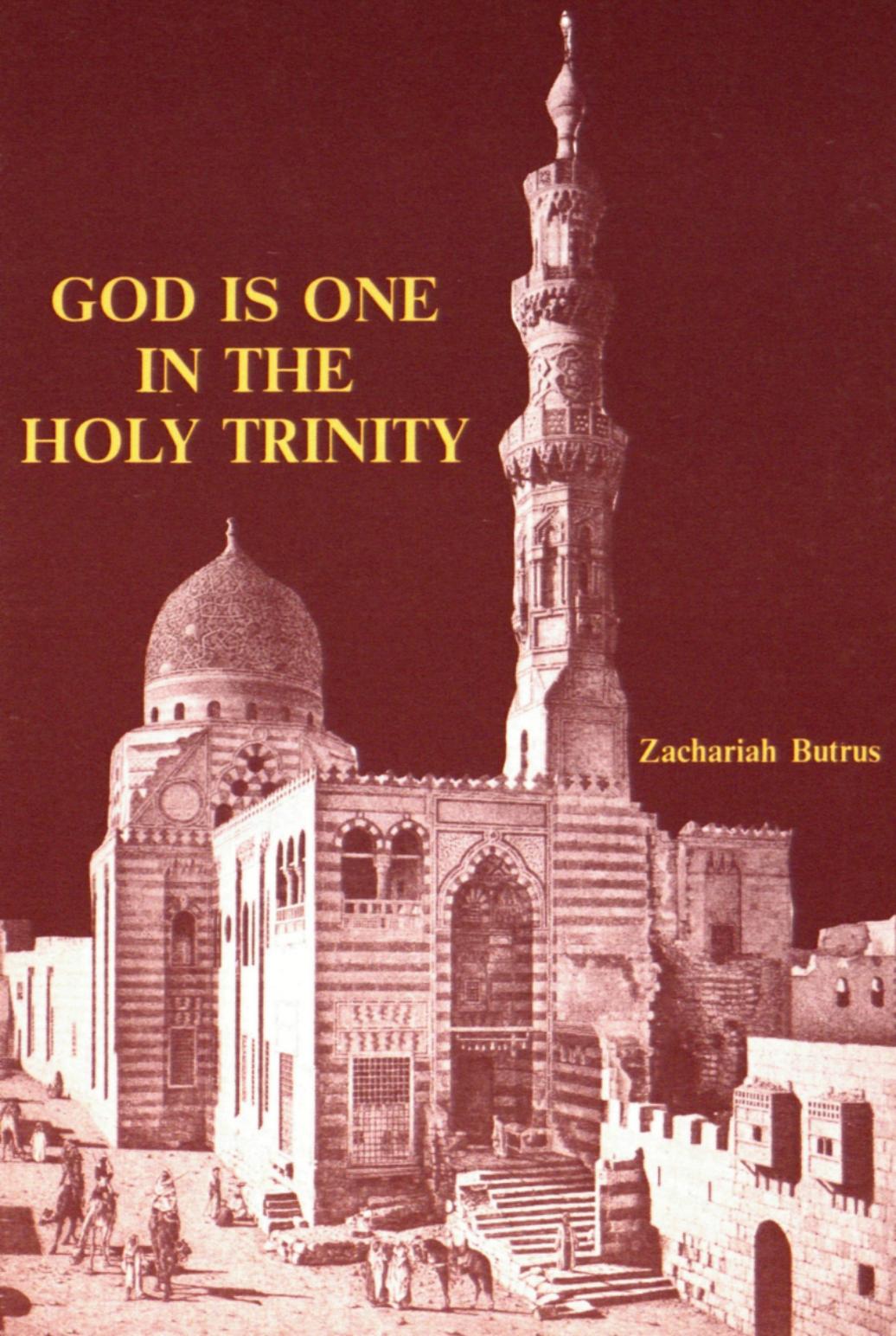


**GOD IS ONE
IN THE
HOLY TRINITY**

Zachariah Butrus



AND YOU WILL SEEK ME AND FIND ME,
WHEN YOU SEARCH FOR ME WITH
ALL YOUR HEART.

Jeremiah 29:13

God is One in the Holy Trinity

GOD IS ONE IN THE HOLY TRINITY

Fourth Revised Edition

(English Translation of the Arabic Original)

by

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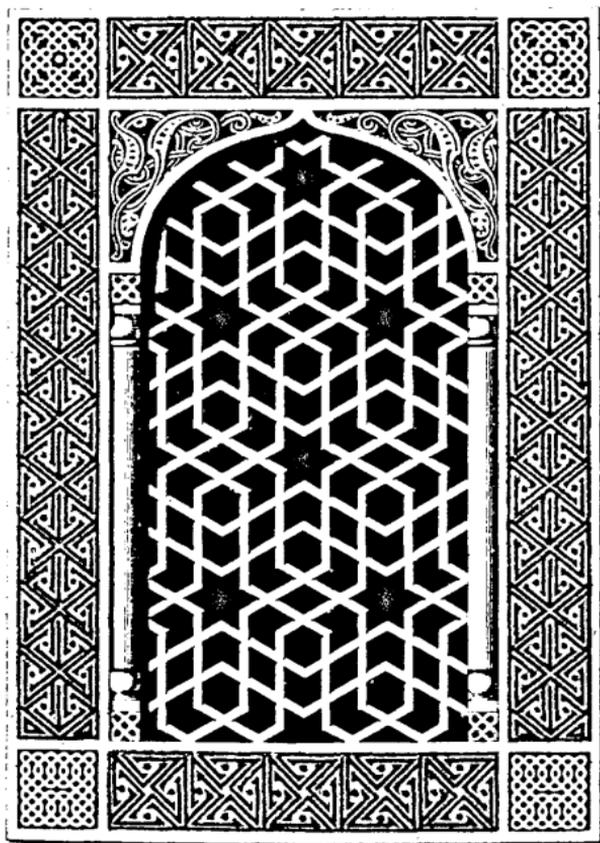


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Introduction

Difficult facts are given to an infant in a simplified and generalized way. As this infant matures and his perception becomes complete, he is dissatisfied with simplified and summarized information. He endeavours to search for accuracy and details in matters, for his intellect is ready and prepared to absorb them.

This is also the case with mankind. When mankind was in infancy, the Lord gave them a simplified and generalized picture of Himself to the extent that they could perceive. That is why the apostle Paul said, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able” (I Corinthians 3:1-2).

