

Between Heresy, Adaptation, and The End of The World

*Early Christian Responses to the Rise of Islam
(Seventh to Eighth Centuries)*

The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (ca. 640–692)

Author unknown

Language: Syriac

Source: Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 36–51.

Some of the earliest Christian responses in writing to the rise of Islam come to us in the form of apocalyptic reflection, a genre of writing in which, for Christian authors, biblical prophecies are applied to current events in such a way that the latter become harbingers for the end of time and God's final judgment. One of the best known of these kinds of texts is The Apocalypse

of Pseudo-Methodius, *so named because its author was not really the Methodius, bishop of Olympus, who died in 312. Instead, he was likely an Eastern Christian in the late-seventh century posing as Methodius so that he could foresee the Arab advance (referred to as "Ismaelites"). He views their arrival in the context of the eschatological prophecy in the biblical book of Daniel. According to this book, four kingdoms hold sway over the peoples of the earth, culminating with the kingdom of the Greeks. In The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, Muslims appear as an interlude to the sequence of these four kingdoms.*

The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius was an extremely popular text, so much so that it was translated from its original Syriac into Greek and many other languages spoken and read by early-medieval Christians encountering Islam. Like other apocalyptic works, it provided Christian readers with an explanation for the rise of Islam and located its purpose in the Christian sacred text. In this case, the cause of Islam was Christian sin; Muslims were used by God as a form of judgment. As a result, the text could also nourish the reader's hope that righting his or her ways would bring an end to Islamic rule, which in turn would signal the return of God's blessing.

For there is no people or kingdom under heaven that can overpower the kingdom of the Christians as long as it possesses a place of refuge in the life-giving Cross, which is set up in the center of the earth and possesses its power over height and depth. Also the bars of Hell which are the tyrants of impiety [or: heathendom] cannot prevail over this kingdom of the Christians. Thus runs the true saying of Our Savior who spoke to Simon [Matt. 16:18]: Which is the power of kingdom or people below heaven that is mighty and

strong in its power and will be able to prevail over the great power of the Holy Cross in which the kingdom of the Greeks, that is of the Romans, possesses a place of refuge? The blessed Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in the second letter when he warned them: Do not be frightened by quick and vain rumors saying: Behold, the day of the Lord Jesus has come [2 Thess. 2:2]. As long as this kingdom which possesses an abiding place of refuge is the center, the Son of Perdition will not be revealed for that something which is in the center is the priesthood and the kingship and the Holy Cross. And this kingship of the Christians overpowers all kingdoms of the earth, and by it all leaders and all authority will be paralyzed and come to nought and all its people will be left destitute, and by it they will be conquered and through it they will come to nought.

Because of [Christian sin] God will deliver them to the defilement of the barbarians. And heroic men will be buffeted by the punishment of distress. . . . And the veil of silence will spread over all men, and all inhabitants of the earth will sit in surprise and in consternation. And the route of [the Arabs'] advance will be from [the inhabitants] and by them, and what is small will be reckoned like big and mean like noble. And their commands will cut to pieces like that which is in swords [i.e., steel]. . . . For these cruel barbarians are not human beings but are sons of desolation and upon desolation their faces are set upon the sword. They are despoilers and for destruction they will be sent . . . And they will be cruel and murderers and bloodthirsty and destroyers and a testing furnace for all Christians.

. . . There will be sought . . . those who blaspheme [i.e., those Christians who apostatize] concerning the sacred mysteries and deny the Messiah and ignorant men in whom is not the wisdom of God. They will be servants of that one [Muhammad?] and their false words

will find credence. And concerning anything that is said to them they will comply. And true men and clerics and wise men and good men will be held in contempt in their eyes and they will be like dung, for they will be subjected to the punishment of the Ismaelites. And they will be distressed until they abandon hope for their lives. And honor will be lifted from the priests, and the divine liturgy and living sacrifice will cease from the Church. And at that time priests will be like the people, and their corpses will be thrown like mud upon the roads without burial. And throughout those days blows of wrath will be sent upon men, two and three in one day. And a man will go to sleep in the evening and will wake up in the morning and will find outside his door two and three oppressors and they will ask tribute and money.

