اللاتمة بجلاله. فاذا صار بهم⁴ التوفيق الى هذه الحالة حصل لهم⁵ المعنى المصحح للتجوز.

ويدل على صحة هذا التأويل الصّارف الى المجاز المذكور انه عليه السلام احتريز عن ارادة ظاهره⁶ هذا النص الدال على الاتحاد بقوله: "فبكم احرى⁷ الذي قدسه الله⁸ وارسله" فصرّح بأنه رسول متبرئاً من الالهية التي تخيل اليهود انه ادعاها مثبتاً لنفسه خصوصية الانبياء وعلو درجاتهم على غيرهم ممن ليسوا

¹ج: اعجاز ²سقط في ج ³سقط في ج ⁴ب وس: اصارهم ⁵لهم سقط في ج ⁶ظاهر سقط في ج ⁷في س، ب، ج: فيكم بالحرا ⁸الله سقط في ب وس

an example saying, it is said in your law that you are gods, but you are not truly gods, and I interpret the meaning of this saying to be, ‘The word has come to you and I share that with you.’

An example like this is also found in our Divine Law. The Chief Messenger, the blessing and peace of God be on him, related from the True One, may his name be exalted,

Whoever wants to come close to me will come closest by performing what I have prescribed for him. Then the worshipping servant will continue to come close to me by performing more than I have prescribed, and so I will love him. When I love him I will be the ear with which he hears, the eye with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks, and the hand with which he strikes.²¹

It is impossible that the Creator is present in any of these members of the body, or that he meant them literally. However, when the worshipping servant exerts all his effort to obey God, he will receive power and help from God which will enable him to speak with the tongue and strike with the hand and to perform other actions that bring him close to God. For this reason it is said of someone who empowers another person to strike with a sword who would not otherwise be able to do it, ‘I am your hand with which you have struck’. This kind of metaphor is used widely, is both good and legitimate and is not rejected.

Jesus, on him be peace, had already indicated in this passage a metaphorical aspect when he said: ‘Because the word came to them’. It is impossible that he meant by ‘the word’ an expression formed in letters but rather he meant a secret message from him that he gave to whichever servants he wished. Thus they gain favour to make them overcome what separates them from God, almighty and exalted; indeed he makes them love only what he loves, hate only what he hates, detest only what he detests, and will only what he wills of words and actions appropriate to his majesty. When they have gained favour to attain this state they become aware of the meaning signified by the metaphor.

The truth of this metaphorical interpretation described above is shown by his, peace be on him, care not to intend a literal meaning of this passage, which has been taken as pointing to the union, in his saying, ‘How much better is the one whom God made holy and sent’. So he declared that he was a messenger, innocent of claiming divinity that the Jews supposed that he claimed. He

21 This Ḥadīth can be traced to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham Maṣūir ibn Yazīd ibn Jābir al-Tamīmī al-Ijlī (d. circa 780). See G.C. Anawati and L. Gardet, *Mystique Musulmane*, Paris, 1961, pp. 30–31.

انبياء بقوله: "فيكم احرى¹ الذي قدسه وارسله" اي قد شاركتكم في السبب المصحح للتجاوز وفضلتكم بمراتب النبوة والرسالة.

ولو لم يكن ما ضربه لهم من التمثيل جواباً قاطعاً لما تخيلوه² من ارادة ظاهر اللفظ لكان ذلك مغالطة منه وغشاً في المعتقدات المفضى الجهل بها الى سخط الاله وهذا لا يليق بالانبياء المرسلين الهادين الى الحق لان تأخير البيان عن وقت الحاجة غير جائز للانبياء. كيف! وفي كتبهم أنه³ ارسل لخلاص العالم⁴ مبيناً ما يجب لله وما يستحيل عليه وانما يكون مخلصاً للعالم اذا بين لهم الاله المعبود. فإن كان هو الاله الذي يجب ان يعبد وقد صرفهم عن اعتقاد ذلك بضربه لهم⁵ المثل فيكون قد امرهم بعبادة غيره وصرفهم عن عبادته والتقدير انه هو الاله الذي يجب ان يعبد وذلك غش وضلال لا يليق بمن يدعى فيه انه أتى لخلاص العالم بل لا يليق بمن انتصب للارشاد والهداية من آحاد الامم فضلاً عن صرح بانه رسول هادٍ مُرشد.

فان قيل انما ضرب لهم المثل مغالطة ليدفع عن نفسه ما يحذره من شرهم، قلنا الخوف من اليهود لا يليق بمن يدعى فيه انه اله العالم وموجد الكائنات. فليت شعري ماذا يقول المعاند بعد ان لاحت له هذه الحقائق اوضح من فرق الصبح وكيف يتقاعد عن تأويل هذا النص وتأويل أمثاله ويخبط خبط عشواء وصاحب شريعته قد أوله نفسه.

النص الثاني نص عليه يوحنا المذكور في انجيله في الفصل السابع والثلاثين: "ايها الاب القدوس احفظهم باسمك الذي اعطيتني ليكونوا معك واحداً كما نحن" هذا النص كالنص الذي قبله سواء

¹ في س، ب، ج: فيكم بالحرا ² ما ضربه لهم ... لما تخيلوه في ج: ما صيرته لهم ... لما تحصلوه ³ ب: ان ⁴ لخلاص العالم في ج: ان خلاص الى العالم ⁵ ب: بضرهم

claimed for himself the particular characteristics of the prophets and their high rank above other people who were not prophets, when he said, 'How much better is the one whom God made holy and sent'. In other words, I have shared with you in what the metaphor points to and I am higher than you in rank of prophethood and messengership.

If the example he gave them was not a conclusive reply concerning what they imagined to be the literal intention of the expression, then that would have been a mistake by him and deception in the beliefs, the ignoring of which would lead to God's anger. This is not appropriate for the prophets and messengers who lead people to the truth, since withholding evidence in time of need is not permitted to prophets. How is it possible, when in their books it is said that he was sent to save the world, to show what is necessary for God and what is impossible for him. Therefore, he is saviour of the world when he shows them God who is to be worshipped. If he was the God who must be worshipped and at the same time he turned them away from believing that by giving them this example, then he was commanding them to worship another person by turning them away from worshipping him. The implication that he was the God who must be worshipped is deception and error, which is not appropriate for one who claimed that he came to save the world. Indeed it is not appropriate for one who is appointed from among the people for their guidance and direction, far less to one who explains that he was sent as a guide and director.

If it is said that he gave them the example deceitfully to deflect from himself their malice that made him anxious, we say, being afraid of the Jews is not appropriate for one who, it is said, claimed that he was God of the universe and Creator of the world. I wish I knew what the opponent would say after these truths became more obvious to him than the break of dawn, and how he could fail to interpret this passage and others like it metaphorically, and stumble about in the darkness when the founder of this divine law had interpreted it metaphorically himself.

[Jesus prays that his followers will be one as he is one with his Father]

The second passage is recounted by the aforementioned John in his gospel in chapter 37 as follows: 'Holy Father, keep them in your name that you gave me, so that they may be one with you as we are'.²² This passage is like the previous passage, confirming that he turned from the literal to the metaphorical meaning described above. It shows that he, peace be upon him, prayed to God,

22 John 17:11.

مؤكداً له¹ في صرفه عن الحقيقة الى المجاز المذكور وبيانه انه عليه السلام دعا الله عزّ وجلّ لتلاميذته ان يكون حافظاً لهم باسمه حفظاً مثل حفظه له ليحصل لهم بذلك الحفظ وحدة بالله ثم اتى بحرف التشبيه فقال: "كما نحن" اي تكون تلك الوحدة كوحدي معك. فان تكن وحدته مع الاله موجبة له استحقاق الالهية فيلزم ان يكون داعياً لتلاميذته ان يكونوا آلهة وخطور ذلك ببال من خلع ربة العقل قبيح فضلاً عن من يكون له ادنى خيال صحيح. بل هذا محمول على المجاز المذكور وهو انه عليه السلام سأل الله ان يفيض عليهم من الائه وعنايته وتوفيقه الى ما يرشدهم الى مراده اللائق بجلاله بحيث لا يريدون الا ما يريد ولا يحبون الا ما يحب ولا يبغضون الا ما يبغضه ولا يكرهون الا ما يكرهه ولا يأتون من الاقوال والاعمال الا ما هو راضٍ به مؤثر لوقوعه فاذا حصلت لهم هذه الحالة حسن التجوّز. ويدل على صحة ذلك ان انساناً لو كان له صديق موافق غرضه ومراده بحيث يكون محباً لما يحبه مبغضاً لما يبغضه كارهاً لما يكرهه حسن ان يقول: انا وصديقي واحد.

وقد بينّ عليه السلام ايضاً في هذا النص ان وحدته معه مجاز وأنه ليس إلهاً حقيقة بقوله: "ليكونوا معك واحداً كما نحن" يريد: اذا حصل لهم منك توفيق صبرهم لا يريدون الا ما تريده كانت وحدتهم معك كوحدي معك اذ هذه حالتي معك لانني لا أريد الا ما تريده ولا أحب الا ما تُحبه. وبقوله ايضاً "أيها الاب القدوس احفظهم باسمك" داعياً لهم الاله الذي بيده النفع والضّر ولو كان هو² نفسه الهاً لكان قادراً على حفظهم من غير ان يتضرع لغيره ويسأله الحفظ. فاعجب لهذه الاشارات التي تبه بها على ارادة المجاز وصرف الكلام عن ظاهره.

وقد صرح بولص³ في رسالته التي سيرها الى قورنثية بمثل ذلك لما فهم المراد من هذه النصوص فقال: "فن اعتمص برّبنا فانه يكون معه روحاً واحداً". وهذا التصريح منه يدل على انه فهم عين ما فهمناه⁴ وفهم ان هذه النصوص ليست ظواهرها مرادة.

¹ له سقط في ب وس ² هو سقط في ب وس ³ بولص في ج: يونس ⁴ عين ما فهمناه سقط في ج

almighty and exalted, for his disciples, that he would be a protector for them in his name just as he protected him, in order that they receive by this protection a union with God. Then he used a particle of comparison when he said, 'As we are', meaning a union like my union with you. If his union with God is the reason for his entitlement to divinity, then he must have prayed that his disciples become gods. This is shameful occurring in someone who lets go of his reason but especially shameful for someone with the slightest soundness of mind. Moreover, this passage refers to the metaphor already described where he, on him be peace, prayed to God to pour upon them his blessings, his regard and his assistance to guide them to his will which is appropriate to his majesty; so that they would only will what he wills, only love what he loves, only hate what he hates, only detest what he detests, only speak and act as he pleases and brings into effect. So when this condition arises in them the metaphor is appropriate. The evidence for the truth of this is, if a man has a friend who agrees with his aims and wishes in such a way that he loves what he loves, hates what he hates, and detests what he detests, it is acceptable for him to say, I and my friend are one.

He, on him be peace, also showed in this passage that his union with him is metaphorical, and that he is not really God, when he said, 'That they may become one with you as we are'. He meant, if they obtain assistance from you that makes them will only what you will, their union with you would be like my union with you; my condition with you is that I only want what you want and only love what you love. Also in his saying, 'Holy Father, keep them in your name', he prayed to God who held their welfare and their injury in his hand. If he himself were God then he would have been capable of keeping them without imploring someone else and beseeching him to protect them. I marvel at these signs that he intended a metaphorical meaning and that he turned the words away from a literal meaning.

Paul, in his letter sent to the Corinthians, gave an example similar to the intention of these passages, when he said, 'Whoever clings to our lord becomes one spirit with him.'²³ This statement of his shows that he understood the essence of what we have understood, and that he comprehended that these passages are not intended literally.

23 1 Corinthians 6:17.

النص الثالث¹ نصّ عليه يوحنا المذكور في إنجيله في الفصل السابع والثلاثين أيضاً: "قدّسهم بحقك فان كلمتك خاصة هي الحق. كما أرسلتني الى العالم أرسلتهم أيضاً الى العالم ولأجلهم اقدس ذاتي ليكونوا هم مقدسين بالحق وليس اسأل في هؤلاء فقط بل وفي الذين يؤمنون بي بقولهم² ليكونوا باجمعهم واحداً كما انك يا أبت³ حالّ في وانا فيك ليكونوا ايضاً فينا واحداً ليؤمن العالم انك ارسلتني وانا اعطيهم المجد الذي اعطيتني ليكونوا واحداً كما نحن واحد".

هذا النص واضح جداً مؤكداً لما قلناه وبيانه انه عليه الصلاة والسلام كشف غطاء الشبهة مبيناً جهة المجاز بقوله: "وانا قد اعطيهم المجد الذي اعطيتني ليكونوا واحداً". اي ان ذلك المجد ينظم شملهم فتقع افعالهم جمع متظاهرة على طاعتك ومحبة ما تحبه وبغض ما تبغضه وارادة ما تريده فيصيرون كرجل واحد لعدم تباين ارائهم واعمالهم ومعتقداتهم كما نحن واحد اي كما انا معك واحد لان مجدك الذي اعطيتني جعلني لا أحبّ الاّ ما تحبه ولا اريد الاّ ما تريده ولا أبغض الاّ ما تبغضه ولا اكره الاّ ما تكرهه ولا يصدر مني عمل ولا قول الا وانت راض به. واذا ثبت ان هذه حالته مع الإله دلّ على ان من اطاعه فقد اطاع الإله جلّ اسمه⁴ ومن اطاع الإله⁵ فقد أطاعه وهذا شأن الانبياء المرسلين. ثم بالغ في ايضاح جهة المجاز بقوله: "كما انك يا ايتّ حالّ في وانا فيك ليكونوا ايضاً فينا واحداً". يريد: ان اقوالهم واعمالهم اذا تظافت واقعة على وفق مرادك ومرادك هو مرادي كلّاً جميعاً كذات واحدة لعدم تباين الارادات.

ثم انه عليه الصلاة والسلام لم يقتنع بذلك حذراً من تعلق الخيال الضعيف بظواهر هذه النصوص فصرّح بانه رسول فقال: "ليؤمن العالم أنك ارسلتني" ثم بالغ في البيان فقال: "وليس اسأل في هؤلاء فقط بل وفي الذين يؤمنون بي ليكونوا باجمعهم واحداً كما نحن واحد" يريد ان وحدته معه ليست

¹ سقط في ج² بقولهم سقط في ج³ يابت في ج: وحده⁴ الإله جل اسمه في ج: الله عز وجل⁵ في ج: الله

[Jesus passed on the glory given to him by the Father to his followers so they could be one]

The third passage is also recounted by the aforementioned John in his gospel in chapter 37 as follows;

Make them holy in your truth, because your word in particular is truth. As you sent me into the world, I am sending them also to the world. For their sake I make myself holy that they may be made holy in the truth. I do not ask for these alone but for those who will believe in me through their speech, that they may all be united. As you, Father, are dwelling in me and I in you, may they also be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, so that they may become one as we are one.²⁴

This passage is very clear and it agrees very strongly with what we have said and shown to the effect that he, blessing and peace be on him, lifted the veil of obscurity, and indicated the metaphorical aspect when he said, 'I have given them the glory that you gave me, so that they may become one'. In other words, may this glory unite them and produce actions that unite them in obeying you, loving what you love, hating what you hate, willing what you will, so that they become as one person for there is no difference in their thoughts, deeds and beliefs, as we are one. This is to say, as I am one with you, because your glory that you gave me made me love only what you love, will only what you will, hate only what you hate, detest only what you detest, and no action or speech issue from me unless you are content with it. If it is established that this is his condition with God, it shows that the one who obeys him obeys God, may his name be exalted, and the one who obeys God obeys him, and this is the characteristic of the sent prophets. Then, emphasising the metaphorical aspect, he said, 'As you, Father, are dwelling in me, and I am in you, may they also be united in us'. He intended to say, may their words and deeds be in agreement and joined together with your will. Your will is my will. We together are like one essence, for there is no difference in our wills.

Then he, on him be blessing and peace, out of a concern that a weak individual might hold to a literal meaning of these passages, declared that he was a messenger by saying, 'That the world might believe that you sent me'. He emphasised this clearly when he said, 'I do not pray for these alone but for those who will believe in me that all of them may be one as we are one'. He intended

24 John 17:17–22.

مقتضية لاهيته وإلا لزم ان تكون وحدتهم مع الاله الذي سأله ان يكونوا معه واحداً كذلك. فانظر كم من حُسن اشتمل عليه هذا النصّ من صرّاحٍ قد صُرح بارادة حقائقها وظواهر قد صُرح بعدم ارادة ظواهرها وتجوّزات اقترنت بها معانٍ أبت لها ان تجعل على حقائقها ومحاسن يبرون عليها وهم عنها معرضون ولله درّ القائل:

وكم من عائب قولاً صحيحاً وآفته من الفهم السقيم

ولكن تأخذ الآذان منه على قدر القرائح والعلوم

وقد صرّح في انجيل يوحنا ايضاً في الفصل الخامس والعشرين بما يدلّ على ان هذا التأويل الذي ذُكر هو المراد فقال: "من يؤمن بي¹ فليس يؤمن بي فقط بل وبالذي ارسلني ومن رأي فقد رأى الذي ارسلني" لما جعل طاعته نفس طاعة الاله لزم² ان يكون مخبراً عن الاله فقال³ "ومن رأي فقد رأى من ارسلني" اي انا أخبر عنه حقيقة فأمره ونهيه وجميع احكامي عنه صادرة وهذا شأن الانبياء الصادقين.

ومن أوضح ما يستدلّ به على انّ حقائق هذه النصوص ليست مرادة وأنها محمولة على المجاز السالف ذكره ان يوحنا بن زبدي الانجيلي المنقولة هذه النصوص من انجيله وهو عندهم من أجلّ تلاميذته حتى انهم يغلون فيه فيسمونه حبيب الربّ لما فهم هذه المعاني المذكورة وعلم ان هذه النصوص مصروفة عن حقائقها الى المجاز المذكور قال في رسالته الاولى المذكورة في كتاب الرسائل: "الله لم يره احد قط فان أحبّ بعضنا بعضاً فالله حالّ فينا ومحبتّه كاملة فينا وبهذا نعلم انا حالّون فيه⁴ وهو ايضاً حالّ فينا لأنه قد اعطانا من روحه ونحن رأينا ونشهد ان الاب ارسل ابنه لخلاص العالم"

¹ في ج من لم يؤمن لي ² لزم سقط في ب ³ فقال سقط في ب ⁴ ج: حالون في الله

that his unity with him would not entail his divinity, otherwise their union with God, whom he asked that they may be one with him, would be like that. Notice how much beauty is contained in this passage. There are unambiguous statements explained by their factual intention. There are literal statements but not explained by their literal intention. There are metaphorical statements related to meanings which prevent them from bearing their factual meaning. These are good qualities that they barely notice, and they turn away from them. May God bless the person who said,

How many find fault with a true word. They fail through a faulty mind.
But each person hears it according to his ability and knowledge.

It is also explained in the gospel of John in chapter 25, that the interpretation given above is the intended one when he says, 'Whoever believes in me does not believe in me alone but also in the one who sent me, and whoever has seen me has seen the one who sent me.'²⁵ When he made obedience to himself obedience to God, he must have been talking about God. He said, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the one who sent me', which is to say, I speak the truth about him and my command is his command and my prohibition is his prohibition. All my judgements emanate from him. This is the characteristic of the true prophets.

Among the clearest evidence that the factual sense of these passages was not intended, and that they should be interpreted metaphorically as above described, is that the Evangelist John, son of Zebedee, author of the gospel that contains these passages, regarded by them as one of his most eminent disciples and who they go as far as to call 'Beloved of the lord',²⁶ having understood these passages, and that they had been diverted from the literal to the metaphorical meaning described above, said in his first epistle contained in the book of epistles,

Nobody has seen God, so if we love one another God dwells in us and his love is made perfect in us. By this we know that we dwell in him and he also dwells in us, because he has given us of his Spirit and we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son to save the world.²⁷

25 John 12:44.

26 John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, and 21:7.

27 1John 4:12–14.

وذكر فيه أيضاً: "من يعترف ان يسوع هو ابن الله فالله حالّ فيه وهو ايضاً حالّ في الله" اطلق هذا التلميذ الجليل عندهم هذه الكلمات مصرحاً فيها بالحلول بقوله: "وبهذا نعلم انا حالون فيه وهو ايضاً حالّ فينا". فان يكن هذا التلميذ الجليل عندهم فهم ان الحلول الذي اطلقه عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام في النصوص المذكورة مقتضى للإلهية فيكون مثبتاً لنفسه ولغيره الالهية بقوله: "وبهذا نعلم انا حالون فيه وهو ايضاً حالّ فينا" وهم لا يعتقدون فيه ذلك ولا في احد من سائر تلاميذ عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام واتباعه فتعين انه فهم من النصوص ما اشرنا اليه من المجاز السالف ذكره.

ويدلّ على ذلك انه أوماً الى جهة المجاز بقوله: "لأنه قد اعطانا من روحه" ويريد أنه أفاض علينا سرّاً وعنايةً علمنا بهما ما يليق بجلاله ثم وفقنا الى العمل بمقتضاه فلا يزيد الآ ما يريده ولا نحبّ الآ ما يُحبه فينثذ تعود الحالة جذعةً في ارادة المجاز المذكور.

ولكن¹ بقي في النص الثالث دقائق من المباحث لا تستخرج الآ بفكرة قاذحة² وقادة وهي انه عليه الصلاة والسلام قال: "وقد اعطيتهم المجد الذي اعطيتني" وظاهر هذا اللفظ يدلّ على العموم لانه عليه الصلاة والسلام أوماً الى المجد المعهود ثم وصفه بقوله: "الذي اعطيتني" وهذا ظاهر في ارادة جميع الافراد التي تناولها المجد وبيانه ان القائل اذا قال: اعطيتُ فلان الدراهم التي اعطيتني او الهدية التي ارسلت اليّ كان ذلك ظاهراً في العموم لكّا اذا أنصفنا علمنا ان الحقيقة ليست مرادة لان من جملة المجد الذي أُعطي له النبوة والرسالة وما يترتب عليهما من الدرجات والصعود الى السماء واقداره على الاتيان بخوارق المعجزات فهذه حقائق ليست مرادة بالاعطاء فلا بدّ من حمل اللفظ بعد ذلك على معنى وإلاّ لزم تعطيله. فلم يبق الا ان يريد بالاعطاء اعلامهم بما يليق بجلال الله عزّ وجلّ ثم سأل لهم التوفيق الى العمل بمقتضاه من الاله القادر على ذلك فقال: "قدّسهم بحقّك" اي انا قد اعلمتهم بما يليق

¹ في ج: لكي ² قاذحه سقط في ب وس

He also mentioned in the letter, 'Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he also dwells in God'.²⁸ This disciple, esteemed by them, applied these words to the explanation of the indwelling, when he said, 'By this we know that we dwell in him and he dwells in us'. If this disciple, esteemed by them, understood that the indwelling that Jesus, blessing and peace be on him, explained in the above passages necessitated divinity, then he was ascribing to himself and to the others divinity, when he said, 'By this we know that we dwell in him and he also dwells in us'. They do not believe that about him, nor about any of the rest of the disciples and followers of Jesus, blessing and peace be on him. Therefore, it is certain that he understood these passages metaphorically as we have indicated in the preceding description.

The following statement proves that he pointed in the direction of the metaphorical aspect, 'Because he has given us his Spirit'. He meant that he poured out on us a mystery and providence through which we come to know what pertains to his majesty. Then he made us accomplish the deeds in accordance with it, so that we will only what he wills, and love only what he loves. Therefore, the situation returns again to the metaphorical meaning already described.

However, there remain in the third passage abstruse points which can only be understood by pure, clear thought, in his saying, blessing and peace be upon him, 'I have given them the glory that you gave me'. The literal meaning of this formulation shows, generally speaking, that he, on him be blessing and peace, pointed to the said glory, then described it by saying, 'That you gave me'. This is literally intended to mean all the items that encompass the glory, and it is illustrated when someone says, 'I gave someone the dirhams that you gave me' or 'The present that you sent me', which is meant literally in general. However, if we are fair, we know that the factual meaning is not intended, because in the fullness of the glory that was given to him is prophethood and messengership, and what entails from them in rank, the ascent to heaven, and his power to perform unprecedented miracles. For these are facts that were not literally intended in 'the gift'. Therefore, after this there is no doubt that this expression bears a definite meaning, otherwise it must be prevented from being understood. It can only be that he intended by 'the gift' to make them realise what pertains to the majesty of God, almighty and exalted. Then he asked for assistance for them, in performing the deeds in accordance with it, from God, All Powerful to execute this, by saying, 'Make them holy in your truth'. In other words, I have made them realise what pertains to your majesty, and this

28 1John 4:15.