When the perfect time had come and the mentality of believers grew, the Lord began to declare that He is one in His unique Trinity. He uncovered for us this great secret which was concealed from mankind in their state of perceptual and spiritual weakness. When the Lord gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to us, He revealed His own life and His divine status to us as the apostle Paul said, “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (I Corinthians 2:10).

This doctrine is still a secret unknown to the carnal. They resist it because of their lack of perception of the facts of true faith and the concealed secret of God.

With the Lord's grace I wrote this book to simplify and clarify what was impossible to understand and difficult to perceive. The book is written so that anyone who reads it can believe in this divine secret and know that this belief does not contradict the intellect, but it satisfies it, and can see that even the books of those who fight against this belief, because of lack of knowledge, clearly testify this creed.

As I offer this book to you as a clarification of our most holy belief, I raise my heart to the Lord to make it a source of blessing for many people, and I pray that it will open for them the gate of true belief. Then they can enjoy the love of God, the Father, and the blessing of the only Son, and the fellowship and the gift of the Holy Spirit: the holy Trinity of the only God to whom belongs the everlasting glory. Amen.

Archpriest Zachariah Buṭrus
Miṣr-Al-Djadida

 Be ready always to give an answer to every man that
 asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with
 meekness and fear. I Peter 3:15

Chapter I

**THE ALL-GATHERING UNITY
OF GOD
IN THE HOLY TRINITY**

The Unity of God in Christianity

The Holy Trinity in Christianity

The Necessity of the Trinity in the Unity

The Unity of God in Christianity

We Christians believe in one God who has no partner. He is infinite, filling the heavens and the earth. He is the creator of all, Eternal, and Everlasting. His kingdom is without end.

This creed is very clear in the holy Gospel. The Christian canon of belief is what follows.

1. The Lord Jesus Himself taught this belief when a Jew came to ask Him about the greatest commandment. He answered him, “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:29-30). This is the first commandment. It is an echo and confirmation of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. If this commandment had been written in the language of the *Ḳurān*, it would have been “God, our God, is the only (unique) God, the everlasting God.”

2. The apostle Paul clarified this saying, “Is God just for the Jews and not for Gentiles as well? Yes, for Gentiles also because God is one” (Romans 3:29-30).

3. And the apostle James expressed the same belief saying, “You believe that God is one. You do well” (James 2:19).

4. The Christian creed was taken from these texts along with others in the Bible. The Church has been

avowing these beliefs for generations saying, “Truly we believe in one God... Creator of heavens and earth, and the visible and invisible.” Hence, my dear friend, you perceive that we Christians believe in one God and not three gods. We shall clarify the meaning of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the discussion about the holy Trinity of Christianity.

The Holy Trinity in Christianity

The doctrine of the holy Trinity in no way means the existence of three gods as some people wrongly imagine. The meaning of this doctrine is — God is one... .

Existing in Himself, so He declared Himself as
the Father

Speaking His word, so He declared Himself as the
Son, the Word,

Alive in his spirit, so He declared Himself as
the Holy Spirit.

It should not be understood from these names that there is a bodily relationship as in human terms, but rather it has a spiritual meaning.

These names are not established or invented by man, but they are the words of divine inspiration in the Holy Book, as you will see from the following references:

1. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Monotheism is clear in His words, “baptize them in the name.” He did not say baptize them in the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Yet the Trinity is clearly presented in His words, “the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

2. The apostle John very clearly confirms this understanding, “Those who testify in heaven are three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit and these three are one” (I John 5:8).

When comparing the two verses, you find the names of the holy Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the holy Trinity in the only God in whom we believe.

The Necessity of the Trinity in the Unity

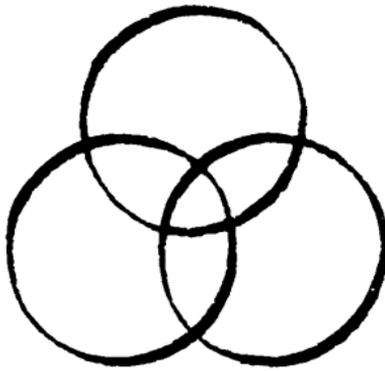
In summary, the necessity of the Trinity in the unity is clear from the above references and discussion.

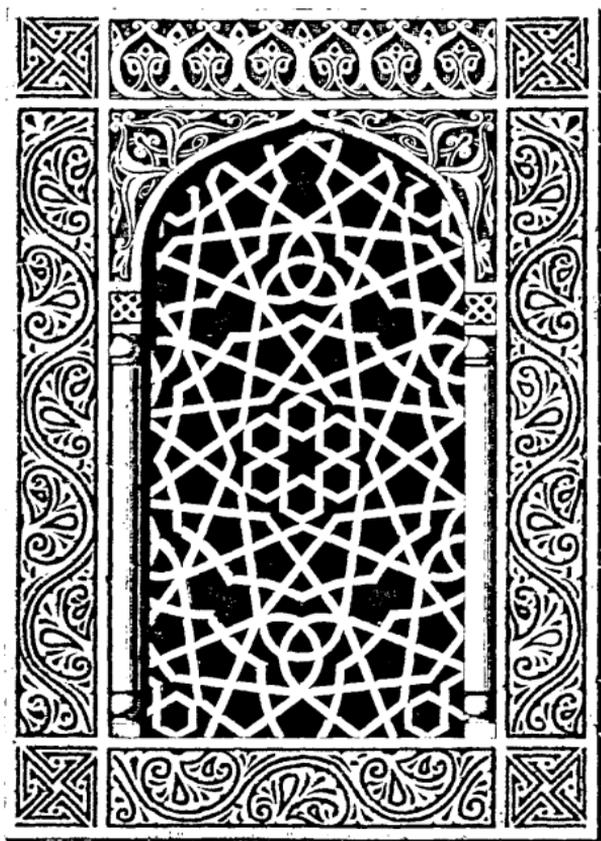
The one God, creator of all living things, must have a personal existence Himself.

The one God, who created man with the ability to speak, must Himself also speak the word.

The one God, who created life in every living being, must Himself be alive in the spirit.

Therefore, it is certain that a holy Trinity should be in the only God as we have already clarified. This is our true belief: God is one in the Trinity and not three gods.