And they will blaspheme and say: There is no deliverer for the Christians. Then suddenly there will be awakened perdition and calamity as those of a woman in travail, and a king of the Greeks will go forth against them in great wrath, and he will be aroused against them like a man who shakes off his wine, and who [plots] against them as if they were dead men. He will go forth against them from the sea of the Cushites and will lay desolation and ruin in the desert of Jethrib and in the habitation of their fathers. And the sons [allies?] of the king of Greece will seize the places of the desert and will destroy with the sword the remnant that is left of them in the land of promise. And fear of all those around them will fall upon them. They and their wives and their sons and their leaders and all their camps and the entire land of the desert of their father will be given into the hands of the kings of the Greeks, and will be surrendered to desolation and destruction and to captivity and murder. And their servitude will be one hundred times more severe than their yoke had been.

And all the wrath of the ire of the king of the Greeks will be completed upon those who denied. And there will be peace on earth the like of which ha[s] never existed, because it is the last peace of the perfection of the world. And there will be joy upon the entire earth, and men will sit down in great peace and the churches will arise nearby, and cities will be built and priests will be freed from the tax, and priests and men will rest at that time from labor and tiredness and torture, because that is the peace of which He said in His gospel: There will be great peace the like of which never existed, and men will sit down in repose and will eat and drink and rejoice in the joy of their heart, and men will take wives and wives will be given to men [Matt. 24:38].

On Heresies, chapter 100 (ca. mid-eighth century)

John of Damascus (ca. 675–ca. 754)

Language: Greek

Source: Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The “Heresy of the Ishmaelites”* (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1972), 132–41.

On Heresies, usually referred to by the Latin title De haeresibus, is a Greek text written sometime after 743 as the second part of a larger work titled The Fount of Knowledge (in Greek, Pege gnoseos). As its title suggests, the focus of the work is a list of heresies, the hundredth and last chapter of which is devoted to Islam.

John of Damascus, a Melkite Christian born in Damascus sometime around 675, wrote the text. His father held a high-ranking position under the Muslim ruler Muʿawiya and, for a time, Umayyad caliphs employed John as well. Facing restrictions upon Christians employed by Muslims,

John retired to the Monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem where he resided until his death in the mid-eighth century.

Though John wrote other important works, On Heresies is significant as one of the earliest known Christian texts to give significant attention to Islam. It influenced later Christian writing on Islam for centuries. Specifically, many of the themes John treats—attacks upon the legitimacy of Muhammad’s claim to prophethood and his alleged debauchery, the historicity of the Qur’an, and defenses of the Trinity and Christology—provide inspiration for many later Christian works devoted to Islam.

There is also the still-prevailing deceptive superstition of the Ishmaelites, the fore-runner of the Antichrist. It takes its origin from Ishmael, who was born to Abraham from Hagar, and that is why they also call them Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. They also call them Saracenes, allegedly for having been sent away by Sarah empty; for Hagar said to the angel, “Sarah has sent me away empty.” These, then, were idolaters and they venerated the morning star Aphrodite, whom notably they called [*Chabar*] in their own language, which means “great”; therefore until the times of Heraclius they were, undoubtedly, idolaters. From that time on a false prophet appeared among them, surnamed [Mamed], who, having casually been exposed to the Old and the New Testament and supposedly encountered an Arian monk, formed a heresy of his own. And after, by pretence, he managed to make the people think of him as a God-fearing fellow, he spread rumors that a scripture was brought down to him from heaven. Thus having drafted some pronouncements in his book, worthy [only] of laughter, he handed it down to them in order that they may comply with it.

He says that there exists one God maker of all, who was neither begotten nor has he begotten. He says that Christ is the Word of God and his spirit, created and a servant, and that he was born without a seed from Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron. For, he says, the Word of God and the Spirit entered Mary and she gave birth to Jesus who was a prophet and a servant of God. And that the Jews, having themselves violated the Law, wanted to crucify him and after they arrested him they crucified his shadow, but Christ himself, they say, was not crucified nor did he die; for God took him up to himself into heaven because he loved him. And this is what he says, that when Christ went up to the heavens God questioned him saying: "O Jesus, did you say that 'I am Son of God, and God?'" And Jesus, they say, answered: "Be merciful to me, Lord; you know that I did not say so, nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who have gone astray wrote that I made this statement and they said lies against me and they have been in error." And God, they say, answered to him: "I knew that you would not say this thing." And although he includes in this writing many more absurdities worthy of laughter, he insists that this was brought down to him from God.