بجلالك وهذه وظيفة الانبياء المرسلين فارشدهم¹ انت ووقفهم الى العمل بمقتضاه فان هذه درجة الاله القادر على خلق الاعمال.

فان قيل لم لا يجوز ان يكون من جملة المجد الذي أعطي له الاتحاد الذي استحق ان يكون به الهاً وقد دلّ الدليل على عدم ارادته وانه ليس معطىً فيكون غير مراد وان كان مندرجا تحت لفظ العموم. قلنا هيئات ههنا تسكب العبرات وهل الالهية يمكن اعطاؤها؟ وهذا مما أجمع العقلاء على استحالتة وهل هذا الأُصدارة على المطلوب من غير اتيان بثبوت يعول عليه الا ظواهر وقد حللناها من ايديهم واؤها صاحب شرعهم معتدراً عن اطلاقها ومحتزراً عن ارادة حقائقها.

ومثل هذه المعضلة لا يثبت بمجرد الاحتمال ما لم تبرهن بالبراهين اليقينية لا سيما في شخص وضحت انسانيته ثابتة لوازمها وملزوماتها وذاتياتها من الحيوانية والنطق والاعياء والجوع والعطش والنوم والاجتنان في الرحم والتألم على رأيهم في الصلب حيث قال: "الهي الهي لم تركتني" فهذه كلها منافية للالهية. وكيف ينكر ذلك وفي انجيل مرقس: "وفي الغد خرجوا من بيت عنيا فجاء ونظر الى تينة² من بعيد وعليها ورق فجاء اليها ليلب فيها ثمرة فلما جاءها لم يجد عليها شيئاً الا ورقاً فقط³ لأنه لم يكن في زمن التين" صرح في هذا النص باحساسه بالجوع وظنه الشيء على خلاف ما هو عليه لأنه ظن ان عليها ثمرة فاخلف ظنه وظن ان الزمن زمن التين او ظن انها تثمر في غير زمن التين وكلاهما ظن غير مطابق.

فان قيل فاي فائدة في تعطيل الشجرة؟ قلنا انما فعل ذلك ليثبت تلاميذته على ايمانهم وليرغبهم في الازدياد من الاعمال التي تكون مثل هذا الفعل من بعض نتائجها لأن الانبياء والاولياء حين وعدوا

¹ في ج: فارسلمهم ² ج: شجرة تين ³ فقط سقط في س

is the task of the sent prophets, so guide them and help them to perform the deeds in accordance with it, for it is a quality of God, the All Powerful to create deeds.

If it is said, why is it not possible that the phrase ‘The glory that was given to him’ means the union which entitles him to be divine? Even though the evidence has been presented of the absence of his intention, that it was not given, and thus was not intended, yet it may be included in the meaning of the expression in general. We say, how preposterous, at this point wise advice should be poured out upon us. Is it possible that divinity be bestowed when the impossibility of this is a matter upon which intelligent people have unanimously agreed? Is this not simply like confiscation of goods for what is owed when the only proof which can be relied on is the literal meaning which we have interpreted for them? The founder of their divine law interpreted them metaphorically, defending this interpretation of them to guard against intending their factual meaning.

Such a difficulty is not resolved by mere possibilities without being proved with certain proofs, especially in a person whose humanity is affirmed in its requirements, necessities and characteristics such as a living being, speech, fatigue, hunger, thirst, sleep, gestation in the womb, and his suffering, according to their belief in the crucifixion, when he said, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’²⁹ All of this is contrary to the divinity. How can this be denied when in the gospel of Mark it is stated,

On the next day they left Bethany and he was hungry; he noticed a fig tree in the distance with leaves, so he approached it to look for fruit on it, but when he reached it he only found leaves on it because it was not the time for figs.³⁰

He clearly declared in this passage his experiencing hunger, and his supposing things contrary to what they are because he supposed that there would be fruit on it, but his supposition was wrong. He supposed either that the time was a time for figs or he supposed that it produced figs outside the time for figs, but neither of these suppositions agrees with the facts.

If it is asked, what useful lesson is there in the withering of the tree? We say, he did that to confirm his disciples in their faith, and to awaken their desire to increase the deeds that are similar to this action in some of its results, because the prophets and the saints, when they were promised paradise, were promised

²⁹ Matthew 27:46, and Mark 15:34.

³⁰ Mark 11:12–13.

بالجنة انما وُعدوا بها مخوفة بالمكاره ومكابدة الجوع والرضى به من المكاره الشداد ومكابدة المكاره
ربما يقل معها عصام التقوى من العارفين ويغلب كثرة من الرعا¹ فاذا اراهم مثل هذا الفعل الذي
هو من نتائج الاعمال الصالحة رغّبهم في الاستكثار من اسبابه وحقّر في نفوسهم مصائب الدنيا والآما
وليبيّن بذلك ان امتحان الانبياء بالجوع والآلام ليس من قبيل الهوان بهم ولا بمراتبهم بل من قبيل
الامتحان والابتلاء فمن صبر شاكراً راضياً قدر على الاتيان² بمثل ذلك.

ويدل على صحة هذا التأويل قوله لبطرس في بقية هذا النص وقد قال له: "يا معلم هذه التينة التي لعنتها
قد يبست—ان كان لكم ايمان بالله الحق اقول لكم ان من قال لهذا الجبل انتقل واسقط في البحر
ولا يشك في قلبه بل يصدق ان الذي يقوله يكون فيكون له" كل ذلك دليل على ان يبسها انما كان
من باب كرامات الاولياء³ لانه قد اثبت لهم بالولاية نقل الجبل وسقوطه في البحر وذلك ابلغ من
يبسها وقد اتى بمثل ذلك ايضا في الانجيل مصرحاً به فقال "الحق اقول لكم ان من يحفظ وصاياي
يعمل الاعمال التي اعمل وافضل منها يصنع".

ويؤكد ذلك تصريح الانجيل في هذا النص بالجوع وتصريحه بطلب الثمرة فيها وهذا ايضا يبطل قول
من يقول انما فعل ذلك اعلاماً لهم انه قادر على اماتة الاحياء لانه يلزم ان يكون واضح هذا⁴ النص
في الانجيل كاذباً في قوله: "بفاج" وفي قوله: "بفاج ليطلب فيها ثمرة" جعل⁵ ذلك علة مجيئه اليها وهل
يكون ما ذهبوا اليه إلا غفلة من عقولهم؟ لانه ما جاء اليها الا ليطلب فيها ثمرة كقول القائل: جعت
فنظرت شجرة فجئت اليها لأطلب فيها ثمرة فلم أجد شيئاً فدعوت عليها بالجفاف ليستدل بذلك على أنني
اله قادر على اماتة الاحياء. هذا من جنس كلام المغفلين، تعالى الله عن ذلك.

¹ في ج: الرعا² سقط في ج في ب الاتباء³ في ب: الكرامات وفي ج: كرامات الانبياء⁴ هذا سقط
في ب⁵ في ب: جعل ذلك علة مجيئه اليها وهل يكون ما ذهبوا اليه إلا غفلة من عقولهم. لانه ما جاء اليها الا
ليطلب فيها ثمرة في س، ج: جعل ذلك علة مجيئه اليها وهل يكون ما ذهبوا اليه الا كقول القائل جعت فنظرت
شجرة فجئت اليها لاطلب فيها ثمرة

it surrounded by adversities. Enduring and accepting hunger is one of the most severe adversities, and by enduring calamities the piety of the Sufi masters is fortified, yet adversity defeats many ordinary people. So when he showed them such an action, which is among the fruits of good deeds, he was awakening a desire in them for the increase of its causes and made them despise misfortunes and pains of the world. By doing this he wanted to demonstrate that the test of the prophets by hunger and suffering is not a kind of humiliation for them or their ranks, but a kind of test and trial. So whoever perseveres by praising and being content has the power to perform things like that.

The evidence for the truth of this interpretation is his saying to Peter in the remainder of this passage when the latter said to him, 'Master, this fig tree that you cursed has withered';

If you had faith in God, truly I say to you, if someone should say to this mountain, move and throw yourself into the sea, and he does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he said will happen, then it will happen for him.³¹

All that is evidence that withering it was in the category of miracles that the saints perform, because he affirmed for them that sainthood can move mountains and throw them into the sea, and that is more profound than withering it. He also offered and declared something similar in the gospel, when he said, 'Truly I say to you whoever keeps my commands does the deeds that I do and greater than these he will do'.³²

The statement of the gospel in this passage about his hunger and the statement about looking for fruit from it confirms it. This also refutes the teaching of the one who says that he did that to show them that he had power to cause death to living things, because that would make the author of this passage in the gospel a liar when he says, 'He was hungry', and 'he approached to look for fruit on it', as reasons for his approaching it. Isn't what they think utter foolishness in their reasoning? Because he only came to it to look for fruit on it, as he might have said, being hungry I noticed a tree and I approached it to look for fruit on it, and I did not find anything, so I cursed it with dryness to show that I am a 'God All Powerful' to cause death to living things. This is the kind of speech of foolish people. May God be exalted far above that.

31 Mark 11:21–22.

32 John 14:12.

النص الرابع ذكره مرقس في انجيله في الفصل الرابع¹ والاربعين: "فأما ذلك اليوم وتلك الساعة فلا يعرفها احد ولا الملائكة الذين في السماء ولا الابن الا الاب² وحده" صرح في هذا النص بالانسانية المحضة نافياً عنه العلم المختص بالاله وهذا من اوضح الأدلة على انسانيته المحضة ومن هديانهم حملهم هذا النص على ان الملائكة والابن كل منهما معطوف على ضمير الساعة ويكون تقدير الهذيان: اما ذلك اليوم وتلك الساعة فلا يعرفها ولا الملائكة ولا الابن احد الا الاب وحده.

فالعجب من هذه العقول كيف فاتها ان صفات الاله اذا لم تثبت بالبراهين اليقينية فلا أقل من كونها ظاهرة الدلالة وانظركم من بعد في هذا التأويل الذي ينبو عنه السمع وكم خولف فيه من ظاهر ثم ان قائله لما ضاق عليه المجال وقيل له اي لفظ في هذا النص يفهم منه السؤال عن الملائكة والابن ليقع³ الجواب مطابقاً جنح الى الكذب قائلاً انه علم انهم يسألونه عن الملائكة والابن فاجابهم دفعة. ثم ان مأوله انما أوله بما⁴ ذكر فراراً من نفي العلم المختص بالاله اثباته وذلك بعينه موجود فيما ذكره من التأويل بل الجهالة فيه اعظم. وبيانه انه اذا جعل الابن والملائكة معطوفين على ضمير الساعة كان معناه: واما معرفة عين الساعة ومعرفة حقيقة الابن حقيقة الملائكة فلا يعرف ذلك الا الاب وحده.

وهو عليه الصلاة والسلام واذا اطلق الابن اراد نفسه واذا اطلق الاب اراد الاله جل اسمه فيعود عين ما فروا منه وزيادة في الجهالة لانه في ظاهر النص المذكور نفى عن نفسه معرفة عين الساعة فقط وفي هذا التأويل يكون قد نفى عن نفسه معرفة عين الساعة ومعرفة حقيقة نفسه ومعرفة حقيقة الملائكة. فاعجب من عقول يجب على العاقل ان يحمد الله ان حماه من اختلالها ساخرا ممن حاول ان

¹ج: الثالث والاربعون ²ب: ولا الابن الاب وحده ³ب: ليقطع ⁴ان مأوله انما أوله بما ... في ج: ان مأوله بما

[Jesus confesses ignorance about future events]

The fourth passage is narrated by Mark in his gospel in chapter 44, 'Concerning that day and that hour, no-one knows, not the angels that are in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father alone'.³³ In this passage he makes clear his definite humanity, denying to himself the knowledge pertaining to God and this is one of the clearest indications of his definite humanity. Their insanity has led them to understand that the angels and the Son are attached to the pronoun of the 'hour'.³⁴ The assumption of this insanity is: that day and that hour are not known by anyone, nor are the angels nor the Son, but only the Father alone.

It is an astonishing thing about this teaching how it has overlooked that the attributes of God, even if they are not affirmed by certain proofs, then at the very least their existence is clearly evident. Notice how far-fetched is this interpretation that is repugnant to the ear and how much it contradicts the literal meaning. Furthermore, when one who teaches it was driven into a corner, and it was said to him, which expression in this passage could be understood to relate to a question about the angels and the Son? In order to arrive at the corresponding reply, he inclined to a lie, saying that he (Jesus) knew that they asked him about the angels and the Son and he gave them a quick reply. Moreover, its interpreter explained that it was a means to escape from denying knowledge appropriate to God and that is exactly present in what he described in the interpretation, but the ignorance in it is greater. It shows that if he attached the Son and the angels to the pronoun of 'hour' its meaning would be: concerning knowledge of the hour itself and the true knowledge of the Son and the angels, no-one has knowledge of them except the Father alone.

If he, on him be blessing and peace, intended the Son to refer to himself and intended the Father to refer to God, may his name be exalted, then what they flee from is exactly what they return to, but which is increased in ignorance because, in the above passage, he clearly only denied to himself knowledge of the exact hour. Yet in this interpretation he denied to himself knowledge of the exact hour as well as true knowledge of himself and true knowledge of the angels. How amazing is such a mentality! A rational person should praise God for protecting him from derangement. What is more ridiculous than trying to deny a lesser ignorance by affirming a greater ignorance? So it is clear that contradicting the obvious meaning of this passage by means of what he said is

33 Mark 13:32.

34 The author is arguing that Christians who hold to the divinity of Christ are driven to reject the obvious intention of Jesus' statement by interpreting the pronoun 'it' not to refer to 'the hour' but to 'the angels and himself', which would be absurd.

ينفي جهالة دنيا فائتبه جهالة عليا. فقد وضح ان مخالفة ظاهر هذا النص بما ذكره هذيان يقبيح على العاقل ان يضيع الزمان في الاشتغال به.

النص الخامس¹ ذكره يوحنا المذكور في انجيله في الفصل السابع والثلاثين: "تكلم يسوع بهذا ثم رفع عينيه الى السماء وقال: يا أبتِ قد حضرت الساعة فيجدّ ابنك ليمجدّك ابنك كما اعطيته السلطان على كل جسد ليعطى كل من اعطيته² حياة الابد. وهذه حياة الابد ان يعرفوك انك الاله الحق وحدك والذي ارسلته يسوع المسيح."

صرّح بالرسالة للمسيح ولا يمكن عود ذلك الى الناسوت لأن المسيح اسم عندهم لمجموع حقيقة مركبة من لاهوت وناسوت. فان ادعى مدّع ان ذلك محمول على المجاز لم يسدّ كلامه وكذب بامتناع اطلاق مثل ذلك في العرف اذ قول القائل رأيت حبراً وهو يريد الزاج من حيث هو زاج منفكاً عن الحبرية ليس من السداد في شيء.

هذا كله بعد ان يلجأ الى بيان ان لغة الانجيل من احكامها اطلاق الكل وإرادة البعض. فان نهض بذلك فما اشرنا اليه جواب كافٍ لمساوتها اللغة العربية وان لم ينهض بذلك فالاعتراض ساقط ولا حاجة الى ما ذكر من الجواب. ثم أكد ذلك بقوله: "ليعطى كل من اعطيته حياة الابد" ثم فسّر حياة الابد فقال: "وهذه حياة الابد ان يعرفوك³ انك الإله الحق وحدك والذي ارسلته يسوع المسيح." فصّرح للاله بالالهية والوحدانية وصرّح لنفسه بالرسالة.

¹ سقط في ج ² السلطان على كل جسد ليعطى كل من اعطيته: سقط في ج ³ في ب: ان قولك

an insanity that is too repugnant to intelligent people to waste time in being pre-occupied with it.

[Jesus claims to be sent by the one true God]

The fifth passage the aforementioned John narrates in his gospel in chapter 37,

Jesus said this, then raised his eyes to heaven and said, my Father, the hour has come, so glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you. As you gave him the authority over everybody, he gives everybody that you gave him eternal life. And this is eternal life that they know that you alone are the one true God and that the one you sent is Jesus Christ.³⁵

He clearly ascribed messengership to Christ, and it is not possible to refer that to the humanity because Christ is a name, according to them, for the true reality composed of divinity and humanity. So if someone claims that this bears a metaphorical meaning, his words would not be sound, and he is refuted by the impossibility of making such an application to what is customary. If someone should say, 'I saw ink' when he intended iron sulphate with respect to iron sulphate being separated from the inkiness, then this is totally incorrect. After all this, he may resort to showing that the language of the gospel, according to its rules, expresses the whole but intends the part. If he uses this, then what we have indicated is a sufficient reply, due to the similarity of the Arabic language. If he does not use it, then the objection falls and there is no need to give any reply. Then he asserted that when he said, 'So that he gives to all those who you gave him eternal life'. Moreover, he explained eternal life saying, 'And this is eternal life that they know that you alone are the one true God and that the one you sent is Jesus Christ'. Therefore, he attributed to God the divinity and the oneness, and attributed to himself the messengership.³⁶

35 John 17:1–3.

36 This is the same interpretation given by 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. circa. 855) in his *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā* (Reply to the Christians) of John 17:3. al-Ṭabarī argues that although the Christian creeds teach three gods (*thalātha āliha*) the gospels do not. The declaration of Jesus in John 17:3 'is the pure, unadulterated oneness (*al-tawḥīd*) and the confession that he was sent, and this is the faith of the Messiah and of all the prophets', *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, pp. 121–122. See further, Thomas, 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī: a convert's assessment of his former faith', pp. 137–155.

وتصرّح أيضاً بولص الرسول في حقّه حين وصف القيامة فقال "فحينئذٍ يخضع الابن الذي اخضع له كل شيء" وصفه بالخضوع لله في القيامة وهذا شأن العبيد الخاضعين لعظمة الله. ووصف الاله بالقدرة على اخضاع كل شيء لعظمته وهذا شأن الاله القادر.

وذكر ايضا في رسالته التي سيّرها الى افسس: "ولست افترُّ من الشكر عنكم والذكر لكم في صلواتي ان اله¹ سيدنا يسوع المسيح الاب المجيد يعطيكم² روح الحكمة والبيان" فصرح بطلب الاعطاء من اله يسوع المسيح ووصف الاله بانه الاب المجيد وجعله الها للمسيح الذي هو اسم عندهم للحقيقة الثالثة.

وصرّح أيضاً في كتاب الرسائل فقال: "الله واحد هو والوسيط³ بين الله والناس واحد هو الانسان⁴ يسوع المسيح" وصرّح الانجيل أيضاً: "ولا تدعوا لكم معلماً على الارض فان معلّمكم واحد هو المسيح ولا تدعوا لكم اباً على الارض فان اباكم واحد هو الذي في السماء" دليل على التغير لانه وصف نفسه بوحدة التعليم في الارض ووصف الاله بوحدة الابوه وهو اذا اطلق الاب اراد الاله فيكون قد وصفه بوحدة الالهية. ثم اشار الى جهة العلوّ بقوله "فان اباكم واحد هو الذي في السماء" وهذا النص ذكره متى في انجيله في الفصل السادس والسبعين.

ثم من العجب انكارهم خضوعه المنافي للالهية وهو القائل عند قيام⁵ عازر وقد رفع عينيه الى السماء "يا أبت اشكرك لانك تسمع لي وانا اعلم انك تسمع لي في كل حين لكن لاجل هذا الجمع الحاضر ليؤمنوا انك أرسلتني" صرّح بذلك يوحنا في انجيله والقائل ايضاً ليلة الصلب على رأيهم "ان كان يستطيع فلتعبر عني هذه الكأس" متضرعاً للاله. وقوله عندما صلب على رأيهم "إلوي إلوي ليا صافخثاني"⁶

¹ في ج، س ان يكون اله ² في ج، س ان يعطيكم ³ في ج: الواسط ⁴ في س ازبدت "الانسان" في الهامش
وسقط في ب ⁵ من "عند قيام" الى "ليلة الصلب" سقط في ج ⁶ في ج الا صفخثاني

Paul the apostle also explained the truth of this when he described the resurrection saying, 'Then the Son will be subject to the one who subjects all things to himself'.³⁷ He describes him being subject to God at the resurrection and this is appropriate to worshipping servants subject to the majesty of God. He describes God as having the power to subject everything to his majesty, and this is appropriate to God the All Powerful.

He also mentions in his epistle that he sent to Ephesus, 'I never stop giving thanks for you and remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you the spirit of wisdom and clarity'.³⁸ So he made it clear by asking for the gift from the God of Jesus Christ, describing God as the glorious Father, and making him the God of Christ whose name, according to them, is the third reality.³⁹

He also explained this in the book of the epistles, when he said, 'There is one God and there is one mediator between God and humans, the man Jesus Christ'.⁴⁰ The gospel is also clear, 'Do not call anyone master on earth, for you have one master, Christ, and do not call anyone father on earth for you have one Father who is in heaven'.⁴¹ This is evidence of a distinction, because he described himself as having exclusive teaching on the earth and described God as having exclusive fatherhood and if he intended to attach the Father to God then he described him as having exclusive divinity. Then he indicated the aspect of the exaltation, when he said, 'For you have one Father who is in heaven', and this passage Matthew relates in his gospel in chapter 76.

In addition, it is amazing how they deny that his subjection excludes his divinity when he was the one who said at the raising of Lazarus, as he raised his eyes to heaven: 'Father, I thank you for listening to me and I know that you always listen to me, but for the sake of the crowd gathered here, that they might believe that you sent me'.⁴² John set this forth in his gospel. He also said on the night of the crucifixion, according to their opinion, 'If it is possible then take this cup from me',⁴³ imploring God. He said when he was crucified, according

37 1 Corinthians 15:28.

38 Ephesians 1:16–17.

39 The author later describes the teaching of the Jacobites that after the union of the divinity with the humanity in Christ a third reality occurred, which was different from each of those two realities, and was composed of divinity and humanity.

40 1 Timothy 2:5.

41 Matthew 23:8–9.

42 John 11:41–42. 'Alī al-Ṭabarī similarly argues on the basis of verse 42 that Christians cannot assert the divinity of Christ when he himself proclaims that 'God was the one who sent him to the world'. See *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, p. 135.

43 Matthew 26:39.

وهذه كلمات عبرانية معناها: "الهي الهي لم تركتني" واي اله هذا شأنه شك في استطاعة عبور الكأس ورفع صوته مستفهماً من الهه لم تركه ثم غير بين ارادته واردة الهه بقوله "و ليس كأرادتي لكن كإرادتك" هذه الالفاظ مصّحح بها في انجيل متى.

ثم غير ايضاً بينه و بين الهه بقوله: "لا تضطرب قلوبكم آمنوا بالله وآمنوا بي" هذه الكلمات مصّحح بها في انجيل يوحنا في الفصل الثاني والثلاثين. ثم اوضح المغايرة فقال في الفصل السابع من هذا الانجيل: "ان من سمع كلامي وآمن بمن ارسلني وجبت له الحياة الدائمة" فصّحح بأن له مرسلًا ومعلوم ان المرسل غير المرسل ثم جعل الحياة الدائمة مشروطة بالإيمان بمُرسله وسماع كلامه المخبر به عن الله. وهذا تصرّح بأحوال الانبياء المرسلين لقد¹ ظهرت فلا تخفى على أحدٍ إلا على اكن² لا يبصر القمر.

