

3rd Edition. Revised and considerably Enlarged.

THE
FAITH OF ISLAM,

AN EXPLANATORY SKETCH OF THE PRINCIPAL
FUNDAMENTAL TENETS OF THE MUSLIM
RELIGION.

BY

W. H. QUILLIAM,

(Scholar of the Supreme Court of Judicature)

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W. H. QUILLIAM,

(*Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature.*)

“I like the Mussulman; he is not ashamed of his God: his life is a fairly pure one.”—*General Gordon.*

“Say: O unbelievers, I will not worship that which ye worship; nor will ye worship that which I worship. Neither do I worship that which ye worship; neither do ye worship that which I worship. Ye have your religion, and I my religion.”—*Sura 109, Koran.*

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

As all the 5,000 copies which comprised the second edition of this work have been exhausted, it has become necessary to issue another one. Since the publication of the last issue the pamphlet has been perused by the Caliph of the Faithful, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan of Turkey, who was gracious enough to signify his commendation of the same; and letters have been received from Sierra Leone, Lagos, and other portions of Western Africa, the Cape of Good Hope and the Transvaal in South Africa, from Hungary, the Phillipine Islands, Australia, and even from Hong Kong in China, and Tobolsk in Siberia, asking for copies of the book to be forwarded, and permission has been granted and the brochure is now being translated into and published, in addition to other languages, in Turkish, German, Bengalee, and Tamil (the language of Southern India).

In this edition I have carefully retained every line of the original text, but I have, in many instances, considerably extended the information previously given, my desire being to present as full and complete a sketch of my religion as was possible without extending the book to an unnecessary length. And I trust that the perusal of this little work may facilitate a correct knowledge of "the truth of that faith which is most excellent." *

W. H. ABDULLAH QUILLIAM.

15, Manchester Street, Liverpool,

3rd Ramazan, 1309.

(Which Christians style the 2nd April, 1892.)

* 92nd Sura, "The Night."

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

The great success of this little work, the first edition of 2,000 copies all being disposed of in less than eight months and there being a continuous demand for more copies, has necessitated the issue of another edition. I have accordingly carefully revised the book, and although I have not found it necessary to eliminate a single line of the original text, nevertheless I have deemed it advisable in some instances to amplify and extend the information given.

As an example of the widespread interest awakened through the publication of this pamphlet I may mention that letters have been received from Mussulmans in Switzerland, St. Petersburg, Ceylon, The Punjaub, Calcutta, Bombay, Lahore and various other portions of India, Egypt, Straits Settlements and Rangoon (British Burmah), asking for copies of the work, that it has been perused by royalty in the personages of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England and Empress of India, and of His Royal Highness the Khedive of Egypt, and that permission has been granted and the book is now being translated into Burmese, Persian, Hindustanee and Arabic for publication in those various languages, and I only trust that these few pages will aid in the hastening of the time foretold in the Koran "When the assistance of Allah shall come, and the victory, and the people shall be seen entering into the religion of God by troops." *

W. H. Q.

32, ELLIOT STREET,

LIVERPOOL, 29th *Dulhegaia*, 1307,

which Christians style the 15th August, 1890.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

The subject matter contained in this little work was originally delivered in the form of three lectures in Vernon Hall, Liverpool. Some of the author's co-religionists suggested that those lectures should be published as a pamphlet for public circulation. However, as he had only kept a few notes of his remarks on those occasions, the writer deemed it wiser to rewrite the matter in its present form. His great embarrassment has been to condense into the smallest possible space a concise yet fair and accurate statement of the tenets held by Mussulmans, and he trusts that he has not carried the process of condensation too far, and that this little work will remove some of the prejudices of those who hold a different belief, and that he has been able to place the main principles of the faith of Islam in an intelligible and, as far as possible, interesting form.—

W. H. Q.

JULY, 1889.

THE FAITH OF ISLAM.

WHEN we consider that Islamism is so much mixed up with the British Empire, and the many millions of Moslem fellow subjects who live under the same rule, it is very extraordinary that so little should be generally known about this religion, its history, and that of its followers; and consequently the gross ignorance of the masses on the subject allows them to be easily deceived, and their judgment led astray by any pretender striving to raise up an excitement against those of that persuasion. If, however, it be the duty of mankind to live at peace together, and do each other all the good, instead of all the evil, in their power, we cannot inform ourselves too much on this and kindred subjects.