We ask, "How is it that your prophet did not come this way, by having others bearing witness to him, nor did—as in the case of Moses, that God gave the Law to him while the people were looking and the mountain was in smoke—God give him as well, as you claim, the scripture in your presence so that you, too, have an assurance?" they reply that God does whatever he pleases. "This" we say "is what we also know; but how did the scripture come down to your prophet, this is what we are asking." And they answer that, while he was asleep the scripture came down upon him. Then we say to them in jest that . . . since while asleep he received the scripture . . . he did not have a sense of this even taking place.

When we again ask them, “How is it that, although in your scripture he commanded not to do anything or receive anything without witnesses, you did not ask him, ‘You first prove with witnesses that you are a prophet and that you came from God, and which scripture testifies about you,’” they remain silent because of shame. Since you are not permitted to marry a woman without witnesses, neither to purchase something, nor to acquire property—you do not even condescend to have an ass or an animal without witnesses—you have women, and properties, and asses and everything else through witnesses; and yet, only your faith and your scripture you have without witness. And this is because the one who handed it down to you does not have any certification from anywhere, nor is there any one known who testified about him in advance, but he, furthermore, received this while asleep.

Again we respond to them: “Since you say that Christ is Word and Spirit of God, how do you scold us as *Associators*? For the Word and the Spirit is inseparable each from the one in whom this has the origin; if, therefore, the Word is in God it is obvious that he is God as well. 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. For it would be better if you were saying that he has an associate than to mutilate him and introduce him as if he were a stone, or wood, or any of the inanimate objects. Therefore, by accusing us falsely, you call us *Associators*; we, however, call you *Mutilators* . . . of God.”

“How is it that you rub yourselves against a stone by your [*Chabathan*] [i.e., *al-Ka’bah*], and you express your adoration to the stone by kissing it?” . . . They claim that the stone is of Abraham. . . .

This, then, which they call “stone” is the head of Aphrodite, whom they used to venerate [and] whom they call [*Chaber*], on which those who can understand it exactly can see, even until now, traces of an engraving.

This [Mamed], as it has been mentioned, composed many idle tales, on each one of which he prefixed a title, like for example the discourse of *The Woman*, in which he clearly legislates that one may have four wives and one thousand concubines if he can, as many as he can maintain beside the four wives; and that one can divorce whomsoever he pleases, if he so wishes, and have another one. He made this law because of the following case: [Mamed] had a comrade named Zaid. This man had a beautiful wife with whom [Mamed] fell in love. While they were once sitting together [Mamed] said to him: “Oh you, God commanded me to take your wife.” And he replied, “You are an apostle; do as God has told you; take my wife.” Or rather, in order to tell the story from the beginning, he said to him: “God commanded me [to tell you] that you should divorce your wife;” and he divorced her. Several days later he said, “But now God commanded me that I should take her.” Then after he took her and committed adultery with her he made such a law: “Whosoever wills may dismiss his wife. But if, after the divorce, he wants to return back to her let someone else marry her [first]. For it is not permitted for him to take her [back] unless she is married by somebody else. And even if a brother divorces [his wife], let his brother marry her if he so wishes.” This is the type of precepts that he gives in this discourse: “Till the land that God gave you and beautify it; and do this and in this manner”—not to say everything obscene, as he did.

On the Triune Nature of God (755 or 788)

Author unknown

Language: Arabic

Source: Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles from an Eighth or Ninth Century Ms. In the Convent of St Catharine on Mount Sinai, with A Treatise On the Triune Nature of God with Translation, from the Same Codex* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1899), 2–36.

The author of this text is unknown, but may have been associated with a monastery like the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, which preserves the only known manuscript of the work. The text refers to a date, claiming that Christianity has existed for seven hundred and forty-six years. Using the Alexandrian calendar, the text may be dated to either 755 or 788, depending on whether the author began his count from the incarnation or the crucifixion. Margaret Gibson, who provides a transcription and English translation of the work (though she neglects to transcribe nearly a quarter of the manuscript), applies to it a slightly misleading title (in Arabic, Fi tathlith Allah al-wahid), especially since the work gives a great deal of space to matters of Christology and soteriology, in addition to the lengthy prayer at the beginning (Samir Khalil Samir promises a forthcoming Arabic edition of the text along with an English translation by Mark Swanson).