النص السادس³ ذكره ايضاً يوحنا في انجيله في الفصل الحادي والعشرين قال لهم يسوع: "لو كنتم بني ابراهيم كنتم تعملون اعمال ابراهيم لكنكم الان تريدون قتلي انسان كهتكم بالحق الذي سمعته من الله" وفي الفصل ايضاً: "فإن لي كلاماً كثيراً اقوله فيكم وأحكم به ولكن الذي ارسلني حق والذي سمعته منه به اتكلم في العالم" وفي الفصل ايضاً "لأنني لم اتكلم بها من نفسي لأن الاب الذي ارسلني هو

¹ "لقد ظهرت فلا تخفى على أحدٍ إلا على اكن (اعمى) لا يبصر القمر" سقط في ب و اضيف في الهامش في س ² آله في شيدياك ³ سقط في ج

to their opinion, *'Ilūwī, Ilūwī, līmā sāfakhthānī'*⁴⁴ and these are Hebrew words which mean 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' What God is this person who doubts the possibility of the removal of the cup and raises his voice asking his God why he had left him? Furthermore, he distinguished between his will and the will of his God when he said, 'Not according to my will but according to your will'. These excerpts are contained in the gospel of Matthew.⁴⁵

Moreover, he also distinguished between himself and his God when he said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God and believe in me.'⁴⁶ These words are contained in the Gospel of John in chapter 32. In addition, he clarified the distinction when he said in chapter 7 of this gospel, 'Whoever hears my words and believes in the one who sent me will receive eternal life.'⁴⁷ So he explained that he had a sender and it is known that the sender is not the one who is sent. Moreover, he made eternal life conditional on faith in his sender, and on hearing his words that report about God. This is such a clear presentation of the characteristics of the sent prophets that it cannot be hidden from anyone except a blind person who is unable to see the moon.

[Jesus says he is a man who has listened to God]

The sixth passage is also narrated by John in his gospel in chapter 21. Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children you would do the deeds Abraham did, but at this moment, you want to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that he heard from God';⁴⁸ and also in the same chapter, 'Indeed I have many more words to say to you and with which I could deliver a judgement, but the One who sent me is truth and what I have heard from him I speak in the world';⁴⁹ also in the same chapter, 'For I do not speak for myself, because the Father who sent me gave me the command about what I should say and about what I should

44 Matthew 27:46, and Mark 15:34.

45 The author appeals to Matthew for evidence of the humanity of Jesus. Muslim refutations of the divinity of Jesus typically used statements of Jesus from the synoptic gospels to counter Christian claims for the divine nature in Christ, as in the refutations by al-Qāsīm ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī al-Rassī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī. See further, M. Beaumont, 'Early Muslim Interpretations of the Gospels', *Transformation* 22, 2005, pp. 20–27.

46 John 14:1.

47 John 5:24.

48 John 8:39–40.

49 John 8:26.

اعطاني الوصية بماذا أقول وبماذا انطق واعلم ان وصيته حياة الأبد والذي اقله انا كما أمرني الاب كذلك اتكلم.

صرّح في هذا النص بالانسانية بقوله: "انسان كلمتكم بالحق الذي سمعته من الله"¹ اي: انا انسان. وصرّح بالرسالة وأنه لا يفعل إلا ما أمر به بقوله "كلمتكم بالحق الذي سمعته من الله"² وبقوله: "كما أمرني الاب كذلك أتكلّم" وقد صرح بولص³ الرسول برسائله المحضّة في رسالته التي كتبها للعبرانيين فقال: "انظروا الى هذا الرسول عظيم احوار ايماننا يسوع المسيح المؤمن عند مرسله وهو مثل موسى في جميع بيته". ويريد بيته الطوائف الذي أرسل اليهم⁴ صرّح بانه من جملة احوارهم وصرّح بان له مرّسلا وانه مؤتمن عنده ثم جعله مثل موسى في جميع بيته.⁵ يدلّ على ذلك قوله في بقية الكلام في وصف عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام: "وانما بيته نحن معاشر المؤمنين" واذا ثبت ان المراد بجمع بيته أمته كان معنى الكلام: وهو مثل موسى في امته. وهذا تصريح بالرسالة المحضّة.

وقد صرّح في هذه الرسالة بما يوضح ذلك فقال: فان لكل بيت انساناً يبنيه والذي يبنى الكل هو الله. يريد بذلك ان كل واحد من هذين الرسولين هُديت به أمته والذي هدى الكل في الحقيقة انما هو الله. وعاضد هذا التأويل مصرّح في الانجيل وهو "انا كرمة الحق وابي هو الغارس كلّ غصن في" صرح بهذا النص يوحنا في الفصل الفارقليط وفي اللغة التي ترجمت منها هذه الرسالة المؤمن عبد من خلقه.⁶

بقي ههنا بحث وهو ان مثل هذا المجاز السالف وهو اطلاق لفظ الحلول واطلاق: "أنا والاب واحد" لم يؤذن لصاحب شريعتنا ولا لاحد من امته باستعماله البتة لكن عيسى صاحب شريعة وكل شريعة اختصت باحكام وحيث اطلق هذه النصوص واعتذر عن توهم ارادة ظواهرها بضره لهم المثل دلّ على أنه اذّن له باطلاقها واستعمال المجاز المذكور. وكذلك اطلاق الابوة والبنوة سنذكر المعنى الحامل له على اطلاقهما.

¹ الذي سمعته من الله؛ اضيفت في ج² من "اي انا" الى "من الله" سقط في ج³ في ج يونس⁴ "ويريد بيته الطوائف الذي أرسل اليهم" سقط في ب وس وشيدباك⁵ "صرّح بانه من جملة احوارهم وصرّح بان له مرّسلا وانه مؤتمن عنده ثم جعله مثل موسى في جميع بيته" سقط في ب و اضيف في الهامش في س.⁶ "عبد من خلقه" سقط في ب و اضيف بدلا "المؤمن لمن جعله كوسى اميناً في كل بيته"

pronounce, and I know that his command is eternal life, and what I say is what the Father commanded me; so I speak'.⁵⁰

In this passage he clearly implied humanity when he said, 'A man speaks to you the truth that he heard from God'. In other words, I am a man. He explained that he was sent and that he only did what he had been commanded, when he said, 'I have told you the truth that I heard from God', and when he said, 'as the Father has commanded me so I speak'. Paul the apostle had pointed out his definite messengership in his epistle that he wrote to the Hebrews, when he said, 'Consider this messenger, the great high priest of our faith, Jesus Christ, entrusted by the one who sent him and he is like Moses in all of his house'.⁵¹ He meant by 'his house' the tribes that he had been sent to, explaining that he was among their great leaders, that he had a sender and that he was entrusted by him, and then he compared him to Moses in all of his house. This is evident from the rest of his words describing Jesus, on him be blessing and peace, 'his house' is us, the community of the believers. If it is affirmed that the intention of 'all of his house' is his nation, the meaning of the words would be that he is like Moses in his nation. This is an explanation of his pure messengership.

He explains in this epistle what makes this clear, saying, 'For each house has a man that built it and the one who built everything is God'.⁵² He intended by this that each one of these two messengers has been a guide for his nation and the one who guides all of them truly is God. This metaphorical interpretation is clearly supported in the gospel, when he says, 'I am the true vine and my Father is the grafter of each branch in me'.⁵³ John included this passage in the chapter about the Paraclete.⁵⁴ In the language that this letter was translated from, the entrusted one is a servant of the one who created him.

There remains an investigation at this point; It is an example of the preceding metaphor and it applies to the expression 'the indwelling', and applies to 'I and the Father are one'. This use is not permitted at all to the founder of our divine law or to anyone from his community, but Jesus is a founder of a divine law and each divine law has particular regulations. When he (Jesus) spoke in these passages he removed any suspicion of intending a literal meaning by offering them a simile showing that he was permitted to apply it and to use the above mentioned metaphor. Likewise, he applied it to the fatherhood and the sonship, and we will describe the meaning which led him to apply it to them.

50 John 12:49–50.

51 Hebrews 3:1–2.

52 Hebrews 3:4.

53 John 15:1–2.

54 The Paraclete is mentioned in John 14:16, 26, 15:26 and 17:7.

فليت شعري باي عذر يعتذر المعاند بعد تصريحه بالانسانية والرسالة وتقيده احكامه بما يؤمر به وتأويله نفسه ما تقدم من ظواهر النصوص الدالة على الاتحاد معتدراً عن بعضها بضره المثل المذكور لليهود ومصرحاً في بعضها بالرسالة ووقوفه في بعضها سائلاً داعياً لله عزَّ وجلَّ موقف العبد الخاضع مستمطراً احسان الاله لتلاميذته بقوله: "احفظهم باسمك الذي اعطيني" وبقوله "قدسهم بحقك" ثم تجده اذا الجأته المضايق ابا براقش ان وجد ما يدل على انسانيته اعاد ذلك على ناسوته وان وجد ظاهراً عجز عن تأويله ردَّ ذلك الى لاهوته. فانظر كيف اعمى الله بصيرة من يجعل الهه تارة انساناً وتارة الهاً تعالى الله عما يقولون علواً كبيراً.

ثم لا بدّ من ابطال ذلك غير مقصّرٍ عن الشناعة والاستبعاد¹ فنقول: هم يعتقدون ان الاله خالق ناسوت عيسى عليه السلام ثم ظهر فيه مُتَّحِداً به ويعنون بالاتحاد انه صار له به تعلق على حد تعلق

¹ في ج "الاستبعاد"

I wish I knew what excuse the stubborn person could offer to excuse himself after his (Jesus') admission of his humanity, his messengership, his submission to the regulations by which he was commanded, and his metaphorical interpretation of himself, in the preceding passages that would literally mean the union. He removed that meaning from some of them by offering the aforementioned simile to the Jews, made clear in some of them his messengership, and in others took the stand of the obedient servant, by earnestly praying to God, exalted and glorious, calling down good deeds from God for his disciples by saying, 'Keep them in your name that you gave me', and by saying 'Make them holy in your truth'. Then, when the narrow straits confine him, you see him altering like a chameleon; if he finds what shows his (Jesus') humanity he makes it refer to his humanity, and if he finds a literal meaning which he cannot interpret metaphorically he refers it to his divinity. See how God has blinded the vision of the one who makes his god sometimes a human being and sometimes a god. May God be greatly exalted far above what they say.

[The union of divinity and humanity in Jesus according to the three main Christian communities]

[The union according to the Jacobites]

We certainly must refute without neglecting its repugnance and improbability so we say: they⁵⁵ believe that God created the humanity of Jesus, on him be peace, then he appeared in it, and united with it. They mean by the union that a connection occurred between him and it like the connective relationship

55 Only at the end of the section does the author name the group he is referring to here as 'the Jacobites', named after Jacob Baradaeus who promoted the belief that Christ was a unity of hypostasis and physis such that the one physis was equivalent to the hypostasis of the divine word, in the period after 536 when the Emperor Justinian condemned this 'one nature' Christology as heresy. The Empress Theodora encouraged Jacob in his leadership of the miaphysite view and Jacob is said to have ordained clergy with these beliefs. See Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 182, and A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2.2. pp. 504–507.

النفس بالبدن ثم مع هذا التعلق حدثت حقيقة ثالثة مغايرة لكل واحدة من الحقيقتين مركبة من لاهوتٍ وناسوتٍ موصوفةٌ بجميع ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من حيث هو اله و انسان وقد ارتكبوا في اثبات هذه الحقيقة فضائح كان الاخلاق بهم سترها، والاخرق اذا لم يستح قال ما شاء، لانهم اثبتوا لها جميع ذاتيات الانسان ولوازمه وملزوماته وصفاته وجميع ما يجب للاله وما يستحيل عليه من حيث هو اله وقضوا بانها مغايرة لكل واحدٍ منهما مع الاشتراك في جميع ما ذكر. هذه مقالة من لا عقل له.

وهذه الحقيقة هي المعبر عنها عندهم بالمسيح وهذا خبط عظيم وعدول عن الحق الواضح وهل هم في هذه المقالة الا كما قيل:

طلب الابق العقوق فلما لم ينله اراد بيض الانوق

لانهم حاولوا ان يثبتوا تعلقاً بين ذات الاله وذات عيسى عليه السلام على حد تعلق النفس بالبدن فلم يقدروا على تحقيق ذلك بل ادعوا اثباته بمجرد الامكان من غير اثباتان بحجةٍ محرّكةٍ للظن فكيف يدعون إثبات ما هو مستحيل الامكان معتذر الوجود؟

وبيان تعذر ذلك ان وجود كل حقيقة مركبة موقوف على وجود اجزائها وتركيبها تركيباً خاصاً فحينئذ تكون مفتقرة في وجودها الى وجود اجزائها ويكون كل جزء من اجزائها مفتقراً في جزئيته اي فيما يصير به جزءاً محصلاً له صفة الجزئية وتركيبه الخاص الى انضمام غيره والتقدير ان احد جزئي هذه الحقيقة اللاهوت وجزءها الآخر الانسان وهو المحصل اللاهوت صفة الجزئية وتركيبه

between the soul and the body.⁵⁶ Then with this connective relationship, a third reality occurred, different from each of the two realities, composed of divinity and humanity, and having the attributes of all that is required from each of them, with respect to him being God and man. They have committed grievous errors in asserting this reality, and it would have been better for them to hide them, for only an idiot who is without shame says what he wants to. They assert for it all the characteristics, necessities, requirements and attributes of the humanity, and all that is required and is impossible for God, with respect to him being God, and they affirm that it is different from each of the two, despite sharing in all that has been described. This is the utterance of one who has no intelligence.

This reality bears the title among them of ‘the Messiah’, yet this is completely mad and an abandonment of the clearest truth. Are they not, in speaking this way, like the one in the saying, ‘The idiot sought for a pregnant stallion and when he did not find it he looked for the eggs of a cock’?

Although they try to establish a connective relationship between the essence of God and that of Jesus, on him be peace, like the connective relationship between the soul and the body they cannot achieve it. They claim to establish it by mere possibility without producing an argument leading to what they suppose, so how can they claim to establish the existence of that which cannot possibly exist?

The proof of the impossibility of this is, if the existence of every composite reality depends upon the existence of its parts and its particular composition, then in this case it would be dependent, in its existence, on the existence of its parts and each part of it would depend on its being a certain part with certain characteristics of being connected to other parts. The supposition is that one part of this reality is the divinity and its other part is the humanity, and this

56 The Jacobite philosophical theologian Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (d. 974) refers to the union of the soul and the body as an analogy for the union of the divinity and humanity of Christ. See E. Platti, *Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, de l’Incarnation*, pp. 83, pp. 85–86, and especially pp. 198–199, where Ibn ‘Adī argues that the union between the soul and body of a human being is the best analogy available for the union between the divinity and the humanity. That this analogy was traditionally associated with the Jacobites is seen in the earliest known Muslim reference to this analogy in *al-Radd ‘alā al-Naṣāra* (Reply to the Christians) by al-Qāsim where he notes that the Jacobites believe that the eternal Son took a body from the virgin Mary and became one human being which is one like ‘a spirit (*rūḥ*) and a body (*jasad*)’, p. 16. See also the summary of various approaches to describing the union of the divine and human in Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq, ‘al-Radd ‘alā al-ittihād’, pp. 89–95, where al-Warrāq describes this theory as the word uniting with a human body such that the word is the controller of the body.

الخاص بانضمامه اليه جزءاً اذ بذلك حصل مجموع ما ذكر فيكون اللاهوت مفتقراً الى الانسان وذلك محال بين بطلانه. هذا اذا لم يُرد بالتركيب تركيب امتزاج واتحاد او مجاورة فان أُريد به شيء من ذلك كان الخطب اعظم في الفساد. وربما نقل عن بعض المغفلين منهم ان هذا التركيب لا تُعلم حقيقته وجوابهم ان مخالفة صرائح العقول والركون الى امرٍ غير معقول حماقة وبخافة في العقل.

ثم نقول ايضاً من الراسي إن الاله اذا كان خالقاً للناسوت ثم ظهر فيه متحداً به فقد حدث له صفة بعد خلقه وهو اتحاد به وظهوره فيه فنقول: اذاً هذه الصفة ان كانت واجبة الوجود استحال اتصافها بالحدوث وان كانت ممكنة الوجود استحال اتصاف الباري بها لان صفات الباري كلها واجبة الوجود، لان كل ما لزم من عدم وجوده محالٌ فهو واجب الوجود وصفات الاله يلزم من عدم وجودها محالٌ بين.

فان قيل ان كان هذا لازماً استحال خلق العالم بل استحال خلق مخلوق واحد لان الله عز وجل اذا خلق مخلوقاً واحداً حدث له صفة وهو اتصافه بخلقه فيلزم المحال المذكور. فالجواب ان هذا غير لازم البتة لان المعنى من كون الله خالقاً تقديره الخلق في الازل وهذه الصفة ثابتة له اذ لا فاذا خلق مخلوقاً فعله بوجوده في زمن خلقه والقدرة على ايجاده في ذلك الزمن ايضاً كلاهما ثابت ازلاً فلم يبق حادث سوى وجوده ووجوده ليس صفة قائمة بذات الاله جل اسمه بل بذات المخلوق. واما نسبة الوجود الى تأثير القدرة فيه زمن ايجاده فذلك من باب النسب والاضافات والنسب والاضافات

would require for the divinity the attribute of being a part and a part being connected to it in order to achieve the composition already described.

Therefore, the divinity is in need of the human being, and that is impossible, clearly false. However, it may not be intended by 'the composition', a composition of mixture or union or proximity, but if it is intended to be something like that, it is an even more profoundly corrupt notion. Perhaps it was reported by some of the foolish among them that the reality of this composition is not known, and the reply to them should be that contradicting sound reason and relying on something irrational is foolishness and absence of intelligence.

Then we also say concerning the principle: if God, when he created the humanity, appeared in it, and united with it, then indeed an attribute newly occurred in him after he created it, which is his union with it and his appearing in it. Then we say: if this attribute is a necessary existent, it is impossible for it to be described as contingent, and if it is a possible existent, it is impossible for it to be an attribute of the Creator because all attributes of the Creator are necessary existents. This is because what requires its non-existence to be impossible is a necessary existent, and it is clearly impossible that the attributes of God entail non-existence.

If it is said that if this is required, then the creation of the world is impossible, since the creation of just one created thing is impossible. This is because if God, exalted and glorious, created one created thing, an attribute would have newly occurred in him, and he would be circumscribed by his creation. Therefore, the above mentioned impossibility is entailed. The reply is that this is not at all entailed because the meaning of the saying 'God is Creator' is his ordaining of the creation in eternity and this attribute is established in him eternally. When he created a created thing, then his knowledge of its existence in the time of its creation, and also the power of producing it in that time were both established eternally.⁵⁷ Therefore the only new occurrence is its existence, and its existence is not an attribute existing in the essence of God, may his name be glorified, but is in the essence of the created thing. Concerning relating existence to the effect of the power in performing an action in the moment of its existence, surely this is in the category of relations and attachments, and relations and attachments are not in the category of existence, like 'above and below', and 'fatherhood and sonship'. This notion is clear and perceivable, contrary to what has been

57 The author is well acquainted with al-Ghazālī's works, especially *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, where he defends God's knowledge of all things, without this causing change in him, through his eternal knowledge. Here the author is producing a very similar argument that God is the creator without this causing change in him because his decreeing creation is one of his eternal attributes.

ليس امراً وجودياً كالفوقية والتحتية والابوة والبنوة وهذا معنى بين الظهور بخلاف ما تقدم فانه اذا اتحد بالناسوت كان اتحاده به صفة قائمة بذاته تعالى الله عن ذلك.

ثم لو فرض وجود هذه الحقيقة فالقول بانها حقيقة ثلاثة مغايرة لكل واحد من اللاهوت والناسوت موصوفة بكل ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من لوازم الانسان وملزوماته وصفاته من حيث هو انسان وما يجب لاله ويستحيل عليه من الصفات الثابتة له من حيث هو اله كلام متهافت لا مطمع لاحد في تحقيقه. ويانه ان الشئ انما يوصف بصفة اذا كان وصفه بها ممكماً واذا ثبت ذلك امتنع ان يجري على هذه الحقيقة احكام اللاهوت واحكام الناسوت لان جميع ما يجب للاهوت من الصفات وغيرها المختصة به من حيث هو لاهوت المميزة له عن غيره، ان كانت ثابتة للحقيقة الثالثة لزم ان تكون عين اللاهوت وكذلك القول في الناسوت لاشتراكها معهما في جميع لوازم كل واحد منهما وجميع ملزوماته وصفاته الثابتة له من حيث هو اله ومن حيث هو انسان على حد ما ذكر.

اذ لو ثبتت المغايرة والحالة هذه للزم ان ثبت لشيء جميع ذاتيات الانسان المقومة لحقيقتة وجميع عوارضه اللازمة والمفارقة ويفرض مع ذلك حقيقة مغايرة لحقيقة الانسان. هذا من المحال البين لأن جميع ذاتيات الانسان المقومة له وجميع عوارضه الثابتة له من حيث هو انسان متى وجدت في شئ اوجب¹ لذلك الشئ حقيقة الانسانية ونفت عنه صدق² ما يغيرها والا لم تكن ثابتة له من حيث هو انسان وقد فرضناها كذلك، هذا خلف.

ثم لو كانت الهاً كاملاً لثبت لها اوصاف الاله الكامل ومن اوصاف الاله الكامل ان لا يكون مركباً منه ومن الانسان لانه يلزم ان تكون ذات الاله محتاجة الى الانسان في الوجود ومسبوقة به وبنفسها ايضاً³. ان طائفة لم تنفطن لمثل هذا الخطاء الواضح فصوابهم عنقاء مغرب.

¹ في ج "وجب" ² في ج "ضد" ³ من "ثم لو كانت ... الى وبنفسها ايضاً" سقط في ج واضيف بدلا منها: ثم لو كانت انساناً كاملاً لثبت لها اوصاف الانسان ومن اوصاف الانسان ان لا يكون جزء حقيقه واحد جزئياً الاخر الاله جل اسمه وكذلك القول في الالهو...

mentioned above, because if he united with the humanity, this union would be an attribute added to his essence. May God be exalted far above that.

Therefore if the existence of this reality is supposed, then the teaching that it is a third reality different from both the divinity and the humanity, characterised by all that is necessary to each of them of the characteristics of the human and its requirements and attributes with respect to being a human being, and what is necessary to God, and what is impossible for him, concerning the attributes with respect to being God, is absurd speech and there is no hope for anyone in proving it. It is evident that something is only qualified by an attribute if this description is possible. If that is established, it is not acceptable that the properties of the divinity and the properties of the humanity come together in this reality. This is because all of the attributes necessary to the divinity and others which are peculiar to it with respect to being divine and which distinguish it from anything else, if they are established in the third reality would be the divinity itself. The same could be said about the humanity, because it shares with the two of them in all necessities of each, and all requirements and attributes with respect to being divine and human, according to what has been mentioned above.

Then if a distinction is established, and this is indeed the case, there would be established in this entity all the characteristics of the human being essential to his reality, and all non-essential distinctive characteristics, along with all that it is supposed to be a reality distinct from the reality of the human being. This is clearly impossible. Whenever all the fixed essentials of the human being and all his established non-essentials with respect to being human are found in a thing they necessitate the human reality in that thing. At the same time they exclude what is different, otherwise these things would not be established in it with respect to being human and indeed we must suppose it to be like that. This is an absurd argument.

Moreover, if the reality is perfectly divine then the characteristics of perfect divinity are established in it and among the attributes of perfect divinity are, that it is not composed of itself and of the humanity because it would entail that the essence of God needs the human being for its existence and be preceded by him and also by (the reality) itself. If a sect does not recognise a clear error such as this then 'the griffon of the west' must be true.⁵⁸

58 According to Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon, 'griffon of the west' (*'anqā' mughrib*) refers to a fabulous bird that no one has seen which supposedly lives in the far west.

فان قيل انما يلزم ذلك اذا جعلناها موصوفة بجميع ما يجب لاله من الصفات وغيرها وكذلك القول في الناسوت من حيث هو حقيقة. اما اذا اجرينا على كل من اللاهوت والناسوت جميع احكامه وصفاته التي كانت ثابتة له قبل التركيب فلم قلتم ان ذلك ممتنع؟

فالجواب ان اعتبار احكام جميع ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من حيث هو اله و انسان ان اعتبرت لا بقيد التركيب استحال ان يكون للحقيقة الثالثة اعتباراً² اذ يكون ذلك حكماً على المفرد بقيد كونه مفرداً. وان اعتبرت بقيد التركيب استحال بقاء جميعها بعد التركيب اذ لوبقى جميع ما يجب لكل واحد من المفردين من حيث هو كذلك بعد التركيب ثابتاً لهما للزم ان يكون ثابتاً للحقيقة (الثالثة)³ وحينئذ يلزم المحال المذكور وهو ان تكون الحقيقة الثالثة نفس اللاهوت ونفس الناسوت لاشتراكها معهما في جميع ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من الصفات وغيرها من حيث هو اله ومن حيث هو انسان. فثبت حينئذ بما ذكرناه ان وصفها بكل ما يجب لكل واحد⁴ من اللاهوت والناسوت ممتنع سواء اعتبرنا كل واحد منهما بقيد التركيب او منفكاً عنه.