What can be more absurd than the belief held by the majority of the people in England that the coffin of the prophet Mahomet is composed of steel, and held in suspension " 'twixt earth and heaven " by the means of loadstones: and yet of so old a duration is this ridiculous story, and so generally is it believed, that it has given rise to an expression which has become as much a part of the English language as is a standard Shakesperian quotation.

Much of this deplorable ignorance, doubtless, owes its origin to the mischeivous tales regarding the customs and religious belief of the Moslems, which were circulated in Europe at the time of the crusades by Christian priests, who thus played upon the credulity of their flocks in order to inflame

their zeal on behalf of the expeditions then being raised to "rescue the Holy Land from the grasp of the infidel"; but equally is it without doubt that falsehoods and misrepresentations are still industriously published and circulated amongst English speaking people by interested persons, paid agents of societies, who know full well how gullible the general public are, and who trade on their ignorance in order to extract subscriptions from their pockets.

In the following pages, therefore, we will endeavour to correct some of these erroneous notions, and to explain what is "The Faith of Islam."

One of the best and briefest descriptions of the faith of Islam is that given by David Urquhart in the introduction to vol. I. of his clever work "The Spirit of the East," published in 1839, and reads thus: "Islam, as a religion, teaches no new dogmas; establishes no new revelation, no new precepts; has no priesthood, and no church government. It gives a code to the people, and a constitution to the state, enforced by the sanction of religion."

That Urquhart was right has been admitted by many. Palgrave, Vambéry, Rawlinson, Layard, Rolland, Stanley of Alderley, De Chonski, and others, have participated in his insight and confirmed his statements. Every traveller who has come into intimate contact with Moslem people has had something to say in their favour. Notwithstanding all this, the bulk of opinion in Great Britain has remained unaffected. The truth has not been generally known, because the great body of the English-speaking people being brought up in one sect or another of the Christian faith have inherited a bitter and unreasoning prejudice on the subject that seems to them to be an essential part of their religion; and even when a dignitary of the Anglican Church like Canon Isaac Taylor

has had the courage at a church congress to deliver his honest convictions on the matter, he has been assailed by bitter invective and bigoted vituperation.

The remarks of Canon Taylor, as delivered by him at the church congress at Wolverhampton, on the 7th October, 1887, and reported in the *Times* of the following day, are well worthy of careful perusal and consideration. Our time and space will not permit us to give the whole of his speech, but we cannot refrain from republishing a portion of it.

“The Rev. Canon Isaac Taylor said that over a large portion of the world Islamism as a missionary religion is more successful than Christianity. (Sensation.) Not only are the Moslem converts from paganism more numerous than the Christian converts, but Christianity in some regions is actually receding before Islam, while attempts to proselytize Mahomedan nations are notoriously unsuccessful. We not only do not gain ground, but even fail to hold our own. The faith of Islam already extends from Morocco to Java, from Zanzibar to China, and is spreading across Africa with giant strides. It has acquired a footing on the Congo and the Zambesi, while Uganda, the most powerful of the negro states, has just become Mahomedan. In India western civilization, which is sapping Hindooism, only prepares the way for Islam. Of the 255 millions in India, 50 millions are already Moslems,* and of the whole population of Africa more than half. It is not the first propagation of Islam that has to be explained; but it is the permanency with which it retains its hold upon its

* The recent census gives the number of Moslems in India as 57,365,204, and the number of Christians (including Europeans residing there) as 2,284,191. It is estimated that about five millions of persons have, in India alone, during the last ten years, become converts to Islam.

converts. Christianity is less tenacious in its grasp. An African tribe once converted to Islam never reverts to paganism, and never embraces Christianity. . . . Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. Take for example the statements of English officials or of lay travellers as to the practical results of Islam. When Mahomedanism is embraced by a negro tribe, paganism, devil worship, fetishism, cannibalism, human sacrifice, infanticide, witchcraft, at once disappear. The natives begin to dress, filth is replaced by cleanliness, and they acquire personal dignity and self-respect. Hospitality becomes a religious duty, drunkenness becomes rare, gambling is forbidden, immodest dances and the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes cease, female chastity is regarded as a virtue, industry replaces idleness, license gives place to law, order and sobriety prevail, blood feuds, cruelty to animals and to slaves are forbidden. A feeling of humanity, benevolence and brotherhood is inculcated. Polygamy and slavery are regulated and their evils are restrained. Islam, above all, is the most powerful total abstinence association in the world, whereas the extension of European trade means the extension of drunkenness and vice, and the degradation of the people ; while Islam introduces a civilization of no low order, including a knowledge of reading and writing, decent clothing, personal cleanliness, veracity and self-respect. Its restraining and civilizing effects are marvellous. How little have we to show for the vast sums of money and all the precious lives lavished upon Africa ! Christian converts are reckoned by thousands, Moslems converts by millions. These are the stern facts we have to face. They are extremely unpleasant facts ; it is folly to ignore them. We ought to begin by recognising the fact that Islam is not an anti-Christian faith, but a half-Christian faith. Islam was a

replica of the faith of Abraham and Moses, with Christian elements. Judaism was exclusive. Islam is cosmopolitan—not like Judaism, confined to one race, but extended to the whole world. Moslems acknowledge four great teachers—Abraham, the friend of God; Moses, the prophet of God; Jesus, the work of God: and Mahomed, the apostle of God.*