Chapter II

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ẸURĀN FOR THE UNITY OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The Ẹurānic Testimony of Christian Monotheism

The Ẹurānic Testimony of the Christian Holy Trinity

The Ẹurānic Testimony that Christ is the Word of God

The Testimony of the Ẹurān for the Holy Spirit

The Ḳurānic Testimony of Christian Monotheism

The Ḳurān testifies that Christians are monotheistic and are not infidels. The following are examples of this testimony.

1. Sūrat Al ^ʿAnkabūt, the Spider: 46 — “Do not argue with the people of the Book except in what is better... and say we believed in what was sent down to us and to you, and our God and your God is the same, is one.” Thus, the Ḳurān testifies that we Christians, “people of the Book,” worship one God.

2. Surat Āl ^ʿImrān, The Family of ^ʿImrān: 113-114 “Among the people of the Book is a nation which recites the verses of God during the night, and they worship God and believe in Him and in the Day of Judgment, and they order doing good and prohibit abomination and they hasten charity.” This reference clearly asserts that Christians, “people of the Book,” believe in one God; they recite His book which was in their hands in Muḥammad’s days, and they worship the one God in their services and prayers.

3. Sūrat Al Mā^ʿida, The Banquet: 82 — “For sure you will find the bitterest enemies of those who believe (Muslims) are the Jews and those who do not believe in our God. And you will find the closest friends to believers to be those who said ‘We are Nazarenes,’ as among them there are pastors and monks and they are not proud.” It is clear

that Nazarenes are not polytheists, since polytheists and Jews are the bitter enemies of Muslims, but Nazarenes are their closest friends.

4. Sūrat Āl^ᶜImrān, The Family of^ᶜImrān: — “As God said, O Jesus, I’ll make you die, and I’ll raise you up to me, and I’ll purify you from the infidels, and I’ll make those who followed you higher than the infidels until the Day of Judgment.” Hence, it is clear to you that the followers of Christ, or Christians, are not infidels. On the contrary, God distinguished Christians from infidels and raised them above infidels.

The testimony of the Ḳurān concerning Christians has proved with certainty that they worship the one God and are not polytheists.

The Ḳurānic Testimony of the Christian Holy Trinity

Perhaps you are amazed, my dear friend, that the Ḳurān mentions the Trinity of the one God exactly as Christians believe in it. We have already seen that the Trinity of Christianity is the nature of God, His Word, and His Spirit. This is the same Trinity that the Ḳurān mentioned, “But Jesus Christ, son of Mary is the messenger of God and His word and spirit of Him that He gave to Mary”

(Sūrat Al Nisā³, The Women: 171). In this verse it is clear that God has

a personality — “messenger of God”

a word — “and his word”

a spirit — “and a spirit from him.”

This testimony of the Ḳurān for the creed of the Trinity is what we Christians proclaim and no more. It does not proclaim polytheism, but rather it proclaims that there is no God but Ḥim.

The Ḳurānic Testimony that Christ is the Word of God

The Ḳurān testifies very clearly that Christ is the Word of God. The following Ḳurānic references are examples.

1. Sūrat Al Nisā³, The Women: 171 — “Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, is God’s messenger and his word.”

2. Sūrat Āl‘Imrān, The Family of ‘Imrān: 139 — “...God proclaims to you Yaḥya (John the Baptist) supporting a word from God...” The Imān Abū Al Su‘ūd commented on the phrase “supporting a word from God,” that is ‘Isā, may he be blessed, by saying: “...it was said that he (John the Baptist) was the first to

believe in him (Jesus) and to support his being the Word of God and a Spirit from Him. Al Sadi said, “The mother of Yaḥya (John) meeting the mother of ‘Isā (Jesus) asked: ‘Mary, have you felt my pregnancy?’ Mary answered, ‘I too am pregnant.’ She (John’s mother) then said: ‘I find that what is in my belly worships what is in your belly.’” From here the above utterance of God ‘supporting a word from God’ comes clear” (Abū Al Su‘ūd Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Al ‘Amādi’s Commentary, page 233).

3. Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān, The Family of ‘Imrān:45 — “The angels said to Mary, ‘Allāh proclaims to you a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary.’” The English translation uses the relative pronoun *whose* in referring to a masculine personal pronoun in the Arabic original. This indicates the fact that *a word* here does not mean a simple word of language but a person. You also find this clarified in the saying of one of the Muslim scholars (Al Shaikh Muḥyī Al Dīn al ‘Arabī), who said: “The word is God in theophany...and it is the one divine person and not any other” (in his book “Fuṣūṣ al Ḥukm”, part II, p. 35). He also said that *the word* is the divine person” (page 13). Isn’t that exactly what was said about the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh” (John 1:1,14). In the Arabic translation of this verse, we again find (in conformity with the Greek original) the same

usage of the term *word* with the pronouns referring to it. *Word* refers to a person. This is clear from John's specifications: "The Word was God" and "the Word became flesh."

The Testimony of the Ḳurān for the Holy Spirit

Many verses of the Ḳurān mention that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that He supported the Lord Jesus with it. This becomes clear from the following: Sūrat Al Mā'idā, the Banquet: 110 — "Allah said to Jesus, 'Jesus, son of Mary, remember the favour I have bestowed on you and your mother, how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so that you preached to men in your cradle and in the prime of manhood.'"

The theological scholar Al-Shaikh Muḥammad al Ḥarīrī al Bayyūmī says, "The Holy Spirit, is the spirit of Allāh" ("Kitāb al Rūḥ wa Māhiyyatuha," p. 53).

From all that preceded, my friend, the testimony of the Ḳurān and the theologians of Islām for the creed of the Trinity in whom we Christians believe, becomes clear.



Chapter III

THE NAMES OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The Father

The Son

The Holy Spirit

THE NAMES OF THE HOLY TRINITY

We learned from the previous discussion that Christianity believes in one God, who is in a Trinity: God's person, His Word, and His Spirit. This Trinity has other names: the Father (God's person), the Son (Word of God), and the Holy Spirit (Spirit of God).

Some ignorant people make objections to this naming for they think that it means procreation and sexual relationship. God forbid Christianity from this understanding! Therefore, we shall clarify the intention of this naming.