هذه مباحثة من دقيق النظر فلتفهم وجاهلهم المركب يعتقد ان الخلاص من هذه الفادحة هيّن فيظنّ انه ينجو من هذه المضايق بامثلة لا تنفيذ⁵ عين المسئلة فيقول قد ثبت وصف الانسان بالجسمية والاحساس والنمو والتغير والفناء وانه ذو حيز وثبت ايضاً اتصافه بالنطق وادراك الكليات والجزئيات والفهم وغير ذلك مما يجب رده الى النفس. وهذه الاحكام انما يتم اعتقادها اذا نظر الى الجسم الحيواني من حيث هو كذلك والى النفس ايضاً من حيث هي كذلك.

وهذا الهديان متقاعد عما نحن بصدهه تقاعداً بيناً لانهم يعتقدون في الحقيقة الثالثة انها انسان كامل واله كامل وان جميع ما هو ثابت للانسان ثابت لها وكذلك القول في الاله فلا بدّ من مثال يفيد عين هذا الاعتقاد وانما يتم ذلك اذا ثبت ان الانسان يصدق عليه انه مجرد ليس بجسم ولا حالّ في جسم ولا متحيز وانه باق غير فان لانهم فلاسفة في هذه المسئلة فيثبتون له ما هو ثابت للنفس من حيث هي نفس⁶ ثم يصفونه ايضاً بنقيض ذلك مما هو ثابت للجسم الحيواني من حيث هو جسم فيقال انه جنس⁷

¹ سقط في ج ² في س اعتباران وفي ج اعتبارات ³ في ب، س، ج: "المفردة" لكن المعنى هنا يلزم ان تكون "الثالثة" ⁴ من "ما يجب لكل واحد... الى بكل ما يجب لكل واحد" سقط في ج ⁵ في ب، س، ج: تفيد. "تفيد" هنا صح لأنّها عانده على "بامثلة" ⁶ سقط في ج ⁷ في ج: جسم

If it is said that this only follows when we ascribe to the reality all attributes and other qualities that are necessary to the divinity, and likewise we should say about the humanity with respect to the reality; however, when we apply to both the humanity and the divinity all of the rules and attributes established before the composition, then why do you say that is unacceptable?

The reply is, if the predicates of all that is necessary to each of them with respect to being divine and human are considered apart from the composition, it is impossible to apply them to the third reality, because this would be applying a rule about a single unit being a separate entity. But if they are considered in the composition, it is impossible that all of them remain after the composition, because if all that is required for each of the separate entities, with respect to being what they are, remained after being composed, surely they would all be established in the third reality. At this point the absurdity already mentioned is unavoidable, and this is that the third reality would be itself the divinity and itself the humanity, sharing with them all that is required for each of them of attributes and other qualities with respect to being God and with respect to being a human being. So it is finally established by what we have discussed that it is impossible to attribute to it (the third reality) all that is required for both the divinity and the humanity, whether we consider each of them in the composition or separated from it.

This discussion requires subtle thought to be understood. Yet one of them who is ignorant about the composition believes that the escape from this grave difficulty is easy, for he supposes that he can get rid of these difficulties by analogies which are not suitable for this key question. He says, it is established that a human being is characterised by corporality, sensation, growth, changeability, passing away, and being in a location; and also established are, characterising him by attributes of speech, perception of the general and the particular, understanding, and other things which must be referred to the soul. These characteristics can only be considered if we look at the animal body with respect to being itself and also at the soul with respect to being itself.

This insanity is very far removed from what we have been discussing, because they believe that the third reality is a perfect human being and perfect God, and that all that is established in the human being is established in it, and likewise what is said about God. Therefore, there must be an analogy suitable for this very belief, but that will only operate when it is established that it is correct to say of the human being that he is abstract, without a body, not dwelling in a body, not in a location, that he is eternal, and immortal, for they are philosophers in this question. Therefore, they establish in him what is established in the soul, with respect to being a soul, and then they also attribute to him the opposite of that, what is established in the animal body, with respect

طبيعي يوجد مثله في اشخاصٍ مختلفة بالحدِّ والحقيقة وأنه حصّة من الجنس وأنه متحيّز متحرّك قابل الفساد¹. وظني ان من توافق² واثبت للحقيقة الثالثة ما اثبتته من

المحال غير بعيدٍ منه ان يحدد الضرورة ويلتزم عين ما ذكر³، وإلا فأبي فرق والعجب من الغفلة عن مثل هذه الامور الواضحة وان اعتقدت مع العلم بفسادها فاعظم في الجهالة.

فان قيل انما يلزم ذلك كله اذا كان التركيب الذي نقول به بتركيب امتزاج واختلاط ونحن لا نقول بذلك وانما نعني بتركيب هذه الحقيقة تركيباً معنوياً يرجع حاصله الى تعلق معنوي بين اللاهوت والانسوت. فالجواب ان هذا التعلّق قد سلف منّا بيان عدم جدواه فيما يحاولونه سواءً كانت النسبة عامة او مقيّدة.

هذا القول السالف في الحقيقة الثالثة منسوب الى رأي اليعقوبي.

واما الملكي فله مقالة شرّ من ذلك وستحكم عند سماعك أيّاه بان اراء هذه الطوائف ضحكة العقلاء وان الله عزّ وجلّ اسمه أضلّ بها قوماً اراد اضلالهم فكذلك طبع على قلوبهم وبصائرهم.

فنقول هم يعتقدون بان حقيقة انسانية عيسى عليه السلام وذات الاله حقيقتان متميزتان ليس بينهما اختلاط ولا امتزاج⁵ بل كل حقيقة باقية على جميع اوصافها الثابتة لها من حيث هي كذلك وان المسيح اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط وهي حقيقة غير مركّبة اخذت من الحقيقتين المذكورتين ولها اتحاد

¹ "وانه متحيّز متحرّك قابل الفساد" سقط في ب وس ² "توافق" في ب ³ في ج: يلزم عين ما ذكره ⁴ من "هذا القول السالف" ... الى "والذي اوقعهم" ما يقرب من اربع صفحات سقط في ج ⁵ ولا امتزاج: سقط في ب

to being a body, for it is said that he is of a natural species found similarly in different individuals, in definition and reality, and yet that he is but a part of the species, and that he is located, movable, and subject to corruption. It is my opinion that whoever is impudent enough to establish in the third reality what he has established of this absurdity is not far from rejecting logical necessity, by adhering to the source of his thinking, no matter how contradictory. How amazing is this stupidity over such obvious issues. If this is believed despite the knowledge of its falsehood then how profound is the ignorance!

It may be said that all of this would follow if the composition of which we speak is a composition of mixture and blending, yet we do not say that. We mean by the composition of this reality a spiritual composition whose occurrence results from a spiritual connection between the divinity and the humanity. We have already clearly stated that this connection is invalid for what they are trying to achieve, whether the relationship is general or restricted.

This teaching about the third reality described above is ascribed to the opinion of the Jacobites.

[The union according to the Melkites]

Concerning the Melkites,⁵⁹ their teaching is more ridiculous than that, and you will judge, when you hear it yourself, that the opinions of these sects are laughable to intelligent people, and that God, may his name be exalted and glorious, has led astray people he intended to lead astray, and has in such a way imprinted on their hearts and their minds.

We say, they believe that the reality of the human Jesus, on him be peace, and the essence of God, are two distinct realities; there is no mixture or blending between them, but each reality keeps all the attributes established in it, with respect to what it is. They believe that the Messiah is a hypostasis of the divine reality alone, and it is a reality which is not composed, taken from the two

59 This name was given to Christians who followed the Christology of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon upheld by the Roman Emperor as orthodox, and was used by Jacobites such as Abū Rā'īṭa in the early ninth century to refer to Chalcedonians who believed that the union of the divine and human in Christ was in terms of one hypostasis in two natures. See his 'al-Radd 'alā al-malakiyya fi-l-ittiḥād' (Reply to the Melkites on the Union), pp. 65–72. See S. Griffith, 'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria' in *Syrian Christians under Islam*, ed., D. Thomas, Leiden, 2001, pp. 9–55.

بالإنسان الكليّ. فانظر الى عوار هذا الكلام وعدم انتظامه وكيف اخطره الله ببال من اراد ان يغويهم ويصدّهم عن سبيل الحقّ الواضح كيف جعلوا حقيقة الاله ماخوذة من حقيقة الانسان وحقيقة نفسه ثم اثبتوا لها اتحاداً بالإنسان الكليّ والانسان الكليّ لا وجود له في الخارج فتكون حينئذٍ متحدةً بما لا وجود له الا في الذهن ويلزم على هذا الرأي السخيف ان يكون المصلوب هو الاله تعالى الله عن ذلك، ولننظم من هذا الرأي المقول قياساً منطقياً فنقول:

المسيح صلب ولا شئ مما صلب باله فلا شئ من المسيح باله¹

وهولاء لا يقدرّون على منع الكبرى لان حقيقة المسيح لا يقولون بتكبيها والمتحدّ به لا وجود له في الخارج. فيرجع اذاً حاصل هذا الرأي الى ان المسيح المصلوب نسبةً الى الانسان الكليّ الموجود في الذهن وهذا لا يدفع ما الزموا لان النسب—قد سلف منا بيان عدم كونها من الأمور الوجودية—ثم ولو حكمنا عليها بالوجود لم يحصل لهم بذلك نجاة لأن النسب والانسان الكليّ كل منهما لا يوصف بصلب ولا ألم.

فان قيل ان النوع الكليّ الطبيعي موجود في الخارج. قلنا إن اريد ذلك لزم ان يكون لاله اتحاد بكل فردٍ من افراد الانسان². فان قيل المراد خصوصية حصّة عيسى عليه السلام مع قطع النظر عن مشخصاته

¹ في س بالاة ² في س: الاسلام

realities already mentioned, and united with the universal humanity.⁶⁰ Notice the defect in these words and their lack of order, and how God has brought them to the minds of those who he intended to lead astray and to deflect from the path of the evident truth, and how they have caused the divine reality to be taken from the human reality and the reality itself. Then they establish a union with the universal humanity, which has no actual existence, so it would be united with what only exists in the mind.⁶¹ It must follow, according to this ridiculous opinion, that the crucified one is God, may God be exalted far above that.⁶² We have composed from this above mentioned opinion a logical syllogism, and we say:

The Messiah was crucified, and nothing of that which was crucified was divine, therefore nothing of the Messiah was divine.

These people cannot deny the major premise because they say that the reality of the Messiah is not composed, and that what is united with it has no actual existence. The sum of this opinion refers back then to the crucified Messiah being related to the universal humanity existing in the mind, but this does not match what is required, because the relationships have already been shown by us to be non-existent among existent things. Even if we decided that they existed there would be no escape for them, because neither the relationships nor the universal humanity can have crucifixion or suffering attributed to them.

If it is said that the kind of universal nature actually exists, we reply, if that is meant, it is required that God be united with each one of the human individuals. It may be said that what is meant is particular to Jesus, on him be peace, regardless of any characteristics distinguishing him from others. We say that this is an intellectual consideration which has no actual existence. The existence of what is particular to him depends upon the existence of certain

60 For a ninth-century Muslim refutation of the Melkite conception of 'universal humanity' see Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq, 'al-Radd 'alā al-ittiḥād', pp. 124–134, and pp. 222–239.

61 Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq also argues that the idea of universal humanity is unworkable in real life since if Mary 'did give birth to the universal human in this respect, then every woman who has given birth to a child has given birth to the universal human in this respect', Thomas, p. 131.

62 Muslim objections to the supposed death of God as a result of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ can be found in al-Warrāq, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–125, and pp. 154–165, and in al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, pp. 97–98.

المميّزة له عن غيره. قلنا هذا اعتبار ذهنيّ لا وجود له في الخارج بل وجود هذه الحصّة ملزوم لوجود مشخّصات فيرجع حاصل هذا الى الاتحاد بانسان جزئيّ وسنبطل هذا الرأي عن قريب.

ثم لو تصوّر ان تكون حقيقة الاله مأخوذة من حقيقة الانسان وحقيقة نفسه للزم ان يكون ما حصل به الوجود لحقيقة الاله على الصفات الثابتة لها اذ ذلك من الحقيقتين سابقاً على وجود حقيقة الاله موصوفة بما ذكر وحينئذ يكون وجود حقيقة الاله الموصوفة بذلك مسبوقةً بوجود حقيقة الانسان ومسبوقةً ايضاً بوجود حقيقة نفسه. وصفات الاله يجب ان تكون واجبة الوجود ثابتة ازلاً لذاته واحدى الحقيقتين التي هي شرط لوجود حقيقة الاله موصوفة بما ذكر هي حقيقة الانسان وحدوثها مقطوع به فكيف تكون شرطاً لما هو ثابت ازلاً؟

هذا كله اذا عنيّ بالاخذ ان ذات الاله أُحدثت¹ لها صفة عند خلق الناسوت فإن أريد بذلك ان الحقيقتين شرط في اصل وجود ذات الاله جلّ اسمه فهذا كلام من لا عقل له.

هذا رأي القدماء منهم وأما المتأخرون فيمثل مقالة هؤلاء يقولون من غير فرقان الا في الاتحاد فأنهم يقولون أن للمسيح اتحاداً بانسان جزئيّ والمسيح عند الفريقين اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط وهي عند الفريقين ايضاً حقيقة غير مركبة أخذت من الحقيقتين يعنون بالحقيقتين حقيقة الاله جلّ اسمه وانسانية عيسى عليه السلام. ثم وقع الاتفاق منهما على ان كل حقيقة باقية على جميع اوصافها من غير اختلاط ولا امتزاج بل كل منهما حافظة ذاتها من حيث هي كذلك والمسيح الذي هو اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط فقد صرّحوا بصلبه فيلزم ايضاً للفريق الثاني ما لزم الاول.

¹ في س: حدثت

particular characteristics, and the outcome would be a return to union with a separate human being. We will refute this opinion shortly.⁶³

Furthermore, even if it is imagined that the divine reality is taken from the human reality and the reality itself, surely it follows that they have brought about the existence of the divine reality, with the attributes established in it, because it is produced from the two realities preceding the existence of the divine reality, as already described. Therefore, the existence of the divine reality which is given such attributes is preceded by the existence of the human reality, and also preceded by the existence of the reality itself. The attributes of God must necessarily exist and be established eternally in his essence. However, one of the two realities, which is a condition of the existence of the divine reality with the attributes already mentioned, is the human reality, and its temporality is already agreed, so how could it be a condition of what is established eternally?

If what is meant by ‘the taking’ (of the divine nature from the human nature) is that an attribute was newly fashioned in the essence of God when he created the humanity, and if it is intended by this that the two realities are a condition of the existence of the essence of God, may his name be glorified, then this would be the speech of someone with no intelligence.

This is the opinion of those among them from early times. Those of recent times speak in a similar way to them, only differing over ‘the union’. They say that there is a union between the Messiah and a particular human being. According to both groups, the Messiah is a hypostasis of the divine reality only, and a reality that is not composed, taken from the two realities; by the two realities, they mean the reality of God, may his name be glorified, and the humanity of Jesus, on him be peace. Moreover, there is agreement between the two groups that each reality retains all of its attributes, without mixture or blending, but each of the two keeps its essence with respect to being what it is. Then they clearly state that the Messiah, who is a hypostasis of the divine reality only, was crucified. Therefore there follows necessarily for the second group what followed necessarily for the first one.

63 For a tenth-century Muslim argument that the universal humanity must be particular see al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, p. 92.

اما الاول فقد مضى القول فيه مُبيناً. واما الثاني فلانهم مصرّحون بان المسيح عليه السلام اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط ومعتقدون بان حقيقته غير مرّكبة ليس بينها وبين حقيقة الانسان اختلاط ولا امتزاج وقد حكموا مع ذلك بصلبه فيلزم ان يكون المصلوب هو الاله.

فان قيل ان الفريقين كل منهما قائل بالاتحاد فلم لا يعود الصلب الى المتحد به؟ فنقول هذه الدعوى لا يقدرّون على تحقيقها البتّة. اما القدماء فلأن المتحد به لا وجود له الا¹ في الذهن ولأن حقيقة المسيح عندهم غير² مرّكبة، واما المتأخرون فيمثل هذه المقالة ايضاً يقولون. واما الاتحاد عندهم بانسان جزئي فخاله يرجع الى نسبة. والعجب من اطلاقهم الصلب على المسيح الذي هو اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط.

ثم يعترفون بان الاتحاد غير معقول الحقيقة وكيف يستجيز العاقل ان يطلق الصلب على المسيح الذي هو اقنوم لحقيقة الاله فقط ويصرّح بجمله بحقيقة الاتحاد الذي يبتي على العلم به ردّ الالم الى الانسان وصرّفه عن الاله جلّ اسمه؟ وأعجب من ذلك ركونه الى ما لا يعلم حقيقته وله عن هذه الجهالة مندوحة ظاهرة واي عذر لمن يعتقد ان الحامل له على ذلك³ ما ورد من ظواهر النصوص الدالة على الاتحاد وما ظهر على يد المسيح عليه السلام من الخوارق وهذه اعتراف بالجهل الضادّ عن الحق. ومن لم يدر اوضاع العلوم ولم يكن له منها هادٍ يزعه عن الجهالة هان عليه ان يقول مثل ذلك.

¹ سقط في س ² سقط في ب ³ سقط في ب

As for the first group, what has been said about them is clear. As for the second group, even though they have declared that the Messiah, on him be peace, is a hypostasis of the divine reality only, and have believed that his reality is not composed, and have stated there is no mixture or blending with the human reality, they still believe in his crucifixion. Therefore, it necessarily follows that the crucified one is God.

If it is said, since both groups speak about the union, then why may the crucifixion not be related to the one who is united with the divine reality? We say, they cannot verify this claim at all. As for the early group, this is because the one who is united with the divine reality only exists in the mind, and also because the reality of the Messiah, according to them, is not composed. As for the later group, they also affirm this teaching. According to them, the union is with a particular human being, so the condition of the Messiah depends on the relationship (between the divine and the human). How strange it is that they attach the crucifixion to the Messiah who is a hypostasis of the divine reality alone!⁶⁴

They admit that the reality of the union is unintelligible. So how can a rational person attach the crucifixion to the Messiah who is a hypostasis of the divine reality alone, and profess ignorance about the reality of the union on which he bases his knowledge while he refers suffering to the humanity to keep it away from God, may his name be glorified? Even stranger than this is his reliance on what he does not know about his reality, when there is a clear alternative to this ignorance! What excuse is there for someone who believes that a meaning can be derived from the literal sense of the passages to prove the union, and from the miracles that appeared by the hand of the Messiah, on him be peace. This is an admission of ignorance which is contrary to the truth. Whoever is not aware of the principles of science, and who is not guided by such principles away from ignorance, speaks like this easily.

64 For Christian denials of Muslim claims that the union of divinity and humanity in Christ results in the divinity suffering death see Abū Rā'īṭa, 'Letter on the Incarnation' pp. 39–42, Abū Qurra, 'Maymar fi-l-radd 'alā man yankaru li-llāh al-tajassud' (A Reply to the One who Refuses to Attribute the Incarnation to God), pp. 180–186, and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, *De l'Incarnation*, pp. 30–38. See also S. Rissanen, *Theological Encounter of Oriental Christians with Islam during early Abbasid Rule*, Åbo, 1993, and M. Swanson, 'Folly to the *Ḥunafa'*', PhD, PISA, Rome, 1992. For the broader issues related to the death of Christ in early Muslim-Christian debate see D. Thomas, 'Denying the Cross in Early Muslim Dialogues with Christians', and M. Beaumont, 'Debating the Cross in Early Christian Dialogues with Muslims' in D.E. Singh, ed., *Jesus and the Cross: Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts*, Carlisle/Waynesboro, 2008, pp. 49–53, and pp. 55–64.

اما الاتحاد فقد ذكرنا اطلاقه على غير عيسى عليه السلام وبيناه احسن بيان واما ظهور الخوارق على يده بالسؤال والطلب فذلك ثابت لغيره من الانبياء وكيف ينكر ذلك وهو المتضرع السائل عند اقامته عازر وقد رفع عينيه الى السماء وقال: "يا ابة اشكرك لانك تسمع لي وانا اعلم أنك سمع لي في كل حين ولكن لاجل هذا الجمع الحاضر ليؤمنوا انك أرسلتني" والطالب لتلاميذه التقديس والحفظ من الاله القادر على ذلك بقوله "قدسهم بحقك" ويقول "احفظهم باسمك الذي أعطيتني" والداعي متضرعاً والمتردد في امكان النجاة من الصلب بقوله "ان كان يستطاع فلتعبر عني هذه الكأس وليس كارادتي لكن كارادتك" والمستفهم من الهه لم تركه بقوله "الهي الهي لم تركتني" والنافي عنه العلم المختص بالاله اثباته بقوله "اما ذلك اليوم وتلك الساعة" ... الى قوله: "ولا الابن الا الاب وحده" والمصرح بالانسانية والرسالة بقوله "انسان كملتكم بالحق الذي سمعته من الله" والمقيد احكامه بما يؤمر به: "كما أمرني الاب كذلك اتكلم" والمشهود له على لسان من اثني عليه من عظماء تلاميذته بان الخوارق مصنوعة لله على يده بقوله: "ان يسوع الناصري رجل ظهر بينكم بالقوى والايات التي فعلها الله على يده"

واذا كانت هذه حالته عليه السلام فكيف يركن العاقل الى ما لا يعلم حقيقته مع امكان علمه وينبذ المعقول والمنقول حجره؟

Concerning the union, we have already mentioned its connection to others apart from Jesus, on him be peace, and we have shown this in the clearest way. Concerning the appearance of miracles by his hand through his requesting and asking, that is established of other prophets. How can they deny this, when he is the one who pleaded, and in his prayer for the raising of Lazarus he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, 'Oh Father, I thank you because you listen to me, and I know that you listen to me at all times, but in order that this present crowd believes that you sent me'.⁶⁵ He is the one who asked God who is capable of it, for his disciples to be made holy and to be kept, when he said, 'Make them holy in your truth',⁶⁶ and when he said, 'Keep them in your name that you have given me'.⁶⁷ He is the one who prayed imploring, and he stumbled over the possibility of escaping from the crucifixion, when he said, 'If it is possible then remove this cup from me, yet not according to my will but according to your will'.⁶⁸ He is the one who asked his God, why he had forsaken him, when he said, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'⁶⁹ He is the one who denied knowledge particular to God having been established in him, when he said, 'Concerning that day and that hour', to his saying, 'Neither the Son, but the Father alone'.⁷⁰ He is the one who proclaimed his humanity and his being sent, when he said, 'A man, I speak to you about the truth that I heard from God'.⁷¹ He is the one who conformed his judgements to what he had been commanded, 'As the Father commanded me so I speak'.⁷² There is the testimony to him on the lips of one of the greatest of his disciples who praised him for the miracles that God performed by his hands, when he said, 'Jesus of Nazareth was a man who appeared among you with power and signs that God did by his hand'.⁷³ Since this was his state, on him be peace, then how can a rational person rely on a reality that he does not know, when it is possible to know it, and reject reason and forbid the text of scripture?

65 John 11:41–42.

66 John 17:17.

67 John 17:11.

68 Matthew 26:39.

69 Matthew 27:46, and Mark 15:34.

70 Matthew 24:36, and Mark 13:32.

71 John 8:40.

72 John 12:49.

73 Acts 2:22.

واما النسطوري فيقول ان الاتحاد وقع في المشيئة. وهذا كلام مشجيج يجب تحريره فان عنوا بذلك ان مشيئة عيسى عليه السلام تابعة لمشيئة الاله في الاحكام الخمسة لا تبينها في واجب ولا محذور ولا مندوب ولا مكروه ولا مباح فهذا ثابت لجميع الانبياء بل وللاولياء ايضاً الذين ليسوا في درجة الانبياء. وان ارادوا بذلك ان جميع ما تعلقت به مشيئة الاله من الكائنات هو بعينه متعلق مشيئة المسيح عليه السلام فهذا عين الخطأ ولا يجمل بعقل ان يخطره بباله فضلاً عن ان يعتقد مذهباً.