The text is enormously significant, because it is one of the earliest apologies for Christian doctrine to appear in Arabic and to come from an Islamic milieu. Furthermore, it is an early example of Christian use of the Qur'an and Islamic patterns of speech in the defense and explication of Christian belief. For example, the text begins like all Islamic texts do, with a basmalah ("In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful") that, in this case, is appropriately Christianized. Even more significantly,

the author refers to the Torah, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels as books that were “sent down” (al-manzila), a concept and title applied to the Qur’an (al-Tanzil). Similarly, the author refers to the Gospel as “a guidance and a mercy” (hudan wa-rahmatan), which is a phrase also applied to the Qur’an (e.g., Qur’an 31:3). Furthermore, the text quotes Qur’anic passages and makes frequent reference to the notion of Christ as a word and spirit from God (e.g., Qur’an 4:171)—a common feature of Christian texts devoted to Islam—but uses it in support of Trinitarian doctrine.

At times the author seems to address Muslims directly, suggesting it functioned as an apology for Christian doctrine that was meant to be read by Muslims. But the features described above would have also made the text useful to Christian readers rethinking the presentation of their faith—either in the context of apology or perhaps even catechism—in an environment increasingly influenced by Muslims and Islam.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. O God, we rejoice in Thy mercy in truth and right. Praise be to God before whom nothing was, and who was before everything, after whom there is nothing, and He is the heir of all things, and to Him all things return, who by His knowledge kept the knowledge of all things, and nothing but His work is sufficient for this, in whose knowledge is the end of all things, and He counts everything by His knowledge. We ask Thee, O God, by Thy mercy and Thy power to put us among those who know Thy truth and follow Thy will and [fear] Thy wrath and adore Thy excellent names in Thy sublime attributes. Thou art the compassionate, the merciful; seated upon the throne Thou art worthy; Thou art higher than

the creatures and Thou fillest all things. Thou doest good and art not done good to; Thou judgest and art not judged; Thou art rich towards us and we are poor towards Thee. Thou art near to those who approach Thee; Thou answerest those who call on Thee and implore Thee. Thou, O God, art Lord of all things, God of all things, Creator of all things. Open our mouths, loosen our tongues, soften our hearts, and open our breasts to the praise of Thy noble and high and great and blessed and holy name. Verily there is no god before Thee, and no god after Thee. To Thee [shall we] return; Thou art the Almighty. To Thee be the praise, O God, who dwellest in light, Creator of the angels and the spirit that they may adore Thy name, Thy holy name, for the message of Thy name and for the authority of Thy power; and they do not weary of Thy majesty and Thy holiness, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the mighty Lord, who filleth the heavens and the earth with His honour. Verily they adore Thee, and set their seal to one Lord, that men may know that the angels adore God and His Word and His Spirit, one God and one Lord. We worship Thee, our Lord and our God, in Thy Word and Thy Spirit.

We do not distinguish God from His Word and His Spirit. We worship no other god with God in His Word and His Spirit. God shewed His power and His light in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms and the Gospel, that God and His Word and His Spirit are one God and one Lord. We will shew this, if God will, in these books which have come down to him who wishes intuition and perceives things and knows the truth and opens his breast to believe in God and His Scriptures.

It is written also in the beginning of the Law, which God sent down to His prophet Moses on Mount Sinai, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Then he said, "The Spirit of God

was upon the waters.” Then He said, by His Word, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Then He said, “Let there be firmament,” and there was a firmament, which is the lower heaven. Then He said, “Let the earth bring forth the grass and the green herb and the tree with fruit and other things, and let the earth bring forth the living soul of wild beasts, and cattle and lions, and creeping things,” and it was so. Then He said, “Let the waters bring forth every creeping thing that hath life, and every fowl that flieth in the heavens of their kind and sex,” and it was so. Then He said, “Let us create man after our own image and likeness.” So God shewed in the beginning of the book which He sent down to His prophet Moses, that God and His Word and His Spirit are one God, and that God, may He be blessed and exalted! created all things, and gave life to all things by His Word and His Spirit. We do not say three Gods . . . but we say that God and His Word and His Spirit are one God and one Creator. This is like the disc of the Sun which is in the heaven, and the rays which issue from the Sun, and the heat which comes from the Sun, each from the other. We do not say that these are three suns, but one Sun, and these are three names not to be distinguished from one another. Also . . . like the mouth and the tongue which is in the mouth, and the word which issues from the tongue; so is our saying about the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. By it the prophets prophesied, and said, “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken.” This all is the proof of our faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. We know God to be one Lord in His Word and His Spirit. And in Him we adore and praise the Word of God and His Spirit.