. . . There is nothing in the teaching of Mahomed antagonistic to Christianity. It is midway between Judaism and Christianity. This reformed Judaism swept so swiftly over Africa and Asia because the African and Syrian doctors had substituted metaphysical dogmas for the religion of Christ. They tried to combat licentiousness by celibacy and virginity. Seclusion from the world was the road to holiness, and dirt was the characteristic of monkish sanctity. The people were practically polytheists, worshipping a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels. Islam swept away this mass of corruption and superstition. It was a revolt against empty theological polemics; it was a masculine protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It brought out the fundamental dogma of religion—the unity and greatness of God. It replaced monkiness by manliness. It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature. . .

. . . The virtues which Islam inculcates are what the lower races can be brought to understand—temperance, cleanliness, chastity, justice, fortitude, courage, benevolence, hospitality, veracity, and resignation. They can be taught to cultivate the four cardinal virtues, and to abjure the seven deadly sins. The Christian *ideal* of the brotherhood of man

*Moslems recognise *six* great teachers. In addition to the four given above they acknowledge Adam, the created of God; and Noah, the specially preserved of God. Canon Taylor has overlooked this fact.

is the highest; but Islam preaches a *practical* brotherhood—the social equality of all Moslems.* This is the great bribe which Islam offers. The convert is admitted at once to an exclusive social caste; he becomes a member of a vast confraternity 150,000,000.† A Christian convert is not regarded as a social equal, but the Moslem brotherhood is a reality. We have over much “dearly beloved brethren” in the reading desk, but very little in daily life. True, the Koran offered a material paradise, but the social privileges attained in this world are a more potent motive. . . . The two great practical difficulties in the way of the conversion of Africa are polygamy and domestic slavery. Mahomet, like Moses, did not prohibit them; that would have been impossible; but he endeavoured to mitigate their evils. Slavery is no part of the creed of Islam. It was tolerated as a necessary evil by Mahomet as it was by Moses and St. Paul. In the hands of the Moslem it is a very mild institution, far milder than negro slavery in the United States.‡ Polygamy is a more difficult question. Moses did not prohibit it. It was practised by David, and it is not directly forbidden in the New Testament. Mahomet limited the unbounded licence of polygamy; it is the exception rather than the rule in the most civilized Moslem lands, European Turkey, Algiers, and Egypt. || Polygamy, with all

* “Verily, the true believers are brethren: wherefore reconcile your brethren: and fear God, that ye may obtain mercy.” 49 Sura, “Inner Apartments.”

† These figures are greatly below the real strength of Islam. It is estimated there are 240 millions of professing Moslems in the world.

‡ “And as to your slaves, see that ye feed them as ye feed yourselves, and clothe them as ye clothe yourselves.” Saying of the Prophet Mahomet.

|| “A case of polygamy was unknown in Candia, amongst a population of 40,000 Mussulmans.” Urquhart’s “Spirit of the East,” Vol. II., page 388.

its evils, has its counter-balancing advantages. It has abolished female infanticide, and gives every woman a legal protector. Owing to polygamy Moslem countries are free from professional outcasts, a greater reproach to Christendom than polygamy to Islam. The strictly regulated polygamy of Moslem lands is infinitely less degrading to women and less injurious to men than the promiscuous polyandry which is the curse of Christian cities, and which is absolutely unknown in Islam. The polyandrous English are not entitled to cast stones at polygamous Moslems. Let us first pluck out the beam from our own eye, before we meddle with the mote in our brother's eye. The four evils of Moslem lands—polygamy, slavery, concubinage, and licence of divorce—are no exclusive reproach to Islam. Within our own memory, if not now, they have all prevailed in aggravated forms in the United States—a land nominally Christian and peopled by a race of English brotherhood. . . . Let us remember that in some respects Moslem morality is better than our own. In resignation to God's will, in temperance, charity, veracity, and in the brotherhood of believers, they set us a pattern we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling and prostitution—the three curses of Christian lands. Islam is the closest approach to Christianity which has been able to take hold of Eastern or Southern nations. It is superior to the grovelling superstition of the Coptic and Abyssinian churches.”