وكيف يمكن ادعاء ذلك وقد تعلقت عندهم مشيئة الاله بصلب المسيح عليه السلام ولم يكن الصلب مراداً له ولا تعلقت مشيئته به؟ يدل على ذلك تضرّعه لاله سائلاً دفعه بقوله: "ان كان يستطاع فلتعبر عني هذه الكأس وليس كارادتي ولكن كارادتك". فصّح بتغاير الارادتين وتبرّمه ايضاً مصلوباً سائلاً عن السبب بقوله: "الهي الهي لم تركتني" يدلّ على عدم شعوره بالسبب ومن لم يكن شاعراً بحقيقة الواقع كيف نتعلق مشيئته بوقوعه؟

ومن المعلوم ان مشيئة المسيح عليه السلام كانت متعلّقة بمتابعة جميع بني اسرائيل له وجمعهم على الهدى. هذا شأن الانبياء الهادين وما تعلّقت مشيئة الاله بذلك بل تعلّقت بعدمه لان الواقع عدمه. وكذلك الساعة تعلقت مشيئة الاله بوقوعها في زمنٍ مخصوصٍ والمسيح غير عالم بتعيين ذلك الزمن

¹ سقط في ب

[The union according to the Nestorians]

As for the Nestorians,⁷⁴ they say that the union occurs in the will.⁷⁵ This is vague language which needs to be made precise, for if they mean by this that the will of Jesus, on him be peace, followed the will of God in the five (legal) principles, not being in conflict with a duty, or a prohibition, or a supererogatory work, or a reprehensible action, or something that is permissible, then this is established in all the prophets, and even the saints as well, who are not in the rank of the prophets. But if they intend by this that all the will of God which is attached to the creatures is precisely what is attached to the will of the Messiah, on him be peace, then this is precisely an error, and it is not appropriate that it should occur to a rational person, far less that he should affirm it as doctrine.

How is such a claim possible when, according to them, the will of God was connected to the crucifixion of the Messiah, on him be peace, and yet the crucifixion was not willed by him, nor his will connected to it? What proves this is his imploring God, asking for its removal, when he said, 'If it is possible then remove this cup from me, yet not according to my will but according to your will.'⁷⁶ Therefore, he made clear a distinction between the two wills. Then his grief during the crucifixion, when he asked about the reason for it, saying, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'⁷⁷ proves his lack of knowledge of the reason. If someone does not know the reality of an event, how is his will connected to its occurrence?

It is well known that the will of the Messiah, on him be peace, was connected to all of the children of Israel following him, and to gathering them under his guidance. This is a characteristic of the prophets who guide. The will of God was not connected with that, but was connected to its opposite, because the

74 Nestorian Christians were named after Nestorius who was exiled beyond the borders of the Roman Empire in 436 for refusing to allow Mary to be called 'God-bearer', a title affirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Followers of Nestorius later refused to accept the definition of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 which held that the union of the divinity and humanity of Christ was in terms of one hypostasis in two natures. They preferred to think of the two natures as two hypostases. See A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2.4. London, 1996, p. 504.

75 Nestorian Christology made much of the need for Christ to be tested throughout his life for obedience to the will of God, since only at the end of his life could he be pronounced fully obedient to God. For a ninth-century Nestorian discussion of Christ's obedience see 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, 'Kitāb al-masā'il wa-l-ajwiba' (The Book of Questions and Answers), pp. 220–230. See further, M. Beaumont, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī on the Incarnation', pp. 55–62.

76 Mark 14:36.

77 Mark 15:34.

فكيف نعلق مشيئته بتعيينه؟ ثم قصد شجرة التين تعلقت مشيئة الاله بان يقصدها وهي غير مشمرة والمسيح عليه السلام قصدها غير عالم بحقيقة هذا التعلق وهذا كثير وجوده فليطلب من مواضعه وانما عدلنا عن الاطالة لانه سهل التعرف. وهذه الطائفة قد علم من حالها انهم يطلقون لفظ الاله على المسيح عليه السلام وليت شعري هل المراد بهذا الاطلاق تعظيمه لان الاله يطلق على كل عظيم ام يريدون بذلك الهيته؟ فان كان هذا الثاني هو المراد فجهل هذه الطائفة اعظم من جهل جميع الطوائف.

والذي¹ أوقعهم في هذه المضائق تعلقهم بظواهر اوجبت صراخ العقول القطع بعدم ارادتها وإلا فكم ورد في كل شريعة من ظاهري مصادم لصريح العقل وأوله علماء تلك الشريعة وقد وقع في مثل ذلك جماعة من الاكابر فبعضهم قال: "سبحاني" وقال الآخر: "ما أعظم شأنني" وقال الحلاج: "انا الله وما في الجبة"² إلا الله". وحمل ذلك منهم على احوال الاولياء الشاغلة عن التحفظ في المقال حتى قال بعضهم³: "هؤلاء سكارى ومجالس السكر تطوى ولا تحكى" كل ذلك لقضاء صريح العقل باستحالة كون هذه الظواهر مرادة.

¹ اخر ما سقط في ج وهو ما يقرب من اربع صفحات ² في ج: الجنه ³ في ج: بعض العارفين

opposite occurred. Similarly, the hour was connected to the will of God by its occurrence at a particular time, yet the Messiah did not know that time exactly, so how was his will connected to the knowledge of it (the particular time)? When he approached the fig tree the will of God was connected to his approaching it even though it had no fruit, and the Messiah, on him be peace, approached it not knowing the reality of this connection. There are many of these texts, and they may be found in their places, nevertheless, we refrain from prolonging the discussion because they are easy to find.

[Titles applied to Jesus by Christians]

['God' applied to Jesus]

This sect, they are well known for applying the term 'God' to the Messiah, on him be peace, and I wish I knew whether the intention of this application is to glorify him because God is attached to everything that is great, or whether they intend by this his divinity? If the latter is the intention, then the ignorance of this sect is greater than that of all other sects.

What caused them to be entangled in these difficulties is their attachment to literal meanings which sound minds must affirm are not intended. How many literal meanings contrary to sound reason would appear in every revealed law, unless experts in these laws interpreted them metaphorically? Indeed a number of leading people have fallen into this kind of error; one of them said, 'Glory be to me', another said, 'How great is my state'.⁷⁸ Al-Ḥallāj said, 'I am God, and there is nothing in my robe except God'.⁷⁹ That is induced in the saints during their ecstatic experiences which distract them from being cautious in speech, so that one of them says, 'These people are drunk, and the speech of drunkards should be hidden and not made known'.⁸⁰ All this has convinced people of sound mind that a literal meaning could not have been intended.

78 These are sayings of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874).

79 al-Ḥusain ibn Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922).

80 This whole passage starting with 'al-Ḥallāj said' is borrowed from al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-amwār* where al-Ghazālī talks about the concept of union among those Sufis mentioned here and that it was inappropriate from them to declare this concept to the public masses, see al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans., D. Buchman, Provo, 1998, p. 18.

ثم نجدهم كأنهم تواصلوا على السلوك في اضيق الطرق حتى صاروا هزأة للساخرين ولم ينبض لأحد منهم عرق العصبية¹ ولهم مخرج ومدوحة عما ورطوا انفسهم فيه². وكيف

يصادم المعقول من³ كان متمكناً من حمل الكلام على محاملة السيدة؟

واما اطلاق الحلول فقد سلف منّا بيانه. واما الرب فيطلق بالاشترك على الله جل اسمه وعلى المالك فيقال: "ربّ المنزل" و"ربّ المتاع" واما الاله فيطلق عندهم بالاشترك على كل عظيم وقد قال في الانجيل: "قد أطلق عليكم في ناموسكم انكم الهة" يخاطب اليهود وفي المزامير: "والهة قلت لكم وبنو العلي كلكم" وقال في التوراة لموسى: "قد جعلتك الهاً لفرعون واخلك هرون رسولك" ويطلق الاله على كل من عبّد سواء كانت العبادة حقاً أو باطلاً. واذا وجد السالك في المضيق عنه مندوحة فتماديه على غية عمياء⁴.

وبمجموع هذا البيان صرح بولص في رسالته الثانية في الفصل التاسع من رسالته تصريحاً لم يبق معه علقه⁵ الا لمن فقد هاديه عقله وعلمه فقال: "وانه لا اله غير الله وحده وان كانت اشياء مما في السماء والارض تسمى الهة وكما قد توجد الهة كثيرة وارباب كثيرة فان لنا نحن الهاً واحداً هو الله الاب الذي منه كل شيء ونحن به ورباً واحداً هو يسوع المسيح الذي كل شيء بيده ونحن ايضاً في قبضته"

فانظر الى حسن هذا البيان صرح بان الاله والرب يطلقان على الله عزّ وجلّ وعلى غيره ممن لا يستحق ان يكون معبوداً ثم اثبت لاله المعبود صفة الخالق المستحق للعبادة فجعل ايجاد كل شيء صادراً منه

¹ "ولم ينبض لأحد منهم عرق العصبية": سقط في ج² ورطوا انفسهم فيه سقط في ج وبدلاً اضيف "عما للوافيه" ³ في ج: ما ⁴ من "عمياء... الى العصاة النوكي عثارا" ص 152 سقط في ج ⁵ في س: عليه علقه

Then you find that they have become committed to proceeding along the narrowest paths to the point that they become objects of ridicule to those who scoff at them, despite the fact that no vein of fanaticism throbs in any of them. It is an escape for them, a way out of the evil in which they have become embroiled. How would they be opposing reason when it is possible to take the words in their correct sense?

[‘Lord’ applied to Jesus]

As far as the meaning of ‘the indwelling’ is concerned we have already explained it clearly. As for ‘the lord’, the meaning is equivocal and could be connected either to God, may his name be glorified, or to an owner, as in the sayings, ‘lord of the house’ and ‘lord of the property’. As for ‘God’, according to them, the meaning is equivocal and could be connected with all that is great. When he (Jesus) said in the gospel, ‘It has been said of you in your law that you are gods’, he spoke about the Jews. He (God) said in the Psalms, ‘And I have called you all gods, and sons of the most high’,⁸¹ and in the Torah to Moses, ‘I have made you a god to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron your messenger’.⁸² The word ‘god’ is applied to all who are worshipped whether the worship is true or false. When the traveller finds a way of escape from the narrow path his persistence in error is sheer blindness.

Paul explained all of this so clearly in his second epistle in the ninth chapter of his epistles, such that only someone who has lost his two guides, his reason and his knowledge, could be in any doubt. He said,

There is no God but God alone, and although there are things that are in heaven and on earth that are called gods, and since many gods and many lords are found, we have only one God; He is God the Father from whom everything comes, and we are in him, and there is one lord; he is Jesus Christ who holds everything in his hand, and we are also in his grasp.⁸³

Notice the excellence of this statement making clear that ‘God’ and ‘the lord’ are applied to God, almighty and glorious, and to others who are not entitled to be worshipped. He established in God who is worshipped, the attribute of the Creator who is entitled to worship, so he made the creation of everything

81 Psalm 82:6.

82 Exodus 7:1.

83 1 Corinthians 8:4–6.

بقوله: "الذي منه كل شيء ونحن به" ثم صرّح بان ذلك هو الله واثني عليه بالوحدانية بقوله: "فإن لنا نحن الهاً واحداً هو الله" ثم نفى استحقاق إلهية غيره بقوله: "وأنة لا اله غير الله وحده" ثم اشار الى المسيح: اذا اطلق عليه "الرب" الذي صرّح باشتراكه كان ذلك بمعنى المالك. يدلّ على ذلك انه لم يثبت له شيئاً من صفات الاله المذكورة وانما اثبت له يد الملك التي من شأنها ان تُثبت للمالك.

فانظر الى حسن هذه الاشارات التي لا يتقاعد ذو الفهم عن تلقّيها بالقبول فليت شعري من اية الجهات بني هذا الشرع على هذا الخزي الفاضح وقد اجرّهم الجهلُ رسن الجرأة على الله وعلى انبيائه الهادين واوليائه المقربين الى ان اخطروا ببالهم اباطيل تناقلوها صاغراً عن صاغر. فلذلك اجمعوا امرهم على ان بني آدم أخذوا بسبب عصيان ابيهم آدم وان جميع الانبياء والاولياء القوا في الجحيم. ثم ان الاله وعدهم ان يفديهم ففداهم فداء الكريم والكريم اذا بالغ في الفداء فدى بنفسه وذاته مجردة لا ينالها صميم ولا اذى فأتحّد بناسوت عيسى عليه السلام ثم ان الناسوت الذي اتحد به صلب فكان صلبه سبباً لخلاص الانبياء والاولياء واخراجهم من الجحيم. لا أقال الله لهذه العصابة النوكى عثاراً².

اما ما تعلّقوا به من اطلاق الابوة على الله عزّ وجلّ والبنوة على نفسه ظانين بان ذلك محصل غرضاً او مثبت خصوصية يقع بها الامتياز فليس الامر كذلك. وبيانه انه قد جاء في التوراة التي يقولون بصدق ما فيها من النصوص في حق يعقوب³ عليه الصلاة والسلام: "أبني بكري اسرائيل" وقال ايضاً في التوراة: "قل لفرعون إن لم ترسل أبني بكري ليعبدني في البرية والاقتلت أبنك بكرك" يريد بأبني بني اسرائيل وكان عدتهم اذا ذاك ستمائة الف سوى النساء والصبيان.

هذا لفظ التوراة وفي مزامير داوود وهو عندهم لا ينطق في مزاميره الا عن الوحي: "وبنو العلي كلمكم" واطلق عيسى ذلك عليه وعليهم فقال: "انا صاعد الى ابي وايبكم والهي والهكم" ان من يعتفد في من هذه

¹ في ب وس: الذي ² نهاية ما سقط في ج ³ "في حق يعقوب" سقط في ب وس

originate from him, saying, 'From whom everything comes, and we are in him'. He announced that this is God and praised him in his oneness, saying, 'We have only one God; he is God'. He denied the right to deity to any other by saying, 'There is no God but God alone'. Then he pointed to the Messiah when he applied to him 'the lord' which he made clear shared the meaning of 'owner'. This proves that he did not establish in him any of the attributes of God already mentioned, but established in him the hand of ownership which was appropriate to be established in an owner.

Notice the excellence of these indications which an intelligent person is quick to accept. I wish I knew how a 'revealed law' could have been set up on such utterly shameful notions. Ignorance led them to be insolent against God, and his prophets who guide, and his saints who are intimate with him, until their minds were occupied with falsehoods which they passed on from one contemptible person to another. As a result of this, they reached a consensus to say that the children of Adam are punished because of the disobedience of their ancestor Adam, and that all the prophets and saints were thrown into Gehenna. God promised that he would ransom them with a generous ransom, and the generosity of the ransom would be most far reaching if he offered himself as a ransom while keeping his essence untouched by harm or injury. Then he united with the humanity of Jesus, on him be peace. Then the humanity that he united with was crucified. His crucifixion was a cause of the salvation of the prophets and the saints, and of rescuing them from Gehenna. May God forgive this stupid mob!

['Sonship' applied to Jesus and 'fatherhood' applied to God]

As for their attributing the fatherhood to God, may he be exalted and glorified, and the sonship to himself, Jesus, they imagine that this confirms something distinctive or particular in the connection between them, but this is not so. This is shown in a text found in the Torah, which they claim contains the truth about Jacob, on him be blessings and peace, 'My first born son, Israel'. He (God) said in the Torah, 'Say to Pharaoh, if you do not send my first born son to worship me in the desert, I will surely kill your first born son',⁸⁴ meaning by 'my son', the children of Israel, and their number at that time was 600,000 apart from the women and children.

This is the wording of the Torah, and in the Psalms of David who, according to them, wrote his Psalms only under inspiration, 'You are all sons of the Most

84 Exodus 4:22–23.

كلماته¹ انه اله لمدفوع عن الصواب الواضح. وأطلق أيضاً ذلك عليهم فقط فقال في انجيل لوقا: "ولا تقطعوا رجاء احد فيكون اجرکم كثيراً وتكونوا بني العلي لانه رحيم على غير المنعمين الاشرار وكونوا رحماء مثل ابيکم".

واطلق ذلك أيضاً تلميذه يوحنا بن زبدا لما فهم المجاز الذي سنذكره فقال في رسالته: "من يعترف بان يسوع هو المسيح فهو من الله مولود." وانما حمله على ان تجوز بمثل ذلك مع القطع بان الحقيقة غير مرادة لان الاب جُبل على ان يكون شديد الحنان والرفقة والرحمة والشفقة لولده حريصاً على ان يجلب اليه جميع الخيور ويدفع عنه جميع الشرور مجتهداً على ان يوضح له طرق الخير ويأمره بالمبادرة اليها مسارعاً الى تحذيره مما يفرض به الى عقوبة او لوم او ضرر دائم او جهالة سائرة لما يزداد به في المستقبل. هذا وضع الاب فيما نشاهده.

واما الابن فوضعه ان يكون موقراً لآبيه معظماً له شديد الحياء منه ممثلاً أو امره ملائماً لها بالاجلال والتعظيم وعدم المخالفة واقفاً عندما يأمره به وينهاه عنه. والله عز وجل اذا قيس احسانه الى كل نبي² ورحمته له وشفقته عليه وما جلبه له من الخير وما دفعه عنه من الشر وما بينه له مما هو لائق³ بجلاله ثم وفقه للعمل بمقتضاه كان ما يصنعه الوالد بالنسبة الى هذا تافهاً حقيراً.

ثم تقرر⁴ الانبياء ايضاً لله وحيائهم منه وانقيادهم⁵ لاوامره ووقوفهم عند مناهيه واجلالهم له اعظم من صنيع الابناء مع اباؤهم فهو لهم ارحم اب وهم له ابر ولد فهذا سر التجوز في اطلاق مثل ذلك فاذا تجوز في اطلاق الاب على الله كان معناه انه ارحم له عطوف عليه واذا تجوز باطلاق البنوة على نفسه كان معناه انه موقر لله معظّم له وهذا معنى قول عيسى عليه الصلاة والسلام محرضاً على

¹ في ج: في من اطلق عليه هذه الكلمات في ب و س: شيء² في ج: اليق³ في ج: توقير⁴ في ج: في ج:
انفاذهم

High'.⁸⁵ Jesus applied this to himself and to them, when he said, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'.⁸⁶ Someone who believes that the one who utters these words is God has been driven from the clear truth. He also applied this to them (his disciples) alone when he said in the gospel of Luke, 'Do not give up hope for anyone, for your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is merciful to those who are not generous, who are evil, and be merciful like your Father'.⁸⁷

His disciple John, son of Zebedee, applied this similarly when he understood the metaphor that we will describe, as he said in his letter, 'Whoever recognises that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God'.⁸⁸ He gave it a metaphorical meaning like that, affirming that the factual meaning was not intended, because a father is naturally disposed to being rich in compassion, kindness, mercy and tenderness to his son, eager to bring about in him all kinds of benefits, and to keep all kinds of evils from him, exerting effort to make the way of goodness clear to him, and commanding him to proceed towards them, hastening to warn him about what might lead to punishment, disgrace, lasting injury, or ignorance that conceals what might be worse in the future. This is the character of a father that we have witnessed.

The role of son is to be respectful towards his father, to exalt him, to be very diffident before him, to obey his commands, to submit willingly to them with respect and honour; not contradicting them, but holding fast to what he commanded him to do and prohibited him from doing. As for God, may he be exalted and glorified, if one were to measure his goodness to each prophet, his mercy to him, his compassion towards him, the blessing he brings about in him, the evil he keeps away from him, his being worthy of glory which he has shown to him, then his giving him success in doing what is required, then what a father would do in relation to this would be trivial and insignificant.

In addition, the respect of the prophets shown to God, their modesty before him, their obedience to his commands, their acceptance of his prohibitions, and their honouring him, are more profound than any good deed of sons towards their fathers. For he is to them a more merciful father and they are to him more devoted sons. This is the secret of the metaphor in such an application. When he (Jesus) employed a metaphor in applying 'father' to God,

85 Psalm 82:6.

86 John 20:17. See M. Accad, 'The Ultimate Proof-Text: The Interpretation of John 20:17 in Muslim-Christian Dialogue (second/eighth-eighth/fourteenth centuries)', in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 199–214.

87 Luke 6:35–36.

88 1John 5:1.

عدم قطع الرجاء أي إن¹ اطعمتموه في ذلك صنع معكم ما يصنع الوالد مع ولده. وهذا ايضاً معنى قول تلميذه: "فهو من الله مولود" فانظر الى سر ما وقف² عليه الانبياء ثم اذن لهم في اطلاقه معولين على فهم من له تحصيل يصرفه عن الخليات الفاسدة وها هم الآن انفسهم مقيمون على اطلاق ذلك فاذا رأوا راهباً أو قسيساً قالوا له: "يا أبانا" وليس هو اباهم حقيقة ولكن مرادهم بالاطلاق ما اشرنا اليه وهو انهم ينزلونه في الشفقة منزلة الاب وينزلون انفسهم في توقيره منزلة الابناء. وقد صرح داود عليه السلام بما اشرنا اليه في مزاميره فقال: "كما يترأف الاب على بنيه كذلك يترأف الرب على خائفيه".

فقد ثبت بما ذكرناه ان اطلاق البنوة عليه غير مثبت خصوصية يقع بها تمييز. وصرح الانجيل ناطق بصحة هذا التأويل وهو قوله "فاعطاهم سلطاناً ان يصيروا بني الله" اي اعطاهم ما يتمكنون به من تحصيل ما ذكر من المعاني المستفادة من الابوة على حد ما أول.

خاتمة³ هي من أعظم معضلاتهم التي يعولون عليها مثبتين بها الهية عيسى عليه السلام جعلها يوحنا فاتحة انجيله وهي "في البدء كان الكلمة والكلمة كان عند الله واله هو الكلمة كان هذا قديماً عند الله

¹ سقط في ب، س ² في ج: وقعت ³ سقطت في ب، س

his meaning was that he is merciful and affectionate towards him, and when he employed a metaphor in applying 'sonship' to himself, his meaning was that he revered and glorified God. This is the meaning of the words of Jesus, on him be blessing and peace, when he urged them not to cut off hope, that is to say, if you obey him in that, he will do for you what a father does for his son. This is also the meaning of the words of his disciple, 'He was born of God'. Notice the secret that the prophets came to understand, which they were permitted to apply, as long as they depended on the understanding of someone who has learning to keep them from corrupt imaginary ideas, and they now themselves continue to apply, for when they see a monk or a priest, they say to him, 'O our father', yet he is not really their father, but their intention is to apply what we have indicated. In other words, that they give him the status of being a father who is compassionate and give themselves the status of being sons who respect him. David, on him be peace, made clear what we have indicated in his Psalms when he said, 'As a father has compassion on his sons, so the lord has compassion on those who fear him'.⁸⁹

What we have described has established that the application of the sonship to him (Jesus) does not affirm any characteristic which distinguishes him (from other people). The gospel clearly speaks of the soundness of this interpretation when it says, 'He gave them authority to become sons of God'.⁹⁰ This is to say, he gave them the capability to attain what has been mentioned concerning the appropriate meaning of the fatherhood, according to the interpretation that has been given.

[Three passages in John's gospel that Christians suppose support the divinity of Jesus]

[Jesus entitled 'word of God' in the opening chapter of John's gospel]

Finally, one of the greatest of their arguments on which they depend to establish the divinity of Jesus, on him be peace, is what John placed at the beginning of his gospel. This is, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and God was the word. This word was eternally with God, everything exists by him, and without him nothing existed that exists',⁹¹ and so forth to where he

89 Psalm 103:13.

90 John 1:12.

91 John 1:1–3.

كل به كان وبغيره لم يكن شئ مما كان ...“ الى آخره وهو قوله: ”والكلمة صار جسداً وحلّ فينا ورأينا مجده.“

اما اول هذا الفصل فلا تعلق له بثبوت الالهية لعيسى عليه السلام بوجه لانهم يعتقدون ان ذات البرائى واحدة في الموضوع ولها اعتبارات فان اعتبرت مقيدة بصفة لا يتوقف وجودها على تقدم وجود صفة قبلها كالوجود فلذلك المسمى عندهم باقنوم الاب. وان اعتبرت موصوفة بصفة يتوقف وجودها على تقدم¹ وجود صفة قبلها كالعالم فان الذات يتوقف اتصافها بالعلم على اتصافها بالوجود فلذلك سمى عندهم باقنوم الابن والكلمة. وان اعتبرت بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها فلذلك المسمى عندهم باقنوم روح القدس.

