INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Baiyīna, 98.

This Sūra was probably an early Madinah Sūra, or possibly a late Makkān Sūra.

In subject-matter it carries forward the argument of the last Sūra. The night of revelation is indeed blessed: but those who reject Truth are impervious to Allah's Message, however clear may be the evidence in support of it.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Those who disbelieve, Among the People of the Book, And among the Polytheists, Were not going to depart (From their ways) until There should come to them Clear Evidence.

2. Messenger from Allah, Rehearsing scriptures, Kept pure and holy:

3. Wherein are books Right and straight.

6221. The People of the Book immediately referred to are the Jews and the Christians, who had received scriptures in the same line of prophecy in which came our holy Prophet. Their scriptures should have prepared them for the advent of the greatest and last of the Prophets. For the Jewish scriptures promised to the Jews, cousins or brethren to the Arabs, a prophet like Moses: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken” (Deut. xviii. 15). And Christ promised a Comforter (John. xiv. 16; xv. 26; and xvi. 7; see my n. 5438 to Ixi. 6) almost by name. The People of the Book fell from the true, straight, and standard religion, into devious ways, and would not come to the true Path until (they said) they were convinced by the arrival of the promised Prophet. But when the promised Prophet came in the person of Muhammad, they rejected him, because they really did not seek for Truth but only followed their own fancies and desires.

6222. The Polytheists, the Pagans, had not previously believed in any scriptures. But yet, when clear evidence came to them, they should have believed. Yet they rejected the holy Prophet because they were not really searching for Truth, but were only following their own fancies and desires.

6223. The Clear Evidence was the holy Prophet himself, his life, his personality, and his teaching.

6224. Cf. ii. 151.

6225. Cf. lxxx. 13-16.

6226. Qaiyim: straight, as opposed to crooked; standard as opposed to irregular; definite and permanent, as opposed to casual or temporary. Cf. ix. 36; xii. 40; etc.
4. Nor did the People
Of the Book
Make schisms,\textsuperscript{6227}
Until after there came
To them Clear Evidence.

5. And they have been commanded
No more than this:\textsuperscript{6228}
To worship Allah,
Offering Him sincere devotion,
Being True (in faith);\textsuperscript{6229}
To establish regular Prayer;
And to give zakat;
And that is the Religion
Right and Straight.\textsuperscript{6230}

6. Those who disbelieve,
Among the People of the Book
And among the Polytheists,
Will be in hell-fire,
To dwell therein (for aye).
They are the worst
Of creatures.\textsuperscript{6231}

\textsuperscript{6227} The responsibility of the People of the Book is greater than that of Pagans, because the People of the Book had been prepared for the standard and straight Religion by the revelations which they had already received. Yet, when the clear evidence came in Islam, they resisted it, And what is this standard and straight Religion, free of all ambiguity, and free of all casual rights and ceremonies? They are summed up in three eternal principles, as explained in the next verse and the next note.

\textsuperscript{6228} The three eternal principles of Religion are: (1) sincere devotion to Allah; (2) Prayer and Praise as drawing man nearer to Allah; and (3) the service of Allah’s creatures by deeds of practical charity.

\textsuperscript{6229} Hanif: see n. 134 to ii. 135.

\textsuperscript{6230} See n. 6226 above.

\textsuperscript{6231} To be given the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong, and then to reject truth and right, is the worst folly which a creature endowed with will can commit. It must necessarily bring its own punishment, whether the creature calls himself one of the children of Abraham or one of the redeemed of Christ, or whether he goes by the mere light of nature and reason as a Pagan. Honour in the sight of Allah is not due to race or colour, but to sincere and righteous conduct (xl. 13).
7. Those who have faith
   And do righteous deeds,—
   They are the best
   Of creatures. 6232

8. Their reward is with Allah:
   Gardens of Eternity,
   Beneath which rivers flow;
   They will dwell therein
   For ever; Allah well pleased
   With them, and they with Him. 6233
   All this for such as
   Fear their Lord and Cherisher. 6234

6232. Contrast this with the preceding verse. Human beings who live a life of faith
    and good deed justify the purpose of their probation here. They attain the fulfilment
    of their highest hopes.

6233. The Good Pleasure of Allah is the final Bliss of Salvation. The good pleasure
    is mutual; the truly saved is he whose will has become completely identified with Allah’s
    universal will.

6234. The fear of Allah is the fear to offend against His holy law, the fear to do
    anything which is against His holy Will. Such fear is akin to love; for with it dawns the
    consciousness of Allah’s loving-care for all His creatures.