We do not say that God begat His Word as any man begets; God forbid! but we say that the Father begat His Word as the Sun begets rays, and as the mind begets the word, as the fire begets heat; none of these things existed before what was begotten of them. God, may His

name be blessed! never existed without Word and Spirit, but God was ever in His Word and His Spirit; His Word and His Spirit were with God and in God before He made the creatures. We do not say how this is. Verily everything relating to God is majesty and might. As no man can understand anything of God, neither can he understand the Word of God and His Spirit.

You will find it also in the [Qur'an], that "We created man in misery, and we have opened the gates of Heaven with water pouring down, and have said, And now are ye come unto us alone, as we created you at first." He said also, "Believe in God, and in His Word; and also in the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost has brought it down a mercy and a guidance from thy Lord," but why should I prove it from this and enlighten [you] when we find in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms and the Gospel, and you find it in the [Qur'an], that God and his Word and His Spirit are one God and one Lord? Ye have said that ye believe in God and His Word and the Holy Ghost, so do not reproach us, O men! that we believe in God and His Word and His Spirit: and we worship God in His Word and His Spirit, one God and one Lord and one Creator.

And say not that God is removed from His place, or that there is of Him one thing without another: God forbid! but we say that God is all complete in Heaven, and all complete in the Christ, and all complete in every place. Seest thou not the Sun which God created . . . and light to the people of the world, that it is in heaven, and in the wadys [i.e., a dry riverbed] and the mountains and on the hillsides and the seas? It is not divided and it is not removed from place to place, but wherever it wills it exists as it wills; it fills all things with its majesty and its might and there is nothing more glorious than it.

God was more merciful than the merciful amongst His creatures. He appointed One who should preside over their salvation and their redemption from the temptation of Satan and his error. When the prophets of God saw this, that the children of Adam were lost, and that the Devil had conquered them, and that no man could save the race of Adam from error and destruction, the prophets and apostles of God entreated God and asked Him to come down to His creatures and His servants and to preside in His mercy over their salvation from the error of the Devil.

What shall I shew and make clear from this prophecy about the Christ, when the prophets prophesied and said that He is God and Lord and Saviour? It is He who came down from heaven a Saviour to His servants. The throne is not divided, for verily God and His Word and His Spirit are on the throne, and in every place complete without diminution. The heavens and the earth and all that is therein are full of His honour.

God destroyed him and put him beneath Him in his disobedience through what he intended. God sent from His throne His Word which is from Himself, and saved the race of Adam and clothed Himself with this weak conquered Man through Mary the good, whom God chose from the women of the ages. He was veiled in her, and by that He destroyed the Evil One, and conquered and subdued him and left him weak and contemptible. He boasts not over the race of Adam, for it was terrible grief when God conquered [the Evil One] by this Man with whom He clothed Himself. If God were to destroy Satan without clothing Himself with this Man by whom He healed him, Satan would not have found grief and remorse.

The Christ was born of Mary the pure by the Holy Ghost without any man touching her, God of God and Light of His Light, His Word and His Spirit, perfect Man in soul and body without sin. Mary remained a virgin after she gave Him birth. If the Christ had not been God of God and Light Mary would not have remained a virgin after she had given Him birth; but she gave birth to the Light of God and His Word, mercy and guidance and salvation to His creatures. He saved Adam and his race from the error of Satan. He raised up Adam from his stumbling and healed his wound and repaired his affliction and mended his rupture and liberated him and his race from the hands of Satan. He put an end to his darkness and wandering and broke off our hearts from the service of the Devil. He crucified sin by His cross, and by His death killed the Death which Adam had inherited by disobedience. He brought to light the Resurrection, He raised up truth and righteousness and guidance by His mercy and His favour towards men, and towards the creatures of God.

And the Christ wrought signs, the work of a God, that men might know from His work that He is God of God and Light. Thus the Christ said to the children of Israel, "If ye believe not in Me, believe in My work which I do." The Christ created, and no one creates but God. You will find in the [Qur'an], "And he spake and created from clay like the form of a bird, and breathed into it, and lo! it was a bird by permission of God." He forgave trespasses, and who forgives trespasses but God? He satisfied the hungry, and no one does that nor provides food but God. You will find all this about the Christ in your Book.