فيقوم اذاً من الاب معنى الوجود ومن الكلمة والابن معنى العالم ومن روح القدس كون ذات البرائى معقولة له². هذا حاصل هذا الاصطلاح فيكون ذات الاله واحدة في الموضوع موصوفة بكل اقنوم من هذه الاقنوم.

ومنهم من يقول ان الذات ان اعتبرت من حيث هي ذات لا باعتبار صفة البتة فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن العقل المجرد وهو المسمى باقنوم الاب وان اعتبرت من حيث هي عاقلة لذاتها فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن معنى العاقل وهو المسمى باقنوم الابن والكلمة وان اعتبرت بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها فهذا الاعتبار عندهم هو المسمى باقنوم معنى المعقول³ وروح القدس. فعلى هذا الاصطلاح يكون العقل عبارة عن ذات الاله فقط والاب مرادفأله والعاقل عبارة عن ذاته بقيد كونها عاقلة لذاتها

¹ سقط في ج ² سقط في ب، س ³ ”معنى المعقول“ سقط في ج

says, 'And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory'.⁹²

As for the opening of this chapter, it has no connection at all with the establishment of the divinity of Jesus, on him be peace. This is because they believe that the essence of the Creator is one in substance yet has aspects. If it is considered as qualified by an attribute whose existence does not depend on the prior existence of an attribute before it like existence itself, then that is called, according to them, 'the hypostasis of the Father'. If it is considered as qualified by an attribute whose existence depends on the prior existence of an attribute such as knowledge, since the attribution of knowledge to the essence depends on the attribution of existence to the essence, then that is called, according to them, 'the hypostasis of the Son and the word'. And if it is considered in respect to the essence being intelligible to itself, then that is called, according to them 'the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit'.

Therefore, from the Father originates the status of existence, and from the word and the Son the status of the knowledgeable one, and from the Holy Spirit the essence of the Creator being intelligible to himself. This is the gist of this terminology; the essence of God is one in substance having the attribution of each of these hypostases.

Among them are those who say that the essence, if it is considered with respect to it being an essence, but not with respect to any attribute, represents, according to them, the pure intellect, which is called 'the hypostasis of the Father'. If it is considered with respect to having intellectual awareness of itself, then this, according to them, represents the intelligent one, which is called 'the hypostasis of the Son and the word'. If the essence is considered with respect to being the object of its own intelligence, then this, according to them is called 'the hypostasis of the status of intellection and Holy Spirit'. According to this terminology, the intellect refers to the essence of God alone, and the Father is a synonym for it. The intelligent one refers to his essence restricted to perceiving itself, and the Son and the word are synonyms for it. The intellection refers

92 John 1:14.

والابن والكلمة مرادفين له والمعقولية عبارة عن الاله الذي ذاته معقولة له وروح القدس مرادفاً له.

فقد ثبت بهذين الاصطلاحين ان الكلمة عبارة عن الذات الموصوفة بالعلم والعقل، وكذلك الابن فاذاً كل منهما اقنوم مدلوله العالم او العاقل. فقوله: "في البدء كان الكلمة" يريد في البدء كان العالم وقوله: "و الكلمة كان عند الله" معناه والعالم لم يزل موصوفاً به الاله يريد ان هذا الوصف لم يزل ثابتاً للاله.¹ "وكان" ههنا بمعنى لم يزل. وقوله: "واله هو الكلمة" معناه وهذه الكلمة التي مدلولها² العالم ذلك العالم هو الاله. وقوله: "كان هذا قديماً عند الله" معناه لم يزل مدلول هذا الاعتبار وهو العالم الذي هو مدلول الكلمة موصوفاً به الاله وهو اله لانه اخبر عنه بذلك بقوله: "والله هو الكلمة" ليقطع بذلك وهم من يعتقد ان العالم الذي هو مدلول الكلمة غير الاله. هذا اعتقادهم في هذه الاقنيم وكلام شارح انجيلهم في اول هذا الفصل واذا صحّت المعاني فلا مشاحة في الالفاظ ولا فيما يصطلح عليه المصطلحون فقد وضع بما شرحوه ان اول هذا الفصل لا دلالة فيه على الالهية لعيسى عليه السلام البتة.

¹ ب، س يكررون الجملة "يريد ان هذا الوصف لم يزل ثابتاً للاله." ² وكان "ههنا" عن سهو للناسخ في ب، س: مدلولها

to God whose essence is being intelligible to itself, and the Holy Spirit is a synonym for it.⁹³

So it is established by these two sets of terms that the word refers to the essence having the attribution of knowledge and intellect, and likewise the Son. Therefore, both of these indicate the one who knows or the intelligent one. So when he said, 'In the beginning was the word', he meant, in the beginning was the knowledgeable one, and when he said, 'And the word was with God', his meaning was, the knowledgeable one is eternally an attribute of God, intending to say that this attribute is eternally established in God. 'Was' here has the meaning 'is eternally'. When he said, 'And God was the word', his meaning was, this word that indicates the knowledgeable one, this knowledgeable one is God. And when he said, 'This was eternally with God', his meaning was the one indicated by this expression has always existed, and he is the knowledgeable one who is indicated by 'the word', which is attributed to God. He is God, because he declared it in his saying, 'And God was the word', to counter the supposition of those who claim that the knowledgeable one, who is indicated by 'the word', is other than God. This is their belief in these hypostases, and the words of the interpreter of their gospel at the beginning of this chapter. If the concepts are sound then there is no dispute about wording or about the technical terms coined by the linguists, so it is clear from what they have commented, that the beginning of this chapter shows no indication at all of the divinity of Jesus, on him be peace.

93 The use of the terms *al-'aql* 'the intellect', *al-'āqil* 'the intelligent one', and *al-ma'qūl* 'the intellection' for the members of the Trinity is found in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, *De l'Incarnation*, p. 12. He explains that Christian theologians think of the impossibility of the union of the Father and the Spirit with the humanity of Christ but the possibility of the union of the Son with the humanity 'like the difference between, on the one hand, the pure intellect (*al-'aql al-mujarrad*) and the intellection (*al-ma'qūl*) of a pure intellect, and on the other hand, the intelligent one (*al-'āqil*) of a pure intellect. Because it is not possible that a human being is a pure intellect or an intellection of a pure intellect, but it is possible that a human being is an intelligent one of a pure intellect, in that he has intelligence of the Creator, exalted and glorified, so for this reason it is possible that the Son, who takes the place of the intelligent one of a pure intelligence, unites with the human being. Yet it is not possible that the Father, who takes the place of the pure intellect, or the Spirit, who takes the place of the intellection of a pure intellect, unites with the human being'.

بقي في الفصل شبهتان فيهما مزّل القدم. الأولى قوله: "كان انسان ارسل من الله اسمه يوحنا هذا جاء للشهادة ليشهد للنور ليؤمن الكلّ به ولم يكن هو النور بل ليشهد للنور الذي هو نور الحق الذي يضيء لكل انسان آت الى العالم في العالم كان والعالم به كُن والعالم لم يعرفه".

فنقول: الموصوف في هذه الكلمات بانه "لم يزل في العالم وان العالم كَوّن به" اما ان يكون هو الناسوت منفكاً عن تعلّقه باللاهوت او باعتبار تعلّقه به واما ان يكون هو اللاهوت من حيث هو لاهوت او باعتبار تعلّقه بالناسوت وهو ظهوره فيه واما ان يكون هو الحقيقة الثالثة والكل باطل الا اللاهوت من حيث هو لاهوت. واما بطلان الناسوت فضروري سواء قلنا انه منفك عن تعلّقه باللاهوت او باعتبار تعلّقه به. اما مع الانفكاك فظاهر وكذلك مع التعلّق لأن تعلّقه باللاهوت حادث لان التعلّق ما حصل له الا بعد خلقه فكيف يوصف بتكوين العالم وانه لم يزل فيه؟ وكذلك ايضاً الحقيقة الثالثة لأن الحقيقة الثالثة احد جزئها الناسوت وهو حادث فيلزم ان تكون معدومة قبل خلقه ويستحيل وصفها اذاً بما ذكر. وكذلك اللاهوت باعتبار ظهوره في الناسوت لان ظهوره¹ فيه انما حدث عند خلقه للناسوت فاذا حكمنا على اللاهوت بما ذكر باعتبار هذا التعلّق الحادث استحال وصفه بما ذكر.

فلم يبق الا ان تكون هذه الاوصاف عائدة الى الاله جلّ اسمه من حيث هو اله لا باعتبار انضمامه الى الناسوت ولا باعتبار انضمام الناسوت اليه. فحينئذٍ يجب صرف هذا الكلام الى الله عزّ وجلّ ويكون تقدير الكلام: "بل ليشهد للنور الذي هو نور الحق الذي يضيء به الحق على كل انسان" لأن الحق جلّ اسمه هو الذي يهدي كل احد بنور معرفته الى المعارف الحقيقية² ويقفه بإضاءته على دقائق مصنوعاته التي لا تهدي اليها العقول الا بنور هدايته. هذا معنى واضح غني عن الاطالة وقد

¹ في ج: حدوته ² في ج: الخفيه

Two ambiguous passages remain in the chapter which may cause the foot to trip. The first is where it says,

There was a man sent from God named John who came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, but to bear witness to the light, which is the true light that illuminates every human being coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and yet the world did not know him.⁹⁴

So we say; the one described in these words as ‘Always having been in the world, and the world having been made by him’, could be either the humanity separate from the divinity or connected to it, or could be the divinity with respect to being divine or considered connected to the humanity, and its appearance in it, or could be the third reality. All of these are false except the divinity with respect to being divine. Referring this to the humanity is absolutely wrong, whether we say that it is separate from its connection with the divinity or considered connected to it. The humanity would have been connected to the divinity in time, since the connection could only occur after the humanity was created, so how could it be described as causing the world to be made, and as always being in it? So it is also with the third reality, because one of the elements of the third reality is the humanity which is contingent. The third reality must have been non-existent before the creation of the humanity, and it is impossible to attribute to it (the third reality) what has been described above. It is the same with the divinity as considered appearing in the humanity, because its appearance in it only occurred when it created the humanity, so if we judge the divinity by what has been mentioned of this connection occurring in time, then this attribution is impossible.

It only remains to say that these attributions belong to God, may his name be glorified, with respect to him being God, not in consideration of his union with the humanity, nor in consideration of the union of the humanity with him. So these words must refer to God, exalted and glorious. The implication of these words is, ‘to bear witness to the light that is the light of the truth by which the truth enlightens every human being’, because the truth, may his name be glorified, is he who guides everyone by the light of his knowledge to the true knowledge, and by enlightening him, acquaints him with the intricacies of his works that intelligence cannot attain except by the light of his guidance. This is a clear meaning, and does not need elaboration. Light is used

94 John 1:6–10.

اطلق النور في الانجيل والمراد به الهداية وهو قوله عليه السلام "ما دمت في العالم فاننا نور العالم" صرح بذلك يوحنا في الفصل الثاني والعشرين وقوله أيضاً "انما جئت نور العالم" صرح أيضاً بذلك يوحنا في الفصل الخامس والعشرين وهذا التصريح يؤكد ما ذهبنا اليه من التأويل في حمل النور على الهداية.

الشبهة الثانية قوله في آخر الفصل "والكلمة صار جسداً وحلّ فينا ورأينا مجده" لا بد من حكاية وضع هذا اللفظ كيف كان¹ في القبطي ليعلم بذلك زلهم وعدولهم عن مقتضى وضعه² وصرّ فهم وضعه عن مفهومه الموافق الى مفهوم مصادم لبديهة العقل.

وضَعُ هذا اللفظ: "وهُ بِيصاجي أفأرُ أوُ صر كس³" مفهوم هذه الكلمات في القبطي والكلمة صَنع جسداً لأن "أفأرُ" مفهومها في القبطي⁴ صَنع وعلى هذا الوضع لم يبقَ اشكال البتة بل يكون اللفظ صريحاً بأن العالم الذي قام من اقنوم الكلمة الذي عبر عنه بانه اله بقوله: "واله هو الكلمة" صَنع جسداً وحلّ فينا ورأينا مجده اي ذلك الجسد الذي صنعه الاله هو هو عيسى عليه السلام وهو الذي ظهر ورؤي⁵ مجده.

وقد اعتذروا عن العدول عن هذا المفهوم الظاهر ان قالوا هذه الكلمة وُضعت بالاشترك في القبطي⁶ بين صَنع وصار. وهذا الاعتبار يطلب اعتذاراً بل هو من المضحكات لان اللفظ المشترك يتعين حمله على احدِ مفهوماته بايسرِ قرينة مشعرة بان المراد منه هذا المفهوم فما شأنك⁷ تحاكم العقل الموجب حمله على ما اشرنا اليه. ثم ان مترجم هذه اللفظة اذا سلم له كونها وُضعت بالاشترك يكون قد ارتكب فيها عكس القضية في المشترك لان المشترك⁸ اذا تردد بين مفهوماته عينته القرائن وهو في هذه الكلمة قضى بصرف اللفظ عمّا هو واجب الارادة وحمله على ما يقضي صريح العقل بعدم ارادته ليحصل له بذلك ان الاله العالم صار جسداً.

لا أعرف احداً اجترأ على الله كجراًة هذه الطائفة عليه لاهاء الله⁹ اذا لا يوجد خزي الحفش من خزي قوم يعتقدون ان اله العالم قبر وقد شينوا بذكر ذلك قائلين: بل يجب ان يصام في ذلك السبت وحده

¹ سقط في ب، س ² سقط في ج ³ "أفأرُ": في ب أفأرو في ج: افاز واسركس ⁴ "لأن" أفأرُ "مفهومها في القبطي" سقط في ج ⁵ في ج: راوا ⁶ سقط في ب و س ⁷ في ج: فما بالك ⁸ "لان المشترك" سقط في ج ⁹ من "لاهاء الله" ... الى "ولياً مرشداً" سقط في ج

in the gospel to mean 'guidance', such as when he, on him be peace, said, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world',⁹⁵ stated by John in the twenty-second chapter. He also said, 'I have come, the light of the world',⁹⁶ also stated by John in the twenty-fifth chapter. This statement agrees with the interpretation that we have given, in taking 'the light' to be guidance.

The second ambiguous passage is his saying at the end of the chapter, 'And the word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory'.⁹⁷ It is necessary to quote how this terminology is written in Coptic, so that their error and their abandonment of its essential meaning and their diverting its meaning from being understood appropriately to being understood in contradiction to intuitive intelligence, may become known.

The written form of this phrase is '*woh bisagi afer ow sarks*'. The meaning of these words in Coptic is, 'and the word made a body' because '*afer*' means in Coptic, 'he made'. According to this phrase no difficulty remains at all, because the phrase makes clear that the knowledgeable one, who is identified with the hypostasis of the word which he asserted to be God, when he said, 'And God was the word' made a body, and he lived among us, and we have seen his glory. In other words, this body which God made was actually Jesus, on him be peace, and it was he who appeared and whose glory was seen.

They have put forward an excuse for deviating from this clear meaning by saying that this word is used in Coptic to mean both 'he made' and 'he became.' This point of view makes an excuse plausible, but it is laughable because the sense of an equivocal term is assigned to one of its meanings by the simplest indication showing that one of the possible meanings is intended. What is your interest in opposing reason that requires it to be taken in the sense that we have indicated? Then, if it is conceded to the translator of this word that it exists with more than one meaning, he has committed an error here, contrary to the rules about equivocal meanings. If an equivocal meaning oscillates between different possible meanings then the evidence determines it, and yet he, in this phrase, decided to divert the expression from what it must intend and to take it in a sense that sound reason pronounces could not be intended, in order to obtain the result that God, the knowledgeable one, became flesh.

I do not know anyone more insolent towards God than this sect. By God, no more shameless disgrace can be found than that of a people who believe that the knowledgeable one, God, was buried. They bring him dishonour in saying it is necessary to fast on that same Saturday because the one who made the

95 John 9:5.

96 Ibid.

97 John 1:14.

لان صانع البرية كان فيه مقبوراً. صُرح بذلك في قوانينهم المدونة عن اكارهم ورسلمهم. ومن يضل فلن يجد له ولياً مرشداً.

فان قيل انما حمل على هذا المفهوم لقرائن رُحَّت حملة عليه. فالجواب ان كل مرَّح كان مصادماً للمعقول رد غير معول عليه، مع ان تسمية ما هذا شأنه مرجحاً جهلاً والقائل به ليس له هادٍ علي يقفه على نهج الحق. ثم ان¹ اقتصرنا على بيان هذا الامر الواضح الذي ارتكبوا فيه التحريف الى ان صبروه شبهة كفنانا ذلك² في دفع هذه الشبهة. وان اردنا قطع النزاع مسلِّين ان هذه الكلمة وضعت بالاشترك وقد احتفت بها قرائن رُحَّت حملها على "صار" دون "صنع" فالجواب ايضاً عن الشبهة واضح وبيانه ان اللفظ على هذا التقدير لا يعرض لعاقل وقفه في صرفه عن ظاهره وبين ذلك ان الكلمة التي ذكرت في اول الفصل صُرح بانها اله بقوله: "واله هو الكلمة" فكيف يحكم على الاله بانه صار جسداً؟

وتصحیح هذا الكلام ان الكلمة عندهم عبارة عن الذات باعتبار صفة العلم او النطق كما تقدم في اول الفصل فحينئذ تكون دالة على الذات الموصوفة بالعلم او النطق وهذا الاطلاق ليس مختصاً بالاله لان اللفظ المشكل كيف ما تردد يستعمل في كل³ فرد من افراده حقيقة فحينئذ تكون الكلمة موضوعة للذات بقيد العلم او النطق مع قطع النظر عن كون الذات موصوفة بالجسمية او منفكة عن هذا الوصف. ففي اول الفصل اطلقت الكلمة على العالم المنفك عن الجسمية حقيقة الذي هو اله وفي آخر الفصل اطلقت على العالم او الناطق الموصوف بالجسمية حقيقة الذي هو رسول ايضاً فيكون اذاً معنى قوله والكلمة صار جسداً اي ان ذلك الاله العالم الذي كان مدلول الكلمة كان منفكاً عن الجسمية وقد صار مدلولها⁴ الان عالماً موصوفاً بالجسمية وهو الرسول لانها اذا وضعت للذات بقيد العلم قام منها معنى العالم لا محالة.

هذه كله بعد تسليم ان الكلمة موضوعة للذات بقيد الصفة من حيث انها ذات فان ادعي ان ذلك مختص بذات الاله كان اطلاقها على عيسى عليه السلام بطريق المجاز لان المشاركة في مفهومها ثابتة

¹ سقط في ج ² سقط في ج ³ سقط في ب ⁴ في ب و س: مدلولها

creation was buried on that day. It is described this way in their regulations, written down by their leaders and apostles. 'And whoever is led astray will not find for himself a protector to guide'.⁹⁸

If it is said that it is taken in this sense by the evidence giving greater weight to it, then the reply is that every probability that is in conflict with reason must be rejected as unreliable. Although being called in this case a probability, it is ignorance, and the one who says it has no knowledgeable guide to set him on the path of truth. Then, if we confined ourselves to showing the clear fact that they have committed corruption in that they have made it ambiguous, it is enough for us to remove this ambiguity. If we wish to settle the dispute, accepting that this word is used equivocally and that the evidence surrounding it makes probable its being taken as 'became' rather than 'made', then the resolution of the ambiguity also is clear. It is evident that the term, according to this assessment, does not prevent the intelligent person turning away from a literal meaning. The evidence for this is that 'the word' which is mentioned at the beginning of the chapter is declared to be God, when it says, 'And God was the word'. So how can someone decide that God became flesh?

The correct evaluation of these words is that 'the word', according to them, expresses the essence, by being considered an attribute of knowledge or speech, as presented at the beginning of the chapter, and in that case would indicate the essence having the attribution of knowledge or speech. Yet this application is not special to God because an ambiguous term, however long one hesitates to interpret it, is used for each of its objects correctly. Here 'the word' may be used to designate the essence in terms of knowledge or speech, either without taking account of the existence of the essence having corporality attributed to it, or being separated from this attribute. For at the beginning of the chapter 'the word' is applied to the knowledgeable one as separated truly from corporality, the one who is God. At the end of the chapter it is applied to the knowledgeable one or the rational person who is attributed with true corporality, the one who is also a messenger. In other words, the meaning of the saying 'the word became flesh' is that God the knowledgeable one, who is indicated by 'the word', was separated from corporality. Later on its meaning becomes the knowledgeable one having corporality attributed to him, and he is the messenger, for if it is used for the essence restricted to knowledge, the term 'the knowledgeable one' is derived from it without doubt.

Once it is admitted that 'the word' is used for the essence in terms of an attribute with respect to being an essence, then, since it is claimed that this is exclusive to the essence of God, its application to Jesus, on him be peace, must

98 Qur'ān 18:16.

وهي من اعظم مصححات المجاز. ولا يردّ هذا التأويل بقول القائل انه على خلاف الظاهر لانه لا معنى للتأويل الا صرف الكلام عن¹ ظاهره لدليل يأبى إبقائه على حقيقته.

فان قيل انما يكون هذا التأويل مقبولاً اذا كان الكلام متعلقاً بعبئه ببعض لا سيما كلام الاله جلّ اسمه. فالجواب ان المعقول اذا حكم باستحالة بقاء اللفظ على ظاهره وجب تأويله فالتأويل اذا صرف اللفظ عن² ظاهره كما ذكر وحمله على ما هو جائز الارادة فحينئذ لا يبقى للمتعلق بظاهره حجة لمخالفة المعقول وامكان التأويل.

ونحن الآن نبيّن عدم تباين كلمات هذا النص وحملها على ما هو سايق الارادة على حكم ما اولناه فنقول: قد ثبت ان الحق جلّ اسمه هو الذي يضيء بنوره على كل انسان آت ويكشف له به غطاء كل خفية وذلك مصرّح به في هذا النص بقوله: "ليشهد للنور الذي هو نور الحق الذي يضيء لكل انسان" قوله: "في العالم كان" هذا يصلح ان يكون وصفاً للنور ويصلح ان يكون وصفاً للحق جلّ اسمه لان هداية الله تعالى وايضاحه لكل خفي وكشفه الغطاء عن كل شبهة لم يزل ذلك ثابتاً في العالم.

قوله "والعالم به كوّن" هذا وصف للحق جلّ اسمه وقد صرح بذلك في اول الفصل بقوله: "كلّ به كان". فليت شعري اي عذر لمن يجمل هذا على عيسى عليه السلام مع هذا التصريح وهو قوله في وصف الاله³ في اول الفصل: "وبغيره لم يكن شئ مما كان". قوله: "الى خاصيته جاء" اي⁴ الى خاصية الحق ظهر نوره الذي هو عبارة عن هدايته وارشاده اذ بنوره يهتدي كل مهتدٍ والمراد بحجى النور ههنا ظهوره لان وصف المعاني بالحجى محمول على ظهورها⁵.

قوله: "وخاصته لم تقبله" المراد بالخاصة من دُعي للهداية اي وخاصته الذين دُعوا لهدايته لم يقبلوا هدايته. قوله "فأما الذين قبلوا" اي فاما الذين قبلوا هدايته وهم غير الذين لم يقبلوا. يدل على ذلك ايراد

¹ في س: على ² في ب، س: على ³ في وصف الاله" سقط في ب وس ⁴ سقط في ج ⁵ في ج: ظواهرها

be by way of metaphor, because the equivocation of its meaning is established, and this is one of the most profound justifications for the metaphorical meaning. This metaphorical interpretation cannot be rejected by someone who says that this is contrary to the literal meaning, because there can only be a meaning through a metaphorical interpretation that diverts the expression from its literal sense and which proves that it must not be given its literal meaning.

If it is said that this metaphorical interpretation is acceptable when the expressions are connected to each other, especially expressions for God, may his name be glorified, the reply is that reason, when it judges it to be impossible for the term to keep its literal sense, must interpret it metaphorically. If the metaphorical interpretation diverts the term from its literal meaning, as has been described, and takes it in the sense that it is a metaphor in intention, then it follows that no argument remains to the one who prefers a literal meaning for opposing reason and the probability of the metaphorical interpretation.