The Father

To Christians the meaning of the word *Father* does not mean an actual physical father. First, it has a metaphorical meaning. God is the source and the creator of all creatures. So He is called the Father of all creatures, especially the intellectual ones. As the prophet Moses said, "Is He not your father and your possessor? He made you and brought you up" (Deuteronomy 32:6) or as Isaiah the prophet said, "O Lord, Thou art our Father" (Isaiah 64:8). In the New Testament the apostle Paul declared "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him" (I Corinthians 8:6).

The word *father* in this context is stated in much the same way as used in the Arabic “Father of blessing” (Abū al Khair Abū al Barakāt) and “Father of God” (Abū al Faḍl), and others. These should not be understood in terms of a procreator or actual parentage but rather metaphorically.

Secondly, there is the legal meaning. In the case of adoption, the word *father* does not mean that he gave birth to the adopted son, rather he accepted him as a son and granted him all legal rights. He considered himself responsible and obligated to him as a real father. The apostle Paul speaks about this, “You have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15) and in Galatians 4:4, he uses the term “to obtain adoption.” So God’s fatherhood in our adoption is based on divine legal rights.

Thirdly, there is the essential meaning. This is the meaning which can only be applied to God’s Trinity. May He be exalted! As a word bursts from the mouth, the son emanated from the Father before all ages. Jesus who is the Son became flesh through the blessed Mary because He was from the very beginning a spirit from God the Spirit. It is stated in John’s Gospel, “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus viewed God as His Father, in this unique, essential meaning which cannot be applied to any one else. “Neither does anyone know the Father,

except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27).

Lastly, there is the spiritual meaning. After God had poured His Holy Spirit into the hearts of all believers through His Son, they were born again, a spiritual birth. They were converted by this friendly, divine Spirit. These believers “were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God” (John 1:13). Jesus Christ taught us to exclaim, “Our Father who art in heaven, holy would be Thy name.” It is not the right of any man to call himself a son of God and call God his Father, unless he obtains legal adoption. The anointment of the Holy Spirit reveals to us the secret of the name of God the Father. We do not believe in the fatherhood of God in a physical sense, but in purity of holiness, we believe in the birth of Christ and the descent and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers.

The Son

When we say Christ is the Son of God, this does not mean that Christ came by means of intermarriage. *Son* is not intended to mean a physical relationship or birth by procreation. We only say Christ is the Son of God to mean that Christ came from God. He is related to no physical father so He is related to God. The word *son* as used in

common language, in the Ḳurān, and in prophetic conversation does not indicate physical breeding.

Son in Common Language

In many linguistic expressions, the word *son* is not used to indicate physical generation. For example, we say that students are *sons of knowledge*; citizens are *sons of the homeland*; an Egyptian is *a son of the Nile*; and an Arab is *a son of the desert*.

Son as Used in the Ḳurān

The word *son* is occasionally used in the Ḳurān when it does not mean physical generation. This you can observe in the following references.

Sūrat Al Baḳara, The Cow: 214 — “Whatever you bestow in charity must go to your parents and to your kinsfolk, to the orphan and to the poor man and to the stranger.” Interpreters say that *stranger* (Ibn al Sabīl) indicates the traveller. Al Imān al Nasafī and Shaikh Ḥasanayn Makhlūf said, “He was called a stranger (Ibn al Sabīl) for permanently sticking to the road.”¹

Son in Muslim Tradition

In a Muslim tradition originating from God (Ḥadith Ḳudsi), it is stated, “The rich are my agents and the poor are members of my family (my sons).” Do we understand

¹ Al Nasafi, Commentary (Tafsīr) part I, p. 86 and Shaikh Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, “Ṣufuwat al Bayān li Maʿāni al Ḳurān” part I, p. 80.

by this that God married a wife and gave birth to children who are the poor?! Surely not!

Therefore, the term *son of God* does not mean procreation in human terms, but rather, this expression was intended to attribute or relate Christ to God, and not infidelity or partnership with God! For sonship originates in the spiritual fatherhood of God. God is the Father and Christ is the Son, only in a special, unique meaning which does not apply to any other.

The Holy Spirit

As previously discussed, the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit and is mentioned in the *Qurān* in many places.

Sūrat Yūsuf, Joseph: 87 — “Do not despair of Allāh's spirit; none but unbelievers despair of Allāh's spirit.”

Sūrat Al Baqara, The Cow: 87 and 253 — “We gave Jesus the son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.”

Al Imām al Nasafi said “by the Holy Spirit is meant, the sanctified spirit...or the name of God the greatest.”²

Sūrat Al Mā'idā, the Banquet: 110 — “Jesus, son of Mary remember the favour I have bestowed on you and on your mother; how I have strengthened you with the Holy Spirit.”

² Al Nasafi, Commentary (Tafsir) part I, p. 56.

Al Sayyid ʿAbdul Karim al Djabali said about the Holy Spirit that He is not created, and what is not created is eternal and the eternal is God, alone.³

Also al Shaikh Muḥammad al Ḥarira al Bayyūmi said, “The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is not created.”⁴

This is the holy Trinity in one God in whom we believe, and this is the secret of naming it as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Father is the title of the essential Fatherhood of God.

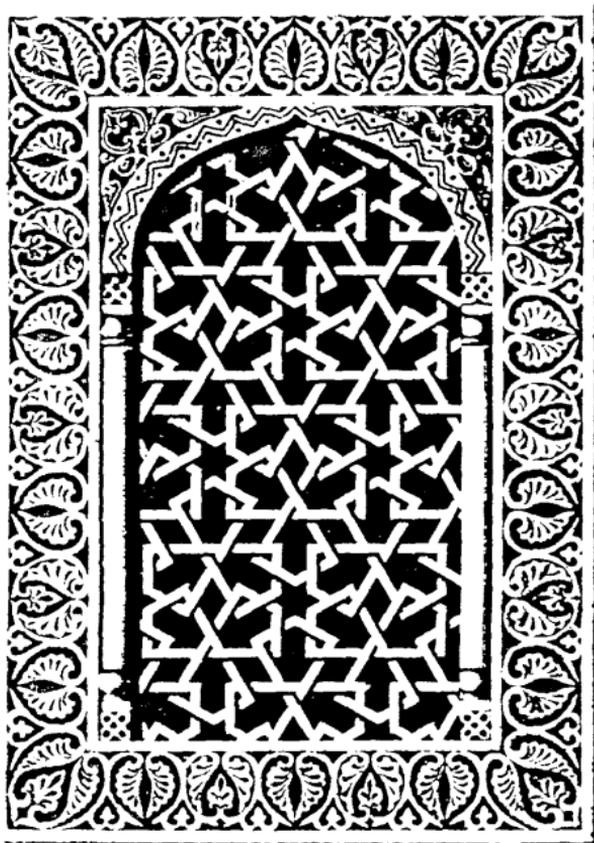
The Son is the title of the incarnated Word of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Himself.