The publication of Canon Taylor's remarks led to a somewhat animated correspondence in the columns of the “Times” newspaper. Many of these letters are well worth reproduction, but the space at our disposal will not permit us to avail ourselves of more than one, and it is from the pen of Mr. Joseph

Thompson, the well-known African traveller, who under date of November 10th, writes from Edinburgh as follows :—*

“ From experience I know how dangerous it is to recognise any good in any living religion outside the orthodox pale and its immediate vicinity, or to offer any criticism on the method adopted by church agencies to propagate their creeds. The critic’s motives are sure to be misrepresented and held up to opprobrium, while his facts will probably be ignored. He soon discovers that the church or its missionary agencies love not the light, or at least only such as passes through authorized loopholes or specially supplied coloured glass. As an observer of somewhat varied experience in Eastern, Central, and Western Africa, where I have seen Christianity and Mahomedanism † in contact with the Negro, I would claim to be heard. It has been argued by some of your correspondents that in Eastern Africa and the Nile basin you see Islam in its true colours in congenial association with the slave trade and all forms of degradation and violence. A more baseless statement could not be conceived. I unhesitatingly affirm—and I speak from a wider experience of Eastern Central Africa than any of your correspondents possess—that if the slave trade thrives it is because Islam has not been introduced to these regions, and for the strongest of all reasons, that the spread of Mahomedanism would have meant the concomitant suppression of the slave trade.

* This letter was published in the “ Times ” of the 14th November, 1887.

† The Moslems do not call their religion Mahomedanism, nor do they render any worship, as some have supposed, to their Prophet. This name is purely of foreign origin, and is objected to by them, on the same principle, that he whom Christians style St. Paul, objected to saying, “ I am of Paul, Cephas or Apollos.”

“Islam is not preached to the Negro because the Muscat Arabs desire to retain their slave-hunting grounds. To do otherwise would have been to hail the natives as brother Mussulmans where they hoped to capture slaves. In the same way many of our Christian traders, you may rest assured, would resist most strenuously the introduction of missionaries of their religion into their trading grounds, if it was not found that the profession of Christianity among the natives was not incompatible with a large consumption of gin. It is sometimes convenient, however, to confound a people with their religion—when it does not come too near home.

“Again, it has been triumphantly pointed out that the religion of Mahomet does not spread in the Eastern division of the African continent. That is perfectly true. I have already mentioned one potent reason. There is a second equally important. Islam, like Christianity, is brought among the natives by an alien race—a race in every respect far above them—a race which characterizes them as Wa-Sherzi (wild men). The Muscat Arab is cut off by a wide gulf from the Negro. He does not attempt to pass it. By being thus cut off from the race the Negro makes no attempt to acquire its religion nor its manners. But while I unhesitatingly affirm that the slave trade flourishes in Eastern Central Africa because Islam is not there, only its professor, I as confidently assert that this so much reviled religion has done one great service there. It has prevented the spread of the liquor traffic. In Zanzibar itself the Sultan has been impotent to arrest the traffic, because Christian nations objected to any restriction of ‘trade.’ Happily, on the mainland he has hitherto been allowed a freer hand in enforcing the rules of his religion, and

so done an enormous service in preventing the demoralization of the easily seduced blacks. How long this will last now that Germany's 'pioneers of civilization' are descending upon the land remains to be seen. Turning now to Western Africa and the Central Soudan—which I also have had the opportunity of visiting—we find a far different state of things prevailing. Here we have Islam as a living, active force, full of the fire and energy of its early days, proselytizing too with much of the marvellous success which characterised its early days. Here we have it preached equally in the streets of Sierra Leone, and among the debased cannibal tribes of the Niger basin. With the disingenousness which makes them attempt to fasten the evils of the slave trade upon Islam, the defenders of the Christian faith seek with might and main to minimize and distort the facts about the success of Islam in Western Central Africa. Unable to recognise any good except it come through orthodox channels, they seek to describe its advance as a terrible calamity and unmixed evil to the African. They declare—as they have been taught from their childhood—that Mahomedanism can only be propagated by means of fire and sword. They delight to draw pictures of the terror-stricken Negro on his knees, his hut in flames behind him, his wives and children, with halters round their necks, being dragged off by ferocious men to make slaves of, while a demon-like Mussulman stands over him with drawn sword, giving him the alternative of 'death or the Koran.' 'This is the stereotyped notion how Mahomedanism is propagated—an idea, I suppose, handed down from previous generations. Happily, I have had an opportunity of seeing for myself, and seeing differently. The greatest triumphs of Islam in the Central and Western Soudan have been by peaceful and unassuming agencies—the