The Christ went up to Heaven, and Heaven was not divided, and sat at the right hand of the Father. He put His enemies who were disobedient to Him below His footstool, and below the feet of those

who believe in the Christ. Thus you will find in the [Qur'an], "I have appointed Thee and raised Thee up to Myself, and have purified Thee from those that are unbelievers. I will make those who follow Thee above the unbelievers until the day of resurrection." Say not that we believe in two Gods, or that we say there are two Lords. God forbid! Verily God is one God and one Lord in His Word and His Spirit.

He is the Lord who came to us from Zion, and turned away error from us, and was a Saviour to us and a Deliverance from the Devil. No intercessor could lead us from error and no angel from among the angels of God, and none could save us from the Devil nor from his snares, until our Lord came to us from Zion. He was born of the race of David the prophet, as God has promised him; He saved us with power and authority and guided us to the light of God and He fulfilled the obedience [due] to Him; He was mercy to His creatures.

The Maiden is the Virgin who is of the race of Adam. She gave birth to the Christ, Emmanuel, God of God, and mercy to His creatures. We do not hear of one man from Adam till this our day who was called "God with us" or who was called the Word of God. He was born of a Virgin without any man touching her. Is not He the Christ? And do they not lie regarding what God has bestowed on creatures in the Christ?

What is the punishment of him who falsifies the word of God by the tongues of His prophets? Let us fly for refuge to God from this and ask Him to make us of those who believe His word and the word of His prophets. Verily this is mercy and favour from God and grace for well-being. Then fear God and follow the word of the Christ. Do not doubt Him.

We do not know that any of the prophets came down with a new law from Zion save the Christ with the Gospel, a guidance and a mercy, and a proof of the work of obedience to God. The perfection of the work is by purity of spirit and the approach of the soul to God, and temperance in the world and longing for the next world. This is the perfection of knowledge and of worship which God desires from men without their disliking it. Thus said the Christ, "I am not come to destroy the example of Moses but to fulfill it, and to give myself a ransom for many." In truth He has redeemed us from death and sin and the error of Satan. To Him be praise and thanks for this.

[After extensive references to biblical prophecies that the author argues refer to Christ:] We do not know that God looked upon the earth or mixed with the people except when He appeared to us in the Christ, His Word and His Spirit. He veiled Himself in flesh, He who is not of us. Men saw Him and He mixed with them. He was God and Man without sin. It was He who knew the paths of good and of knowledge and judgment, and who taught them and made them spring up to those who follow His command and His word. The speech of the Christ was the speech of light and life, as the Apostles said to Him, "Thy speech is the speech of light to those who go and call on Thee." Let us ask God in His mercy to make us of those who follow the commands of the Christ and let us believe in Him as the prophets prophesied about Him and preached about Him.

God and His Word and His Spirit are one God in Heaven and earth and in every place. This is the proof of what God's prophets said about it of old time. Verily he who believeth not in God and His Word and His Spirit, one God, hath not kept the faith in God and hath not accepted the word of God's prophets, when they speak about everything that He sent down to them, that God's Word is

His strength and His wisdom, and that the Holy Ghost is the life of everything.

[The Christ] burneth up sins and killeth them by means of forgiveness, as fire burneth thorns and destroyeth them and one sees no trace of them. Sins and trespasses are like thorns. The Christ said in the Gospel, “Verily, verily I say unto you that he who is not born of water and Spirit shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven”; but he who is born of water and Spirit is he who is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God and one Lord. Let it not take thee aback when thou hearest, “the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.” Verily the Father is God; the Son is the Word which is from God; and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God through whom He sanctifieth everything; as water cleanseth the defilement of the body, so the Holy Ghost cleanseth the defilement of souls and spirits and purifieth them from sins and trespasses, so that he who is baptized in faith is cleaner than when he was born from his mother’s womb, he has no sin and no iniquity.

He that believeth and is baptized is saved and delivered and pardoned; he who believeth not hath not been baptized, and there hath been decreed against him contempt and remorse. Praise be to God who hath delivered us from the Dragon and his error, and saved us from our sins and trespasses by the immersion of baptism and our faith in the Christ, the Word and the Light of God.