³ “Madjallat Kulliyyat al Ādāb” (Magazine of the College of Arts) 1934.

⁴ Al Shaikh Muḥammad al Ḥariri al Bayyūmi, “Al Rūḥ wa Māhiyyatuha” (The Spirit and Its Nature) p. 53.



Chapter IV

THE COUNTERFEIT TRINITY

The Trinity of the Maryamiyya Sect

**The Christian Attitude towards this
Counterfeit Trinity**

The Attitude of Islām

The Trinity of the Maryamiyya Sect

Before Islām in the fifth century A.D., a heretical doctrine appeared. (A heretical doctrine is an untrue and strange teaching of an infidel or a heretic.) The adherents of this doctrine were heathens who embraced Christianity. As pagans they worshipped the planet Venus and said that it was “the queen of heaven.” After embracing Christianity they tried to associate what they had worshipped with Christian doctrine. They considered Mary as “queen of heaven” or “goddess of heaven” instead of Venus. Consequently, they called themselves Mariamists.¹ They came to believe that there are three gods: God, Mary, and Christ.

The Christian Attitude towards this Counterfeit Trinity

The Christian Church fought against this heresy as soon as it appeared, opposed their teaching, and deprived them of the communion of faith and excommunicated all their followers. By the end of the seventh century A.D., this doctrine was blotted out, and its adherents had

¹ ʿAwaḍ Simʿān, “Alfāh Dhātuhu wa Nawʿu Waḥdāniyatihī” (God’s Essence and the Nature of His Unity) p. 127; Aḥmad al Makrizī, “Kitāb al Ḳawl al Ibrizī” (Book of Golden Sayings), p. 26.

disappeared completely. The Church confirmed its most holy belief that the blessed Mary is a human being and not a goddess. The Church continued to affirm that God is one, with only one essence, speaking the Word, and alive in Spirit. The Word of God dwelt in the body of the Lord Christ. “Great is the secret of godliness, that God appeared in the flesh” (I Timothy 3:16).

The Attitude of Islām

When Islām appeared in the seventh century A. D., it also found some adherents of this Mariamist doctrine before it had disappeared completely. Islām fought their doctrine and their trinity (not the Trinity of Christianity). This is clear from the following verses.

Sūrat Al Māʿida, The Banquet: 116 — “Then Allāh will say, ‘Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to mankind, ‘Worship me and my mother as gods beside Allāh?’” It is clear that the objection here is intended to be against the Mariamists who proclaimed that Mary is a goddess, and this is what Christianity also denies.

Sūrat Al Anʿām, Cattle: 101 — “Lord, creator of the heavens and the earth, how does he have a son when he did not have a wife?!” Likewise, this verse objects to the Mariamist teaching that Mary is a goddess, that she

became God's wife, and that through her He gave birth to a child.

Sūrat Al Ikhḷāṣ, Faithfulness — “God is one. God the eternal, He did not give birth nor was He born, nor has He an equal.” This is the answer to the Mariamist doctrine which purported, “There are three gods — the Father, the mother and the son, and that this son came by procreation.”

Sūrat Al Māʿida, The Banquet: 73 — “Unbelievers are those that say, ‘Allāh is one of three.’ There is but one God.” This confirms what was said and denies what Mariamists purport — the existence of three gods!

You can see clearly from this discussion that Islām did not fight the belief of Christianity that God is one. He has one nature, speaking the Word, alive in Spirit, as the Ḳurān says, “Jesus the son of Mary is the messenger of God and His word...and a Spirit from Him” (Sūrat Al Nisāʾ, The Women: 171). But Islām fights another trinity, the trinity of the Mariamist doctrine. They fight those who consider the blessed Mary a goddess who gave birth to Christ by means of procreation after God had married her.

Christianity abhorred and violently fought against this concept and excommunicated its adherents. As for the principle belief of Christianity, it is the belief in one God in a Trinity: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

Chapter V

THE SHINING OF GRACE

The Proof of the Spirit

Groping in Darkness

The Grace of Revelation

Overwhelming Compassion

The Light of Faith

The Greatest Proof

The Proof of the Spirit

Dear reader, the discussion thus far has presented intellectual and logical evidence in considering the truth of the Trinity and monotheism in Christian belief. In other words, human wisdom has been the basis of discussion. However, the apostle Paul shows us that faith is not by human wisdom, but rather by the proof and power of the spirit. He says, “And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God” (I Corinthians 2:4,5). So pardon me, my dear friend, for resorting to human wisdom and let me talk to you about the proof of spirit and power.

The proof of the spirit is in the heart and not in the intellect. “For with the heart man believes, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:10). Heart faith is the result of grace shining into the heart of man disclosing to him the secret of faith, the love of God, and His wonderful work for him. This made Him take the form of man and walk the road of Calvary, carrying the cross of shame to redeem sinners like me. Do know, dear brother, that the Lord is ready to shine into your heart in order to reveal to you His glory, for He loves you personally despite your sins, your evils, and your blasphemy against Him. He is prepared to pardon, forgive, and forget your sins. Just come to Him in

repentance and submission. Give over your heart and life to Him. You can be completely sure that He will not refuse you. He said in His true promise, "And the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out" (John 6:37). Come to Him now and throw your sins in front of Him, and He will cleanse you from every sin. "And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Pray to Him, "O Lord, remove the darkness of my heart; light my path; show me Your way; protect me from the evil one, so that he will not trouble me."

Next, I shall present, my dear friend, some spiritual facts which I hope God will use to save your soul and be a blessing to your life. Amen.

Groping in Darkness

There is no doubt that reliance on mere intellect to perceive the facts of faith is impossible. Divine inspiration says, "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? It is high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Hell, what can you know?" (Job 11:7-8).

