

5. Surah al-Maida, Medina 112

The Quranic Text & Ali's translation:

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا... ^{up}

5: 82. Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans;

... وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَى...

and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say:

"We are Christians:"

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَسِيصِينَ وَرُهَبَانًا ...

because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world,

... وَأَنَّهَمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

and they are not arrogant.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ... ^{up}

5: 83. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger,

... تَرَى أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ...

thou wilt see their eyes overflowing
with tears, for they recognize the truth:

... يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

they pray:

"Our Lord! we believe; write us down
among the witnesses.

وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ... up

5: 84. "What cause can we have not to
believe in God and the truth which has
come to us,

... وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبَّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

seeing that we long for our Lord to
admit us to the company of the
righteous?"

فَأَنَابَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا... up

85. And for this their prayer hath God
rewarded them with gardens, with rivers
flowing underneath, their eternal home.

... وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

Such is the recompense of those who
do good.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ up

5: 86. But those who reject faith and belie our Signs, they shall be companions of Hell-fire.

[Ali's comments:] 789. The meaning is not that they merely call themselves Christians, but that they were such sincere Christians that they appreciated Muslim virtues, as did the Abyssinians to whom Muslim refugees went during the persecution in Makkah. (R).

[790. Qissis: I have translated as "devoted to learning," following the Commentators. it seems to be a foreign word, possibly Abyssinian rather than Syriac, as the reference seems to be to the Abyssinian Christians. **Their real devotion to learning and the renunciation of the world by the Monastic Orders** are contrasted with the hypocrisy and arrogance of the Pharisees and Scribes.]

Muhammad Asad's translation:

5:82 Thou wilt surely find that, of all people, the most hostile to those who believe [in this divine writ] are the Jews as well as those who are bent on ascribing divinity to aught beside God; and thou wilt surely find that, of all people,'

96 they who say, "Behold, we are Christians," come closest to feeling affection for those who believe [in this divine writ]: this is so because there are priests and monks among them, and because these are not given to arrogance.'97

(5:83) For, when they come to understand what has been bestowed from on high upon this Apostle, thou canst see their eyes overflow with tears, because they recognize something of its truth;' 98 [and] they say: "O our Sustainer! We do believe; make us one, then, with all who bear witness to the truth.

(5:84) And how could we fail to believe in God and in whatever truth has come unto us, when we so fervently desire that our Sustainer count us among the righteous?"

5:85 And for this their belief' God will reward them with gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: for such is the requital of the doers of good

5:86 whereas they who are bent on denying the truth and giving the lie to Our messages – they are destined for the blazing fire.

Asad's comments : -

96 Lit, "of them".

97 I.e., they do not believe, as do the Jews, that revelation is God's exclusive gift to the children of Israel; and their "priests and monks" **teach them that humility is the essence of all true faith**. - It is noteworthy that the Qur'an does not in this context include the Christians among "those who are bent on ascribing divinity to aught beside God" (alladhina ashraqu - the element of intent being expressed in the use of the past tense, similar to alladhina kafaru, alladhina zalamu, etc.): for although, by their deification of Jesus, they are guilty of the sin of

shirk ("the ascribing of divinity to anyone or anything beside God"), **the Christians do not consciously worship a plurality of deities inasmuch as, theoretically, their theology postulates belief in the One God**, who is conceived as manifesting Himself in a trinity of aspects, or "persons", of whom Jesus is supposed to be one. However repugnant this doctrine may be to the teachings of the Qur'an, **their shirk is not based on conscious intent, but rather flows from their "overstepping the bounds of truth"** in their veneration of Jesus (see 4:171, 5:77). Cf in this context Razi's remarks mentioned in note 16 on 6:23.

98 Regarding this rendering of the phrase mimma 'arafu min al-haqq, see Zamakhshari and Razi; also Manar VII, 12. As for my translation of the expression idha sami'u as "when they come to understand", it is to be noted that beyond its primary significance of "he heard", the verb sami'a has often the meaning of "he understood" or "came to understand" (cf. Lane IV, 1427).