We will now show that there should be no dispute over the words of this passage, and we will take them according to what was probably intended, according to the conclusions that we reached about their interpretation. We say it is established that the True One, may his name be glorified, is the one who guides with his light 'Every human being that comes', and by means of it reveals to him all secrets. That is made clear in this passage when it says, 'To bear witness to the light, that he is the light of truth which enlightens every human being'. The expression 'he was in the world' fits well with being an attribute of the light and is appropriate that it is an attribute of the True One, may his name be glorified. This is because the guidance of God Almighty, his making clear every hidden thing, and his lifting the veil from every ambiguity, never cease in the world.

His saying, 'And the world existed through him' is attributed to the True One, may his name be glorified, and this has been stated clearly at the beginning of the chapter, when it says, 'Everything existed through him'. So I wish I knew what excuse there is for someone to take this to refer to Jesus, on him be peace, despite this being made clear, where he says in describing God at the beginning of the chapter, 'And without him nothing existed that came to exist'. His saying, 'he came to his own' means to the ones belonging to the True One, his light appeared, which refers to his guidance and his direction, since by his light every rightly guided person is guided, and the intention of 'The coming of the light' here is 'his appearance', because describing the meaning as 'coming' signifies appearance. His saying, 'And his own did not receive him' means his own who were called to guidance. In other words, his own who were called to his guidance did not accept his guidance. His saying, 'As for those who accepted', means as for those who accepted his guidance, and they were not those who

الكلام بأمّا التي هي للتفصيل "فاعطاهم سلطاناً أن يصيروا بني الله" كان الأخصر ان يقول ان يصيروا بنيه وانما عدل عن ذلك ليصرّح بذكر الاسم المعظّم وهو الله لاجل شرف النسبة ليعظم وقع ذلك في النفوس.

ثم قال: "الذين يؤمنون باسمه الذين ليس هم من دمٍ ولا من هواء لحمٍ ولا مشيئة رجل لكن ولدوا من الله" يريد ان هذه البنوة التي حصل لهم بها شرف النسبة ليست من قبيل البنوات التي من شأنها ان تحصل عن مشيئة¹ الرجال والمأمهم بالنساء وتكوّن اللحم والدماء بل المراد بذلك الافراط في القرب والرأفة بهم على حكم ما سلف.

ثم عطف على أول الفصل مبيناً أن من احكام "الكلمة" التي قام منها معنى العالم ان تطلق على العالم² سواء كان منفكاً عن الجسمية كذات البارئ او غير منفك كذات الرسول.

وقد سلكو³ في تأويل الاقانيم مسلماً لزمهم القول بوجود ثلاثة الهة في الذهن والخارج متباينة ذاتها وحقائقها او نفي ذات الاله جل اسمه. وذلك انهم جعلوا الاب عبارة عن الذات بقيد الابوة والابن عبارة عن الذات بقيد البنوة وروح القدس عبارة عن الذات بقيد الانبثاق، ثم يقولون اله واحد.

فاذا ضويقوا في ذلك وتبينوا ان ذات الاب مختصة⁴ بصفة الابوة غير قابلة لوصفها بالبنوة وكذلك القول في الابن وروح القدس وليست من الذوات المتضامنة فتقدّر اباً لشخص وابناً لغيره. قالوا ان الذات واحدة وصفها بجميع هذه الصفات ممكن لكنا اذا وصفناها بصفة قدرنا نفي ما يباينها وهذا مكان الجهل والغفلة لانهم يقولون بقدّم هذه الذوات ازلاً وبقدم صفاتها فاذا هي ملزومات الصفات⁵ وصفاتها لازمة لها ومتى وُجد الملزوم وُجد اللازم ومتى انتفى اللازم انتفى الملزوم فاذا

¹ في شيدياك: مشيات ² ان تطلق على العالم سقط في ب ³ من "وقد سلكو" الى "المعضله الثانيه" ص 58
سقط في ج ⁴ في ب: مختصة بذات ⁵ سقط في س

did not accept. That is proved by the intention of the expression ‘as for’, which is placed there to specify, ‘And he gave them authority to become sons of God’. It would have been more natural to say that they became his sons, except he refrained from that in order to make a clear reference to the sublime name who is God, so that by conferring the honour of this relationship he would make a greater impression on the souls.

Then he said, ‘Those who believed in his name who were not from blood, nor from desire of the flesh, nor from the will of a man, but were born of God’. He meant that this sonship, which happened to them by the conferring of the honour of the relationship, was not the kind of sonship which can be characterised as happening as a result of the will of men, and their uniting with women, and the formation of flesh and blood. The intention of this is to intensify his closeness and compassion to them, according to what has been said before.

Then, he referred to the beginning of the chapter showing that it is upon the rules governing ‘the word’ that the meaning ‘the knowledgeable one’ is based. This is applied to the knowledgeable one equally whether separated from corporality as with the essence of the Creator or not separated as with the essence of the messenger.

When interpreting the hypostases they (Christians) have followed a path which has obliged them to talk about the existence of three gods, in the mind and in fact, distinct in their essences and their natures, which is to deny the essence of God, may his name be glorified. The result is that they make the Father equivalent to the essence in terms of fatherhood, and the Son equivalent to the essence in terms of sonship, and the Holy Spirit equivalent to the essence in terms of proceeding. Then they say that God is one.

If they are pressed about this and they are shown that the essence of the Father specified by the attribute of fatherhood cannot admit the attribute of sonship, and likewise with the teaching about the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is not one of the relative essences that it may be assigned as a father to one person and a son to another. They say: ‘If the essence is one, to describe it with all of these attributes is possible, but when we describe it with an attribute, we imply the negation of what is contrary to it’. This is a position resting on ignorance and stupidity, because they speak about the timelessness of these eternal essences, and the timelessness of their attributes. So then, they are necessarily attached to the attributes and their attributes are necessarily attached to them. When something necessarily attached exists, what is necessarily attached to it exists too, and when what is necessarily attached is removed, what it is necessarily attached to it is removed as well. If it is possible to remove an attribute necessarily attached to the essence, then it is possible to remove the essence.

قدر نفي الصفة اللازمة للذات قدر نفي الذات والى هذا المعنى اشارة الكتاب العزيز بقوله¹ "لقد كفر الذين قالوا ان الله ثالث ثلاثة".

المعضلة الثانية ذكرها يوحنا في الفصل الخامس والعشرين: "ابراهيم ابوكم اشتهى ان يرى يومي فرأى وفرح. فقال له اليهود: لم يأت لك بعد خمسون سنة وقد رأيت ابراهيم فقال لهم يسوع: الحق الحق اقول لكم اني قبل ان يكون ابراهيم". هذا آخر كلامه.

فقول اذاً هذا الكلام ناطق بالمجاز لأن ابراهيم عليه السلام لم ير يوم ولادته ولا يوم ارساله ولا يوم حصول الحقيقة الثالثة له كما يزعمون لان هذه كلها حدثت بعد ابراهيم بل المراد من ذلك ان الانبياء يحبون دوام طاعة الله ودوام اظهار الشرائع المتكفلة بمصالح العباد فلما علم ابراهيم عليه السلام برسالة عيسى وهدايته للعالم وما يظهر على يده من مصالح العباد على ما اقتضته شريعته سر بذلك فالرؤية ههنا محمولة على البصيرة التي هي العلم لا على البصر وقد صرح بولص في رسالته التي سيرها الى قورنثية بابلغ من ذلك وهذا يدل على انه اراد عين ما اردناه فقال "ولكنا ننطق بحكمة الله الخفية بالسر الذي لم يزل مستتراً عن العوام"² وكان الله تقدم فقررها قبل العالمين يريد ان هذه الاحكام مقررة في علم الله قديماً³ فليست اذاً تقولاً واقتراء وهذا عين ما اولناه.

وقد صرح في قصص الرسل في الفصل الثالث بمثل ذلك عظيم تلاميذته بطرس بن يونا المعروف بشمعون الصفا قائلاً "يا بني اسرائيل اسمعوا هذا الكلام ان يسوع الناصري رجل ظهر عندكم من الله بالقوى والايات التي فعلها الله على يديه بينكم كما تعلمون انتم فهذا الذي كان مقرراً لهذا من سابق

¹ سقط في ب ² "عن العوام" سقط في س وج ³ سقط في ب، س

This is the meaning indicated in the Noble Book when it says, ‘unbelievers are those who say that God is the third of three.’⁹⁹

[Jesus’ claim to have existed before Abraham]

The second difficulty is mentioned by John in the twenty-fifth chapter: ‘Abraham your father wanted to see my day, he did see it and he rejoiced. The Jews said to him, you have not yet reached fifty years and you have already seen Abraham?, and Jesus said to them, truly, truly I say to you, I am before Abraham was.’¹⁰⁰ This is the end of his words.

We therefore say that these words were spoken as a metaphor because Abraham, on him be peace, did not see the day of his birth, nor the day of his being sent, nor the day of the occurrence of the third reality in him, as they claim, because all of these happened after Abraham. But the intention is that the prophets desire always to obey God and always to make known his law which guarantees the welfare of the worshipping servants. When Abraham, on him be peace, was made aware of the mission of Jesus to be a guide for the world, and of what would appear by his hands for the welfare of the worshipping servants according to what his law required, he took pleasure in it. ‘Seeing’ here should be taken to refer to perception, which is knowledge, but not to physical vision. Paul declared in his epistle which he sent to the Corinthians much more than this, and this shows that he intended exactly what we have said was intended when he said, ‘But we speak by the hidden wisdom of God, by the secret which is always hidden from the worlds, and God who is eternal decreed it before the worlds existed.’¹⁰¹ He meant that these decisions were decreed in the mind of God eternally, and therefore they are not gossip or slander. This is exactly what we have interpreted.

In the Acts of the Apostles in the third chapter, the most important of his disciples, Peter son of Jonah, known as Simon Cephas, made a declaration like this when he said, ‘O children of Israel, listen to these words; Jesus of Nazareth was a man who appeared among you from God with power and signs which God performed by his hands among you, as you yourselves know, and this is what was decreed for him from the prior knowledge of God and his will.’¹⁰²

99 Qur’ān 5:73.

100 John 8:56–58.

101 1 Corinthians 2:7.

102 Acts 2:22.

علم الله ومشيئته". صرح هذان العظيمان عندهم بعين ما أولئاهُ وزاد ابن يونا زيادةً فصَّحَّ بانه رجل وصرَّح بان القوى والآيات التي ظهرت على يديه ليست واقعةً بفعله بل صرح بان فاعلها إنما هو الله بقوله "رجل ظهر عندكم من الله¹ بالقوى والآيات التي فعلها الله على يديه" وهذا التلميذ المصَّحَّ بمجموع ما ذكر لا يسعُ أحداً منهم ان يخطر بباله مخالفته.

وصرح الانجيل ناطق عموماً و خصوصاً بوجوب متابعتة والوقوف عند اقواله. اما عموماً فقوله لتلاميذته: "الحق اقول لكم أن كل ما ربطتموه على الارض يكون مربوطاً في السموات وما حلتموه على الارض يكون محلولاً في السموات" واما خصوصاً فقوله مخاطباً له "انت الصخرة و على هذه الصخرة ابني بيعتي" ثم قال له: "وما ربطته على الارض يكون مربوطاً في السموات. وما حلته على الارض يكون محلولاً في السموات" صرح بمجموع ذلك كله اعني الخصوص والعموم متى في انجيله وقوله ايضاً: "ارغ خرافي ارغ كباشي ارغ نعاجي" يريد بذلك طوائف امته² صرح بهذه الكلمات يوحنا في آخر انجيله. ويدل على صحَّة هذا التأويل ايضاً قوله: "اني قبل ابراهيم" القبلية³ ههنا محال أن تكون مضافة إلى ناسوته لا باعتبار انفكاكه عن اللاهوت ولا باعتبار تعلقه به ومحال أن تكون أيضاً مضافة للحقيقة الثالثة لما تبين (أن)⁴ هذه كلها حوادث لم تكن موجودة عند وجود إبراهيم عليه السلام بل المراد بالقبلية علمه بتقدير الإرسال وما يترتب عليه من الإرشاد. هذا هو المعنى الذي حمله على السرور.

فان قيل فاي خصوصية له في ذلك إذ هذا الجمل مشترك بينه وبين سائر الأنبياء بل وبين كل موجود. فالجواب أنه لم يذكر ذلك في معرض الخصوصية وإنما ذكره قاطعاً به استبعاد اليهود لسرور إبراهيم وفرحه بيومه وتصحيحاً لصدقه فيما اخبر لأن الأنبياء إذا صدر عنهم مثل ذلك إنما يصدر في

¹ سقط في س، ب ب² في ب طوائف منه ³ سقط في ج⁴ في ب، س، ج: اذ

These two leading people among them proclaimed exactly what we have interpreted, and the son of Jonah promoted it further for he made it clear that he (Jesus) was a man and he explained that the power and the signs which were manifested by his hands were not due to his own actions. He made it clear that the one who performed them was God when he said, 'A man appeared among you from God with power and signs which God performed by his hands'. As for this disciple who declared all that has been mentioned, nobody among them would dare to contradict him.

The gospel makes clear, speaking generally and particularly, the necessity to follow him and to pursue his teaching. As for 'generally', there is his (Jesus') saying to his disciples, 'Truly I say to you that all that you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven'.¹⁰³ As for 'particularly', there is his saying when he was talking to him (Peter), 'You are the rock and on this rock I will build my church'. Then he said to him, 'What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and what you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven'.¹⁰⁴ Matthew made all of this clear, whether in particular or in general, in his gospel. He (Jesus) also said, 'Tend my lambs, tend my rams, tend my ewes'.¹⁰⁵ By this he meant the groups of his people. John reported these words at the end of his gospel.

Evidence is also found for the soundness of this interpretation when he says, 'I was before Abraham'. The precedence here cannot be attached to his humanity, whether it is considered separated from the divinity or is considered connected to it. Moreover, it cannot be attached to the third reality, as has been shown, since it is not possible that all of these things did not exist when Abraham, on him be peace, existed. The meaning of the precedence is his (Abraham's) knowledge of the decree of his (Jesus') being sent, and of his work of guidance connected with it. This is the meaning which should be taken of the 'rejoicing'.

If it is said, what is exclusive to him in this since all of this is shared between him and the rest of the prophets, indeed with all human beings? The reply is that he did not mention this in relation to what was exclusive to him, rather he mentioned it to oppose the incredulity of the Jews about the rejoicing of Abraham, his happiness about his (Jesus') day, and to confirm the truth of what he reported. When something like this issue occurs to the prophets, it occurs on the occasion of the denial of their words, and that what they claim of their being sent is not established in fact. So this is a refutation of the one who made

103 Matthew 16:19.

104 Ibid.

105 John 21:15–17.

معرض التكذيب لأقوالهم وأن ما يدعونه من الرسالة ليس ثابتاً في نفس الأمر فيكون ذلك رداً على المكذب وإعلاماً له بأن هذه الدعوى ثابتة في نفس الأمر مقررة في علم الله قديماً.

ويدل على صحة هذا التأويل أن عيسى عليه السلام إنما ورد منه ذلك حين أعظم عليه اليهود قوله قائلين: "لم يأت لك بعد خمسون سنة" فذكر حينئذ الجهة المصححة لسرور إبراهيم فتحصل لهم بذلك استمالة مكذبيهم إلى صدقهم فيما يدعونه من النبوة والرسالة وتقوية ظنون مصدقيهم الذين لم يصلوا إلى درجة العلم. وقد ورد مثل ذلك في ألفاظ سيد المرسلين حيث قال: "كنت نبياً وآدم بين الماء والطين".

ويجوز أن يكون عيسى عليه السلام ذكر ذلك في معرض الخصوصية وهو إعلام إبراهيم بمجموع رسالته وما يترتب عليها من الهداية وإظهار ما ظهر على يده من المعجزات المختصة به دون من عداه من الأنبياء السالفة قبله هذا معنى حسن الإرادة فكيف ثبت الهية إنسان بدليل هذا شأنه؟

الشبهة الثالثة نص عليها ابن زبدي في الفصل الأول من فصول الفارقليط: "قال له فيلبس: يا سيد أرنا الآب وحسبنا فقال له يسوع: أنا معكم كل هذا الزمن ولم تعرفني يا فيليب من رأيي فقد رأى الآب فكيف تقول أنت أرنا الآب أما تؤمن أنني في الآب والآب هو في وهذا الكلام الذي أتكلم به ليس هو من عندي بل أبي الذي هو حال في هو يفعل هذه الأفعال، آمنوا بي³ أنني في الآب والآب هو في والإفآمنوا من أجل الأعمال الحق الحق أقول لكم أن من يؤمن بي ويعمل الأعمال التي اعمل وأفضل منها يصنع لأني ماض إلى الآب" هذا آخر كلامه.

¹ سقط في ب، س في س: انا ³ سقط في ج

the denial and makes him aware that this claim is established in fact, decreed in the knowledge of God from eternity.

The evidence for the truth of this interpretation is that Jesus, on him be peace, mentioned this when the Jews thought that his words attached greatness to himself, saying to him, 'You have not yet reached fifty years'. He mentioned at this point the aspect that justified the rejoicing of Abraham. So it happens to them (prophets) in this way, attracting their deniers to believing them concerning what they claim of prophethood and messengership, and strengthening the faith of those who have given credence to them, who have not arrived at a degree of knowledge. Something like this is recorded in the words of the Prince of the Messengers, when he said, 'I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay'.¹⁰⁶

It is possible that Jesus, on him be peace, mentioned this in respect to what was exclusive to him, which was Abraham's knowledge of the totality of his mission, the guidance connected with it, and making known the miracles that appeared by his hand which were exclusive to him apart from all of the prophets who preceded him. This is the meaning of the laudable desire, for how can the divinity of a man be established by evidence of this kind?

[Jesus' claim that whoever saw him had seen the Father]

The third difficulty is recounted by the son of Zebedee in the first of the chapters about the Paraclete;

Philip said to him, 'Master' show us the Father and it will be enough for us, and Jesus said to him, I have been with you all this time and you have not known me, Philip; whoever has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? These words which I speak are not from me but my from Father who dwells in me, he performs these deeds; believe in me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, if not, believe as a result of the deeds; truly, truly, I say to you that whoever believes in me will perform the deeds that I perform, and even greater than them he will do, because I am going to the Father.¹⁰⁷

This is the end of his words.

106 This Ḥadīth is found in the Ḥadīth collection of Abū Abdullah al-Ḥakīm Nishapurī (d. 1012), *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-ṣaḥīḥayn* 2:616–617.

107 John 14:8–12.

فاقول: هذا النص كالنص الذي أنكر اليهود اطلاقه واعتذر عنه ضاريا لهم المثل وقد مضى القول فيه مبيناً وزاده ههنا بياناً وضع فيه ما عادته أن يصنعه وهو أنه صلوات الله عليه لم يأت قط بلبسة الا واتبعها كاشفاً يظهر خفاها. وبيان ذلك أنه حين سئل أن يريهم الإله وكان ذلك مما لا يمكن أسعافهم به عدل عن مسؤولهم قائلاً: "من رأي فقد رأى الاب" يريد أن الإله لما كانت رؤيته غير ممكنة للعباد أقام الأنبياء في تبليغهم احكامه مقام نفسه وهذا شأن الملوك المحتجبين بأمره يأمرون وبنهيه ينهون وبإحكامه يحكمون.

ثم صرح بعدم إرادة ظاهر¹ هذا اللفظ فقال: "وهذا الكلام الذي أتكلم ليس هو من عندي" ثم بالغ في البيان فقال "بل أبي الذي هو حال في يفعل هذه الأفعال" يريد أن أقواله ليست للإله بقيد كونها مفردة بل وأفعاله أي وكل كلام صدر مني متضمناً حكماً فهو من الله لأني عنه أخبر وكلماتونه من الأفعال الباهرة للعقول الناطقة بخوارق الأنبياء فذلك فعله لأنه واقع بقدرته.

وقد سلف منا تصريح بولص الرسول بما يعضد هذا التأويل وذكرنا لفظه: "وهو الله الواحد هو والوسيط بين الله والناس واحد هو² الإنسان يسوع المسيح". ثم أتى بعد ذلك بما لا يتصور معه إرادة ظاهر هذا اللفظ الدال على أنه هو الإله فقال مصرحاً بعدم إرادة ظاهره ومرغبا لهم في تعاطي الأسباب التي وصل بها إلى مثل ذلك: "الحق الحق أقول لكم أن من يؤمن بي يعمل الأعمال التي أعمل وأفضل منها يصنع" صرح بجهة المجاز إذ لا يتصور لأحد من البشر أن تكون أفعاله أفضل من أفعال الإله بوجه.

ثم أكد البيان بقوله: "لأني ماض إلى الأب" ولو كان هو الأب حقيقة لما قال: "لأني ماض إلى الأب"؟ إذ لا يتصور لأحد أن يقول أنا ماض إلى زيد ويكون هو عين زيد. وقوله: "أما تؤمن أني في الآب والآب هو في" يريد بذلك عدم التباين في الأحكام والإرادات على حد ما أسلفناه في اطلاقه

¹ سقط في ج "واحد هو" سقط في ب وس

I say this passage is like the passage in which the Jews denied his declaration about himself. He defended it by giving them the proverbial saying, added these words as a clarification, and increased the clarification here by emphasising, as he usually did, that he, may the blessings of God be upon him, never presented an ambiguity except that he followed it with a disclosure that revealed its hidden meaning. The evidence for this is that when he was asked to show them God, since he could not comply with their wishes, he deflected their request saying, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father'. He meant that, since God cannot be seen by the worshipping servants, he ordained the prophets to transmit his decrees instead of himself. This is the case with kings who are hidden from sight. By his command they command and by his prohibition they prohibit and by his judgments they judge.

Moreover, he made clear the absence of any intention of a literal meaning for this expression by saying, 'And these words that I speak are not from me'. Then making it absolutely clear he said, 'But my Father who dwells in me performs these deeds'. He meant that not only were his words from God in terms of their actual existence, but also his deeds. In other words, all of the words issued from me containing a judgment are from God because I pronounce on his behalf, and all of the magnificent deeds that you witness, which remind intelligent people of the miracles of the prophets, he performed by means of his power.

The declaration of Paul the Apostle, which backs up this interpretation, has already been quoted by us, and now we mention his saying, 'And he is the one God, and the mediator between God and human beings is one, he is the man Jesus Christ'.¹⁰⁸ So he (Jesus) put forward, what could not be intended literally, this expression which taken literally would mean that he was God. For he made clear that he did not intend a literal meaning and he wanted them to consider why he had given this metaphor, when he said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you that whoever believes in me does the deeds that I do and greater deeds than these he will do'. He made clear the metaphorical aspect since it could in no way be conceived by any human being that his deeds would be greater than the deeds of God.

Then he confirmed the explanation when he said, 'Because I am going to the Father'. If he was himself really the Father why did he say, 'Because I am going to the Father'? It cannot be conceived that anyone would say, 'I am going to Zayd' when he is actually Zayd himself. When he said, 'Do you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?', by this he meant the absence of difference in judgments and wishes, according to what we have said about his use of the term 'indwelling'. The proof of this is the fact that he followed the

108 1 Timothy 2:5.

الحلول ويدل على ذلك أنه اتبعه بقوله: "هذا الكلام الذي أتكلم به ليس هو من عندي" فليتأمل المتأمل هذا النص كم اشتمل على تصريح وتضمن من قرينة تدل على أنه غير الإله فكيف يجعل نفس الإله بل لو كان هذا النص كله لبسه لما جاز معاندة المعقول واعتقاد ذلك فكيف والحالة هذه؟ الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا وما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله.

ويحتمل هذا النص وجهاً آخر يعضده ما ورد مصرحاً به في الإنجيل متى وهو قوله: "وليس أحد يعرف الابن الا الآب ولا احد يعرف الآب إلا الابن" صرح بأن احدا لا يعرفه إلا الإله فحينئذ يكون منكراً على السائل الطالب رؤية الإله بقوله: "إني معكم كل هذا الزمن ولم تعرفني" وأنا إنسان مع أن معرفة الإنسان ممكنة فكيف نتصور أن تعرف الإله الذي لا يتصور معرفته بحاسة البصر ولا يتبين كنه حقيقته بالإجناس والفصول. ثم عدل عن ذلك مبيناً أن الإله إنما تطلب معرفته ليكون المكلف واثقاً بأن هذه الأحكام صادرة منه وقال: "من رأي فقد رأى الآب" أي أنا عنه أخبر ثم أوضح ذلك بقوله: "هذا الكلام الذي أتكلم به ليس هو من عندي" ثم لم يقتصر على نسبة الكلام إلى الله عز وجل فقال: "بل أي الذي هو حال في يفعل هذه الأفعال" ثم ساق نفسه¹ بالكلام على حد ما أول.