How then can a finite mind perceive the infinite God? The wise man said, "You search for the Lord who controls all, but you will never understand the secret of His wisdom, because you will never know the depth of man's heart, and

his thoughts you do not know, so how do you search for God who made all these things and how can you know His mind and perceive His thoughts?" The words of the apostle Paul confirm, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34). If some people do not beware of this fact, they will stray from faith and will be lost in the gloomy darkness. Here are some examples from the areas of philosophy, Christianity, and Islam.

Philosophy

Philosophy relies on thought and deals with abstracts, and so we find contradictions and differences among the efforts of philosophers down through the centuries. Among philosophers there are believers and unbelievers. The English philosopher Carlyle (1795-1881) is an example of man groping in the darkness of human thought. At one time Carlyle was a believer. Then he read the philosophy of Hume and other skeptics. He was convinced of their opinions, and his faith disappeared. Yet while he was still devoted to searching and scrutinizing, he read Shiller, Goethe, and Fichte and was dissuaded by their opinions; he changed his attitude and came back to faith. Returning to faith, Carlyle became certain of this everlasting fact, which he approved after his long search and study: "Mind is no

longer the source of true knowledge, rather the heart has become that source.”¹

Christianity

Many heretics, people who have left the Christian faith, wanted to subject the facts of faith to intellectual standards. They threw themselves into a perilous situation. Such men were Arius, Macedonius, and Nestorius. Arius did not accept the possibility of the appearance of God in a human body. He denied the deity of Christ. Then the patriarchs of the Church and its bishops from all parts of the world held a meeting and debated this subject in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible. They condemned and exiled Arius. They rejected his teachings as contradictory to the faith.

Islām

Many different sects appeared in Islām with different beliefs.

For example, Al Khawāridj, Al Shi‘a and Al Nuṣayriyya consider ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib to be a god.

Al Djabriyyah, Al Mu‘tazila and Al Ḳadariyya denied the qualities of God.

The al Ashā‘ira al Mutridiyya, Al Zaidiyya, al Imāmiyya, and al Ismā‘iliyya, say the world has two

¹ Yūsuf Karam, History of Modern Philosophy, p. 322.

directors. The first is God and the second is the soul, and they allow unlawful matters.

Al Bahā²iyya consider their leader, Bahā²Allāh, a god.

The Druzes consider “Al Ḥākīm bin ²Amr Allāh al Fāṭimi ” to be a God.

Does not all this show that the mind is in need of the light of grace and the light of faith?

The Grace of Revelation

No man is able by his power, his intellect, or his wisdom to come to know God. This problem is in need of divine declaration so that in the darkness of his thought, man can know the secret which is concealed from limited human minds. Some philosophers knew the importance of this grace and called it the theory of enlightenment. A philosopher once said, “It is only possible to know God thanks to the light of God. God is the hidden teacher. He is the true light that enlightens every man in this world.”²

The Holy Bible speaks about these two subjects: the inability of man and the necessity of revelation.

The Bible describes the inability of human intellect to perceive divine matters in the book of Job. “It is as high as

² Yūsuf Karam, History of European Philosophy in the Middle Ages, p. 32.

heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11:8-9). Job also said, “Search for the Lord, controller of all, and you do not perceive the secret of His wisdom... Then how do you search for God and know His mind and perceive His thoughts.” The apostle Paul said, “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?” (Romans 11:33-34). Hence, it is indeed clear that man is unable to know the matters pertaining to God.

We are in need of the grace of revelation or “the light of God” to reveal to us the secret of His wisdom, as was said in the Bible, “And that He would show you the secrets of wisdom” (Job 11:6).

My dear friend, God is prepared to declare Himself to you. You can see this fact in the Lord’s prayer, “I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes” (Matthew 11:25). Perhaps you perceive from this prayer that the light of grace is declared to simple people who are referred to as “babes.” Those who want to understand those secrets by reasoning and wisdom will not obtain understanding. God the Father declared the secret of faith to the apostle Peter. Peter said, “Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,” and Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjonas, because

flesh and blood did nor reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:16-17).

My brother, Jesus Christ Himself is prepared to reveal His nature to you and to reveal the secret of faith. He says, “And no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Luke 10:22). The Son kindly revealed His secret to the apostle Paul. Paul said, “For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:12).

The Holy Spirit with its full grace is now working in the world revealing the way of faith to every man, so that he can enjoy the fellowship of grace and know the Lord well. This is what the apostle Paul clarified saying, “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing way; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.’ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who

among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 1:6-16).

These verses clarify to you an extremely important and essential point: it is necessary to change the natural man to a spiritual man so that he can accept and know the affairs pertaining to God. Ask the Lord to convert you and reveal Himself to you, and He will surely respond because He wants all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Overwhelming Compassion

A well-known philosopher said, “Man is unable by his natural power to attain the nature of God, but God is

He that attracts man to Himself and raises him to a brilliancy that no mind can perceive.”³ In fact, no one can come to God unless He attracts him. As the Lord Christ, may He be glorified, said, “No man comes to Me unless the Father attracts him.” When the bride of Solomon knew that secret she cried, “Draw me after you, and we will run after you” (Song of Solomon 1:4). The Lord draws us to Himself by His love and His affection. When the human soul remembers the fullness of God’s love for it, it becomes fascinated by His love; the apostle John says, “We love Him because He first loved us” (I John 4:19).

Are you not aware of what God’s love has done for you? The apostle Paul says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Love caused Him to take a human body and walk on the road to Calvary, carrying the cross, to pay my debt and yours. The punishment of sin that we deserve is death. With a wonderful secret, Christ enters the frightening grave and extinguishes the blazing fire, and opens for us the door of hope and the way of glory. When He smashed the power of death and the chains of sins by His resurrection, He went away bearing a marvelous love to prepare a place for us in His kingdom which He was pleased to give us (Luke 12:32).

³ Yūsuf Karam, *History of European Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 54.

The Lover will soon come to take us, “That where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3).

O divine love! What a privilege we were given and what dignity we were granted, and by what affection you attracted us. Brother, you will not know God but through love. Worship is not mere teachings, beliefs, theories or religious duties; but rather, it is extreme love at its highest degree. God is not a “picture” of a being made or imagined by human minds. He cannot be defined by religious men and intellectually analyzed by theories of philosophers and theologians in terms of their opinions and understandings. But as the apostle said, “God is love and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (I John 4:16).

Has your heart been bound by the love of God? My dear friend, do not be embarrassed with theories and debates, but it is enough to do as St. Augustine said, “Love and do whatever you wish, because God is love.”

The Light of Faith

When grace shines in the heart of man, he becomes enlightened by the light of faith. It is impossible for man to attain true faith without the light of grace, as the Bible clarifies in Isaiah 60: 1-3, “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness

the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

The apostle Paul said, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6).

Grace has shone in the life of many people including Saul of Tarsus and Shaikh Mikhā’il Manṣūr.

Saul of Tarsus was a fanatic Jew. He persecuted Christians and dragged them to jails, and talked about himself saying, “I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. While thus enraged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said,

‘Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you; to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’

Thus grace shone and Saul was enlightened by the light of faith, and later he became the apostle Paul, philosopher of Christianity.

Grace also shone in Shaikh Mikhāʿil Maṣṣūr’s life. Here is a summary of what his brother, Shaikh Kāmil Maṣṣūr, wrote about him. Mikhāʿil, son of Maṣṣūr, was born in the city Suhādj in March 1871. He received lessons in religion from the religious leaders. After these teachings, he spent his nights in deep search for divine secrets.

In 1893 he had the idea to discuss the Christian religion, and asked permission from his professor to argue or debate with Christians; but he did not approve, for fear that his student might become arrogant and proud. Nevertheless, he began debating and arguing with men of religion, and the debates were frequently lengthy and vain. One day someone said to him, “Everyone should ask his

God for guidance, and I advise you to ask God to lead you to truth,” but he mocked at these words saying to him, “Do I doubt my faith? God forbid!” But having left him, he thought of what that man had asked him to do, “I advise you to seek guidance from God for truth.” The grace of the Holy Spirit began to work in his heart. The stage of doubt grew to the degree that it seemed that he was afflicted with a mental disease. He appeared pale, and he devoted himself to reading the Holy Book, searching for divine right... After a period of time, signs of pleasure and delight appeared on his face because the light of the Redeemer overcame him and the sun of righteousness enlightened his soul.

Christ gloriously appeared to him with his superior love, supreme principles, and the beauty of His teachings. He learned that He alone is the way, the truth, and the life, and that man is sinful, ignorant, and enslaved, and can only be saved by Christ. My memory has forgotten many things. However, I have not and will not forget the great joy that filled his heart, the glorious happiness that radiated from his face, and the tears that drenched his clothes because of tremendous joy, when I first asked him for a Gospel. It is true to say that at the beginning, I was ashamed of him, and sometimes I asked people to pray for him, so that he might change and return. Sometimes I looked for the intelligent and famous in education in order to lead them to him to bring him back. At other times, I

resorted to some wicked people to threaten him. But I found out that he was firm like a high mountain in Jesus Christ, finding every torture bearable in His love. I thoroughly considered what was the secret. I knew very well that he had no worldly purpose. His loyalty to Christianity was clear to me; and so, I found myself impelled to request the Gospel from him, and so he met me with that joy. We thank God because he was a cause for guiding many sinners, the first of whom is me, to the glory of the Redeemer.”

The Greatest Proof

When man is drawn by the power of grace to the fold of faith, he is no longer in need of an evidence or a logical proof to confirm the truths of faith, rather the testimony is now in his heart, for he realizes that God lives within him, and He changed him. He no longer searches for God outside himself. Augustine, the well-known philosopher, having accepted faith said, “Lo, I have found you and perceived you. O! how great is my fortune and how lucky I am! I was looking for You in outer matters! But that searching was in vain, for I found you in my soul, in my heart! And here I am grasping You and seeing You.”⁴

⁴ Augustine, Confessions

The believer is he who sees the Lord and is clothed with the Lord in his life which He completely converted. He changed him from a lustful man, a slave to sin, into a spiritual, holy-loving man. The believer sees the Lord in his heart now cleansed from the filth of sin, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). After the work of grace, faith is no longer an intellectual faith believing in invisible matters, lacking evidence and proofs, but a faith of experience, that changes the wolf into a lamb; this is the greatest evidence and proof for the truth of faith.

The Experience of the Saint Mūsa al Aswad

Saint Mūsa Al Aswad was a savage killer and a heathen leader of a bandit gang. Grace began to shine into his heart. So he went to a wise, old believer and told him saying, "I have heard that you are the righteous worshipper of God; that is why I fled and came to you, so that the God who saved you will save me. Tell me and inform me about God." The saint asked him, "What was your God?" He answered, "I do not know any God except the sun, for when I looked at it, I found out that it enlightened the world with its light; the moon and the stars as well, which have strange secrets; also the sea and its power... But all these did not satisfy my soul, and I knew that there is another God greater than all these whom I do not know. I said, 'O Lord! who is living in heaven, guide of all

creation, lead me to you now, and let me know what satisfies You.' Therefore, I came to you, so that you inform me, and ask God for me so that He may not have wrath on me for my evil deeds."⁵

The old saint started preaching the words of God to him, and talked to him about judgment, salvation, and God's love for sinners. The work of grace was perfected in his heart, and the Lord shone in his heart, and the tears of repentance came down, and his face beamed with the light of faith. Mūsa, the savage, became a saint, one of the greatest men of faith.

Who changed this wolf into a lamb? Indeed it is the marvelous work of grace. Who made him understand faith? God penetrated his life and the touch of His Almighty hand changed him completely.

The Experience of Jibrān.

Jibrān grew up in a fanatic religious family and his father was in charge of teaching him the origins of religion. As soon as the father died, the young man threw away the restrictions of this background and sank into crime. To solve this problem his family put him in a boarding school. In that school there was a student called Michael, who suffered under Jibrān's teasing. When the day of a school celebration arrived, Jibrān, wanting to really trouble

⁵ Archives of the Coptic Museum, p. 496.

Michael, thought of making him carry all the necessary chairs. He made the school administration issue an order for that. He went to look for Michael, and he saw him jumping over the school wall and enter a forest near the school. He assumed that Michael was evading his task. So he followed him, and saw him entering a place in which the branches made a small hut.

Jibrān slyly hid behind a tree in order to discover the secret of this hut. Behold, he saw Michael lighting a little candle. Then he knelt on his knees, and Jibrān heard him speaking in a low voice. Then he saw him taking out a small book from his pocket and reading it. After he finished reading, Jibrān saw him raising his face upwards, and he noticed tears flowing from his eyes and his voice choked with crying. Having finished, he extinguished the candle and went back to school. Jibrān followed him at a distance.