بقيت لهم شبهة لفظية وقعت لبعضهم ظناً منه أن "الكلمة" حيث ما أطلقت يجب أن يكون المراد منها عين ما اصطلاحوا عليه في أقاتهم لتصحيح ما يتعذر عليهم إرادة ظاهره المتعدد بالذات.

¹ "نفسه بالكلام" في ج: بقية الكلام

statement with his saying, 'And these words that I speak are not from me'. So let the thoughtful person reflect on how many clear and implied statements are contained in the context of this passage showing that he is not God. How can he make himself God? Even if all of this passage were ambiguous, it would not be possible to resist reason and believe this, so how could it be when this is the case? Praise be to God who guided us in this, and we could not have been guided unless God had guided us.

This passage bears another aspect supported by what is stated clearly in the gospel of Matthew, when he (Jesus) says, 'No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son'.¹⁰⁹ He made clear that no one knows him except God, and therefore he was denying the one who questioned him, who asked to see God, by saying, I have been with you all this time and yet you do not know me. I am a man. Although human knowledge is possible, how do you imagine that you can know God, since knowing him does not come through the sense of sight, nor can the core of his reality be explained, by genus or difference.¹¹⁰ He turned away from this to demonstrate that God, when the knowledge of him is sought, ensures that the responsible people are certain that these judgements originate from him, in his saying, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father', in other words, 'I report about him'. He further made this clear by saying, 'And these words that I speak are not from me'. Not content to attribute only the words to God, exalted and glorious, he said, 'But my Father who dwells in me performs these deeds'. Thus he himself uttered the words according to what has been interpreted.

[Christian appeal to Jesus being called 'word from God' in the Qur'ān to support his divinity]

There remains for them a terminological ambiguity causing some of them to suppose that 'the word', when it is used, means exactly what they have defined for their hypostases. They try to authenticate, what is not possible, a literal

109 Matthew 11:27.

110 Genus and difference were two of the five predicables of Porphyry used in Arabic logic. The five predicables were genus *jins*, species *naw'*, difference *faṣl*, property *khaṣṣa*, and accident *'araḍ*. See Tj de Boer and G.C. Anawati, 'faṣl', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 2, 1965, pp. 836–837.

وهذا وهم عظيم وعماية خيلت له¹ أن هذا الاصطلاح الذي حملهم ما أشرنا إليه من الضرورة على ما قالوا به² يجب أن يكون مراداً لأهل كل شريعة فلذلك استدلل على الهية عيسى عليه السلام بما ورد في الكتاب العزيز وهو قوله جلّ من قائل: "يا أهل الكتاب لا تغلوا³ في دينكم ولا تقولوا على الله إلا الحق إنما المسيح عيسى بن مريم رسول الله وكلمته القاها إلى مريم وروح منه فآمنوا بالله ورسله ولا تقولوا ثلاثة انتهوا خيراً لكم إنما الله إله واحد"⁴.

فاحسب أن أكشف غطاء هذه الشبهة ليكون الناظر في هذا النص آمناً من الشبهات المضلّة فأقول: المولود إنما يتكون مسبباً⁵ عن سببين أحدهما في الأنثيين وهو أحد نوعي القوة المولدة وهي القوة التي يصير الدم فيها بحال يكون بها مستعداً لقبول قوة الحياة من واهب الصور والثاني القوة الموجودة في المني إذا انتقل إلى الرحم وانضمت إليه سائر الشرائط بأن يكون ماء دافقاً صحيحاً قوياً لا فساد فيه ولا ضعف ويكون الرحم صحيحاً لا علة به ولم يحصل للمرأة عقيب الجماع حركة مزعجة عنيفة يحصل بها زلق المني من الرحم فحينئذ يستعد لقبول القوة المصورة من واهب الصور فإذا صار عنها تشكيلات

¹ سقط في ج ² في ج على ان قالوا انه ³ في س: لا تغلوا ⁴ "أما الله إله واحد" سقط في س وج ⁵ من "مسبباً" الى "فقول السبب القريب في حق عيسى" سقط في ج

plurality in the essence.¹¹¹ This is a gross error and folly which gives them the impression that this terminology, which they have interpreted as we have indicated, must be intended for the people of every revealed law. So for that reason, conclusions are drawn about the divinity of Jesus, on him be peace, from what is written in the Noble Book, and it is the teaching of the Glorious One who says,

O people of the book, do not exaggerate in your religion, and only speak the truth about God. Surely the Messiah is Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God, and his word cast into Mary and a spirit from him; so believe in God and his messengers, and do not say three, Desist! It will be better for you; surely God is one.¹¹²

It is appropriate for me to lift the veil from this ambiguity so that the one who looks at this passage may be saved from misleading doubts. So I say one who is born is created from one of two causes; one of them is in the testicles and it is one of the categories of generative power from which the blood comes into a condition that makes it capable to receive the life force from the One who gives the human form. The second of them is the power existing in the sperm, when it passes into the womb and is combined with the right conditions, that there is water, flowing, sound, and strong, with no corruption or weakness in it, and that the womb is sound, with no disease in it, and that there does not occur in the woman, after the union, a harsh violent movement resulting in the spilling of the sperm from the womb. Now it is ready to receive the formative power

111 The author is referring to Christians who interpret Q4:171 to refer to the word incarnate through Mary and the Holy Spirit indwelling Christ. The earliest known example of this Christian reading of the Qurʾān is given by John of Damascus (d. circa 750), 'The Heresy of the Ishmaelites', in D.J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, Leiden, 1972, p. 137, where he argues that if Muslims believe that Christ is word and spirit of God then Christians can say that if the word is in God it is obvious that he is God as well. Similar use is made of the Qurʾān in the eighth century *Anonymous Apology for Christianity*, pp. 77–78, where Qurʾān 4:171 is taken to support the Christian teaching that the Father brought forth the word as the sun produces rays, or the human mind words, or fire heat. Just as there cannot be heat without fire or rays without sun, or words without a mind, so there cannot be the word of God without God. See further, M. Swanson, 'Beyond Proof-texting: Approaches to the Qurʾān in some Early Arabic Christian Apologies', *The Muslim World* 88, 1998, pp. 297–319, 'Beyond Proof-texting (2): The Use of the Bible in some Early Arabic Christian Apologies', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 91–112, and M. Beaumont, 'Early Christian Interpretation of the Qurʾān', *Transformation* 22, 2005, pp. 195–203.

112 Qurʾān 4:171.

الأعضاء كان ذلك كونا للصورة العضوية وفساداً للصورة المنوية فيستعد حينئذ لقبوله الروح من واهبها.

هذا هو السبب العادي في تكوين كل مولود وإذا ثبت ذلك فنقول: أن كل شيء له سبب قريب وسبب بعيد فالأكثر إضافته إلى سببه القريب فيقال عند رؤية الرياض الخضر: أنظر إلى صنع المطر والله هو الصانع الحقيقي ولو رؤي نبات نضر على صلد والشمس في الأسد لقليل: أنظر إلى صنع الإله فيصرح بالسبب الحقيقي لفوات السبب العادي.

وإذا وضح هذان الأصلان¹ فنقول: السبب القريب في حق عيسى عليه السلام لما دل الدليل على عدم وقوعه أضيف تكوينه إلى السبب البعيد² وهو الكلمة لأن كل أحد مخلوق بكلمة الله القائل بها لكل مخلوق: كن فإذا هو كائن. فلهذا السبب³ صرح في حقه بذلك إشارة إلى انتفاء السبب القريب العادي وأنه إنما كون بالكلمة التي هي "كن" من غير مني يمكن إضافة التكوين إليه على ما شرح.

ثم أوضح ذلك بقوله: "ألقاها إلى مريم" يريد أن الولد إنما يتكون من القاء المني إلى أمه وهذا المولود لم يخلق إلا بإلقاء الكلمة إلى أمه التي هي عبارة عن الأمر بالتكوين فإذا الإلقاء مجازي.

وقد ورد مثل ذلك في حق آدم لما اشتركا في عدم التكوين عن الأسباب العادية حيث قال جلّ من قائل: "ما منعك أن تسجد لما خلقت بيدي" والله عز وجل لا يد له وإنما المراد: خلقته بقدرتي، إشارة

¹ نهاية ما سقط في ج ² السبب البعيد: سقط في ج ³ فلهذا السبب: في ج وإنما

from the One who gives the forms,¹¹³ and when the formation of the members happens, this is the creation of the form of the members and the decomposing of the form of the sperm. So it is ready, at this point, to receive the spirit from the One who gives it.

This is the natural cause in the making of every generated being. If this is established, then we say that everything has a direct cause and an indirect cause,¹¹⁴ though it is mostly related to its direct cause. It is said of the sight of green fields, 'Look at the work of the rain', and yet God is the One who works in truth. If healthy plants are seen in barren ground and the sun is in the constellation of Leo, then it is said, 'Look at the work of God', so here one mentions the true cause instead of the natural cause.

If these two principles have been made clear then we say, concerning the existence of Jesus, on him be peace, since the direct cause has been clearly proved not to have occurred, then his creation was related to the indirect cause, which is the word, because everyone is created by the word of God, the One who says to every creature 'Be and it exists'.¹¹⁵ This is why it is made clear about his existence, by the indication of a lack of the natural direct cause, that he was indeed created by the word 'Be' without the possibility of sperm being connected to his creation, according to what has been explained.

Moreover, he made this clear by saying, 'Cast it into Mary', which means that although a child is created from the sperm cast into its mother, this child was only created by the casting of the word into his mother, that is to say the command about the creation. So then the word 'cast' is metaphorical.

Something like this has been mentioned about the existence of Adam, for these two (Jesus and Adam) share in the absence of creation by natural causes. He, may the One who speaks be glorified, says, 'What has prevented you from

113 Here the author uses the Muslim philosophers' terminology *wāhib al-ṣuwar*, 'the giver of forms', and makes the distinction between the stage where the foetus would be formed and the stage when the soul will be received from God. Here the author combines the philosophical theory of the giver of forms and the efficient cause of humans when they receive the soul from God. We can infer that the author is relying on al-Ghazālī's method of connecting philosophical theories with theological concepts.

114 Theologians of the Mu'tazilite school considered that for every act there is a direct cause and an efficient cause. The direct cause intimates the act and the efficient cause is indirect divine power. Later Ash'arites also adopted this theory. R.M. Frank shows in *Creation and the Cosmic System: al-Ghazālī and Avicenna*, Heidelberg, 1992, that al-Ghazālī was one of the earliest Ash'arites to adopt the efficient cause theory in his cosmology.

115 Qur'an 7:43.

إلى أنه لم يَكُون من مني وإنما كَوّن بقدرته يشير بذلك إلى فوات السبب العادي وإذا فات السبب العادي أضيف إلى السبب البعيد المشبه بالحقيقي وهو كلمة الله عزّ وجلّ.

وقد أوتي بالمماثلة صريحاً فقال: "أن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون" وكذلك أيضاً قوله: "روح منه" أي وهو روح تكوينها صادر عنه منفكاً عن الأسباب العادية التي يضاف إليها السبب عادة فالصلة في مكان الصفة للروح.

فان قيل: تمام هذه الحجة فرع لكون الكلمة سبباً وسببيتها فرع لردّها لقاعدة الشرط وما يترتب عليه من الجواب وذلك ممتنع لما يلزم من عدم المغايرة بين المسبّب وسببه.

قال الفارسي: لو جاز أن يكون مثل ذلك جواباً لكان قوله تعالى: "كن فيكون" منزلاً منزلة قول القائل: "أذهب فتذهب" وممتنع ذلك إذ يصير تقدير الكلام بالرد إلى قاعدة الشرط "إن تكن تكن" و"إن تذهب تذهب" فيكون حينئذٍ السبب عين المسبّب ولذلك أجمع القرّاء على الرفع فيما وقع الاحتجاج

¹ في ج: فاصله

prostrating when I created you by my hands?’¹¹⁶ God, exalted and glorious, does not have hands, so the meaning is, I created him by my power, indicating that he had not been created from sperm but rather he had been created by his power, which in turn indicates the by-passing of the natural cause. If the natural cause is by-passed, it is assigned to the indirect cause, similar to the true (cause), and this is the word of God, exalted and glorious.

This suits the analogy clearly when he said, ‘Jesus is the same in the sight of God as Adam whom he created from dust’;¹¹⁷ then he said to him, ‘Be, and he came into existence’;¹¹⁸ and likewise also his saying, ‘And a spirit from him’.¹¹⁹ In other words, he is a spirit whose creation originated from him, unconnected with the natural causes to which this would usually be attributed, and the connection is in the place of the attribute for the spirit.

If it is said, the conclusion of this argument is part of the premise that ‘the word’ is the cause, and its causality is a part of its reference to the conditional rule, and what results from it in the main clause, then that is not possible when it necessitates the absence of distinctions between what is caused and its cause.

Al-Fārisī¹²⁰ said, if it is permissible that such an example is a main clause, the saying of the Almighty, ‘Be and it came to exist’ would be reduced to the manner of speaking of one who says, ‘Go, and you go’. That is not permissible since the sense of the words would be referred back to the main clause; ‘If you exist, you exist’ and ‘If you go, you go’, so then the cause would be exactly the same as the effect. This is why readers of the Qur’ān agree on the nominative in the argument concerning the preceding verse. Al-Kisā’ī¹²¹ does not follow

116 Qur’ān 38:75.

117 Qur’ān 3:58.

118 Qur’ān 4:171.

119 Ibid.

120 Abū Ḥāmid ‘Abd al-Jāfir ibn Ismā’il ibn ‘Abd al-Jāfir al-Fārisī (d. 1134) was a grammarian and Ḥadīth specialist. The subsequent discussion of the possible grammatical senses of the command, ‘Be and it came to exist’ is designed to deny the Christian reading of the word of God in Q4:171 as one of the hypostases of the Trinity. By examining Q7:43, *‘Kun fa-yakūn’* the author discusses the view of Ibn ‘Amīr that the *fa’* can grammatically be a conditional term with the meaning, ‘if you exist, you exist’. He refers to other grammarians who argue that the context does not permit the conditional sense here. They agree that the *fa’* must be a connective term, connecting the command to the result. If this is the case then the word of God is the cause of the existence of Jesus, without him being caused by natural physical means, just as Adam was caused by God’s word of command without natural physical means.

121 ‘Alī ibn Ḥamza ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Bahman ibn Fairūz al-Kisā’ī (d. circa 805) was a Qur’ānic scholar and a grammarian.

به من الآية السالفة¹. ولم يتابع² الكسائي ابن عامر إلا فيما أمكن أن يكون انتصابه لا من³ جهة الجواب بل من جهة العطف وتلك المتابعة محصورة في آيتين الأولى قوله جلّ من قائل: "أما أمره إذا أراد شيئاً أن يقول له كن فيكون" والثانية قوله تعالى: "إنما أمرنا لشيء إذا أردناه أن نقول له كن فيكون" وإذا كان الجواب ممتنعاً فيما قرئ منصوباً ومرفوعاً سقط الاحتجاج بالآية وامتنع كون الكلمة سبباً.

فأقول والله الموفق أن هذه المباحثة غريبة وأهل العربية يجرون الأجوبة تارة على الألفاظ باعتبار معانيها وتارة على صور الألفاظ المجردة عن معانيها مثال ذلك قوله تعالى: "أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فينظروا" وقع الجواب مرتباً على صورة لفظ الاستفهام مجرداً عن معناه ومعنى الكلام أنهم ساروا فنظروا وذلك خبر محض ليس من الاستفهام في شيء. فإن ظنّ الفاء عاطفة⁴ لصلاحيها مع حذف النون للعطف والجواب فكيف تُجْعَل متمحّضة للجواب مع هذا الاحتمال؟ دفع ذلك بما لا لبسة في كونه جواباً وهو قوله جلّ من قائل: "أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فتكون لهم قلوب".

وإذا وضع ذلك رُدّت مسألتنا إلى هذه القاعدة وكان الجواب جارياً على صيغة الأمر فقط من غير تعرض لمعناه. قال سيبويه: شُبّه ترتب المأمور على صيغة لفظ الأمر في العرف بترتب المقدور على تأثير القدرة فيه إذ أهل العرف يقضون على أن من أمر شخصاً بالقيام فأوجده عند أمره أن قيامه مسبّب عن صيغة الأمر وأن لفظ الأمر سبب⁵ لقيامه وهو في الحقيقة مسبّب عن⁶ الإرادة التي دلت صيغة

¹ "فيما وقع الاحتجاج به من الآية السالفة" سقط في ب ² في ج: يبلغ ³ في ج: الامن ⁴ الفاء عاطفة: في ج ان الفاظها ⁵ في ج: سبيل ⁶ في ب: على

Ibn ‘Amir¹²² except in admitting the possibility that it is accusative, not from the aspect of the main clause but from the aspect of the conjunction, and this agreement is limited to two verses. The first is his saying, may the One who speaks be glorified, ‘He only has to command when he wants something; he says to it, Be! and it exists.’¹²³ The second is the saying of the Almighty, ‘We only have to command something when we want it; we say to it, Be! and it exists.’¹²⁴ If the main clause cannot be read as accusative or nominative, the argument about the verse falls and ‘the word’ cannot be a cause.

So I say, and God is my helper, that this discussion is strange and the people of the Arabic language use the main clause to consider sometimes the meaning of words and at other times the form of words without taking account of the meaning. An example of this is the saying of the Almighty, ‘Do they not go about the earth and see?’¹²⁵ The use of the main clause depends upon the form of the interrogative expression without taking account of its meaning, and the meaning of the words is that ‘They went about and they saw’. This is purely an announcement, it is not a question at all. If it is supposed that the *fa’* is a conjunction because of the susceptibility to the omission of the *nūn* in the conjunction and the main clause, then how can it be taken as solely dedicated to the main clause, according to this conception? This is rebutted by what is not ambiguous in its existence as a main clause, and it is his saying, may the One who speaks be glorified, ‘Do they not go about the earth so that they might have hearts?’¹²⁶

If this is clear our question is referred to this rule, and the main clause accords with the form of the imperative only, without showing its meaning. Sibawayhī¹²⁷ said the order of the one commanded is compared with the form of the expression of the imperative in common usage relating that which is accomplished to the effect of the capability of it. Since the people of the common usage¹²⁸ judge that when a person is commanded to stand up, and he does so at the command, then his standing up is caused by the form of the imperative and the expression of the command is the cause of his standing up.

122 Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ‘Amīr (d. 1031) was a legal scholar of the Maliki school.

123 Qur’ān 36:82.

124 Qur’ān 16:40.

125 Qur’ān 12:109.

126 Qur’ān 22:46.

127 Sibawayhī was the popular name of Abū Bishr ‘Amr ibn Uthmān ibn Qanbar (d. circa 796), a grammarian of the Basra school who wrote the first grammar of Arabic. See M.G. Carter, ‘Sibawayhī’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9, 1997, pp. 524–531.

128 or the Traditionalists.

الأمر عليها. يدل على ذلك أن السيد إذا أمر عبده بأن يفعل فعلاً وعلم العبد أن السيد لا يريد منه فعل ما أمره به فإذا فعله العبد عدّ مخالفاً للسيد ملوماً من جهته فإذا للمأمور سببان أحدهما حقيقي وهو الإرادة وهو السبب البعيد والثاني صيغة الأمر في العرف الدالة على الإرادة فتعود حينئذ القاعدة نفسها في إحالة الحكم على السبب القريب.¹

فقد ثبت حينئذ بما ذكرناه أن أهل العرف يعدون الكلمة المأمور بها سبباً² ويحيلون الحكم عليها ويجعلون ما يقع بعدها مسبباً عنها وإن كان له أسباب حقيقية أبعد منها وذلك عين³ ما بيناه أولاً وإنما تعلق مورد هذا الإشكال بصناعة عربية وقد أمكن رد ذلك إلى قواعدها حينئذ يسقط الإشكال يقيناً ويسقط خيال من ظن أن قراءة ابن عامر فيما تتحضر الفاء فيه جواباً عسرة الرد إلى الأصول العربية وقواعدها كقوله عز وجل سبحانه "إذا قضى أمراً فإنما يقول له كن فيكون" ونظائر ذلك مما انفرد بقراءته منصوباً بل القراء محجوجون من جهته بقوله تعالى "أفلم يسروا في الأرض فتكون لهم قلوب" ولا وجه لإجماعهم على النصب وجعل الفاء جواباً إلا أحالة على وجود صيغة الاستفهام فقط من غير نظر إلى معناها كما تقدم. وبهذا التقدير والإلزام لا يتجه على ابن عامر إشكال⁴ البتة.

فليتأمل الناظر حسن هذا الإعراب والإغراب معظماً هذه الشريعة المحمدية المؤيدة بإفصح الأنبياء لهجة وأصدقهم⁵ حجة إذا نطقت جاءت بكل غريبة وإن سكتت جاءت بكل غريب وليعجب من طائفة تمسك بمثل هذا النص الواضح فهمه وتأويله.

¹ سقط في ب ² سقط في ب ³ في ب، س: غير ⁴ في س: اشكالك ⁵ في ج: ابغهم

But it is in reality caused by the intention which the form of the imperative has demonstrated. This is proved by a master, when he commands his servant to do an action, and the servant knows that the master does not intend him to do what he has commanded him to do. If the servant does it, he is considered as disloyal to his master, blameworthy from his point of view. So, for the one commanded there are two causes; the first of them is real and intended, and it is the indirect cause, and the second is the form of the command in common usage showing the intention, and it goes back, here, to the same rule referring to the judgment about the direct cause.

It has now been established, by what we have mentioned, that the people of the common usage¹²⁹ consider the word by which the command is made to be a cause and they transfer the judgement to it. They make what takes place after it the effect produced by it, even if the real causes are further beyond it, and that is exactly what we have shown from the beginning. But the origin of this difficulty is related to the construction of the Arabic language, and it is possible to refer that to its rules. So here the difficulty certainly disappears, along with the illusion of those who suppose that the reading of Ibn ‘Amir, in making the *fa’* solely dedicated to the main clause is difficult to refer to the principles and rules of the Arabic language, as in his saying, may he be exalted, glorified and praised, ‘When he decides something, he says to it, Be! and it is’.¹³⁰ These are similar to his unique reading of the subjunctive, but the readers of the Qur’ān are presented with evidence of his point of view by the saying of the Almighty, ‘Did they not go about the earth so that they might have hearts’.¹³¹ There is no argument for their affirmation of the subjunctive, and making the *fa’* part of a main clause except with reference to the existence of the interrogative form only, without paying attention to its meaning, as has already been put forward. As a result of this assessment and conclusive argument, no difficulty at all should arise in the mind concerning Ibn ‘Amir.

May the observer consider the excellence of this discussion with its mysteries, magnifying this Muḥammadan law, which is confirmed by the most eloquent language of the prophets, and their best proof of the argument for them is, when it has spoken it has brought forward every kind of wonder, and when it has been silent it has brought forward every kind of mystery. He must be amazed at a sect which adheres to such a narrow minded meaning that is so clear to understand and interpret.

129 or the Traditionalists.

130 Qur’ān 2:117, and 40:68.

131 Qur’ān 22:46.

هذا آخر ما أردناه ووعدنا به في بيان عدم دلالة النصوص على الهيئته وعدم حملها على ما يردده صريح العقل والجمع بين ما يعتقدون مباينته قاصدين بذلك وجه الله جعلنا الله ممن اهتدى بنور هدايته وعَصِمَ عن الخطأ في القول والعمل بتوفيقه وعنايته وصلواته على خلقه محمد وآله وصحابه.

نجز الكتاب بكامله

This terminates what we have intended and have promised concerning a demonstration of the lack of evidence of texts of his divinity, and the absence of any meaning which a sound mind would reject, and we have resolved what they believe to be in contradiction, in doing so, seeking the face of God. May God place us among those who are guided by the light of his guidance and are prevented from error in speech and deed by his assistance, and his care. May his blessing be on his creatures, Muḥammad, his family and his companions.

The book is completely finished.

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