When Michael entered the school, Jibrān followed him and grasped his shoulders and asked him, "Where were you?" The answer was, "I was worshipping my Lord." He said to him, "You are a liar. I saw you and followed you from the minute you jumped over the wall until you entered the hut and began to sing and read in a small book, and you cried. These are the symptoms of madness." Michael answered quickly, "I am not mad, and I was not singing, but I was chanting to the Lord. What I read was the Gospel. Afterwards I prayed to my Lord to

forgive my sins and help me in my life.” Jibrān said, “Can I see the Gospel?” He gave it to him, but Jibrān had learned from his father that he who touches the Gospel of the Nazarenes, his hand inevitably will be paralyzed or he will become insane. But the scene that Jibrān had witnessed had attracted him to learn the secret of this devotion which impels a man to enter the wood and worship. He grasped the Gospel with the tips of his fingers, bearing in mind that if he felt paralysis, he would throw it and escape danger. But he did not feel anything of what he was told, and he took the Gospel and asked Michael’s permission to read it. Jibrān was alone all night reading the Gospel, but he could not understand anything.

At dawn he went to Michael and woke him up and asked him about what he did not understand. Michael began to explain, but Jibrān still could not understand. So Michael closed the book and told him, “I will tell you in brief, the contents of the Gospel.

The first truth is — Man is a sinner. You and I are sinners, too.

The second truth is — The punishment for our sins is an everlasting torture in hell.

The third truth is — Because of his love, God sent Christ to redeem us from the

punishment of sin, and so He was crucified instead of us.

The fourth truth is — If you believe this and repent of your sins, the Lord will accept you and save you from the everlasting fire of hell . . .”

These words were simple, but anointed with grace and were said from experience. Right then the hand of God worked in Jibrān’s heart, and there was a miracle. The face of the young man brightened, and he said, “I believe,” and they both prayed. Events and experiences continued in the life of the ill-mannered Jibrān and changed him to a gentle-hearted, blessed servant in the Lord’s vineyard. He became a cause of blessing for many souls of believers and others.

This is the miraculous work of grace and the greatest proof of the truth of our holy faith. I desire that God would work in you, dear reader, so that you become a son of the Lord God, and a faithful witness to the Lord who loved and redeemed us by His blood.



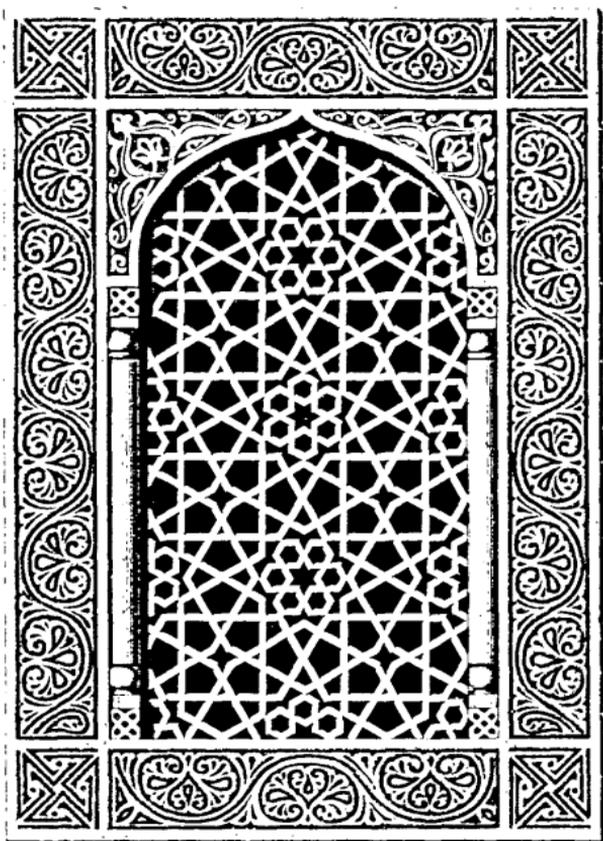
SUMMARY

Perhaps you have perceived, dear beloved brother, the meaning of the Trinity for us Christians. Perhaps you have become certain that we do not worship three gods. God forbid! We only belief in one God, existing in Himself, speaking His word, alive in His soul. His Word dwelled in the blessed Mary and took from her a human body, who is the Lord Christ, who lived on our earth, and completed our salvation.

In our second book about “Christ the Son of God”, we will talk in detail about our faith in the living Christ, and the secret of the divine incarnation. The second book is similar to this book.

My beloved brother, I pray to the Lord to make His light shine in your heart, to declare to you this miraculous secret, because the matters of God are only perceived by the Spirit of God. Would that you would ask Him, first to convert you, and qualify you to accept the work of grace in your life, so that you become a son of God, and a member of this godly nature. Then by the Spirit you will perceive what the mind is unable to perceive. God protect you and be with you!





Quiz

God is One in the Holy Trinity

Dear brother, man can only express clearly and easily say what he understands well. Read this book carefully and thoroughly. In order to evaluate your knowledge about this serious subject, write down your thoughts and answers to at least twelve of the seventeen questions listed. We are waiting for your answer so that we can send you one of our useful books, as a prize should you succeed.

1. Explain how Christians have the right to say: God is one.
2. Why doesn't the Fatherhood of God mean procreation but rather spiritual Fatherhood?
3. How does the Ḳurān testify to the divine unity of God in the Christian faith?
4. Explain the Ḳurānic texts that indicate the truth of the Trinity in one God.
5. What does the name Father mean in the Christian understanding?
6. What does the saying "God has a Son" mean?
7. Who is the Holy Spirit in Christian belief?
8. What kind of trinity do the Ḳurān and Christianity reject?

9. How do you know that man's mind is unable to perceive spontaneously all secrets?
10. What are the ways and means that help us to perceive the nature of God?
11. Why does God reveal Himself to man?
12. Why was it necessary for God to become a man?
13. How did God reveal Himself to Skaikh Maṣṣūr?
14. How does a believer reach assurance in his faith in God and His work in us?
15. Discuss what you think is the most important experience of the Saint Mūsa al Aswad.
16. List the four important truths in Jibrān's experience.
17. Write your own opinion about the all-encompassing unity of God in His holy Trinity.

Do not forget to write your answer and address clearly and send them to

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