erratic Fellani herdsman in the past, the energetic and enterprising Hausa or Nupé trader in the present. From somewhere about the 12th century the herdsman has been engaged spreading his religion from Lake Chag to the Atlantic, with the result that the entire region became honeycombed with little Mahomedan coteries by the end of last century. They but wanted a leader to throw off the yoke of paganism and proclaim the Unity of God. With the beginning of this century came the leader in the person of Fodiyo, and in a surprisingly short time Mahomedanism was established as the reigning religion over a huge extent of country, giving an impetus to the barbarous tribes which has produced the most astounding results. In these later years the chief agent in the spread of Islam has been, as I have already remarked, the Hausa or Nupé trader. Protected by the sanctity of his business, the Negro merchant penetrates into every tribe within hundreds of miles of his own home. He mixes with the barbarous pagan as one of like blood with himself; he sleeps in the same house, he eats the same food. Everywhere he carries his religion with him, its great central features unobscured by unthinkable and transcendental dogmas. He has just so much of doctrine as his pagan brother can understand and assimilate. The trader remains a month, or it may be six months or a year. During that time he is admired for his fine clothes, and the people around him begin to ape him. They see nothing which they may not hope to aspire to; there is nothing in his religion they do not understand. In this manner have the seeds of civilization and Islam been scattered broadcast among numerous savage tribes, till the land resounds with the inspiring din of a hundred industries, and morning, noon, and evening rises the watchword of Islam, and knees which were formerly bent to stocks and stones,

now bend before the one God, and lips which have quivered with enjoyment over the flesh of a brother man are employed to acknowledge His greatness and compassionateness.

“ If Islam has not always been propagated by such peaceful means, what is there to wonder at? Have we not required some eighteen centuries to learn that we have no right to force our religion on others? What wonder, then, if ardent negro propagandists should seek occasionally to force the blessings of their religion on their unbelieving and stubborn brethren ? ”

Having thus briefly given extracts from the speeches and writings of some of our countrymen upon the subject, let us now endeavour to calmly and dispassionately consider what is the creed of Islam and then to try and see if it will stand the test of reason and commonsense.

“ Islam has been defined as being like a horse for beauty, strength and endurance and for its swiftness in carrying conviction, and like a sword for its keen incisive power in argument ; it teaches a man always to live remembering that he has once to die, and as life is short he should therefore do as much good in the world as he can while he lives, and thus be always prepared to die.” *

The fundamental doctrine of Islam is that from the very creation of the world down to its final destruction there has been, and for ever will be, but one true orthodox belief ; the foundation of this religion is the recognition of the truth that there is one only and true God. “ There is no God but

* This masterly definition of the Faith of Islam I received from the lips of His Imperial Majesty Ghazi Abdul Hamid-as-sani, Sultan of Turkey and Caliph of the Faithful, in an interview he was graciously pleased to accord me at the Imperial Palace of Yildiz, Constantinople, in Ramazan, 1308 (May, 1891).

God." "He is God, besides whom there is no God; who knoweth that which is future, and that which is present: He is the most Merciful. He is God, besides whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Powerful, the Strong, the most High. He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the Originator. He hath most excellent names.* Whatever is in heaven and earth praiseth Him: and He is the Mighty, the Wise." † This belief is over and over again inculcated in the Korân and passage upon passage might be quoted to verify this statement, but a few will suffice. "Verily your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days; and then ascended His throne; He causeth the night to cover the day; it succeedeth the same swiftly; He also created the sun and the moon, and the stars, which are absolutely subject unto His command. Is not the whole creation, and the empire thereof, His? Blessed be God, the Lord of all creatures! Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret; for He loveth not those who transgress, and act not corruptly in the earth; and call upon Him with fear and desire: for the mercy of God is near unto the righteous. It is He who sendeth the winds spread abroad before His mercy, until they bring a cloud heavy with rain, which He drives unto a dead country; and He causes water to descend thereon, by which is caused all sorts of fruits to spring forth." — Koran, Sura 7. ("Al. Araf.") The description of the attributes of the Deity is very fine, as the following extracts from the second and other Suras of the Korân will show.

"God!—there is no God but He; the Living, the Self

* In the appendix will be found a complete list in Arabic and English in parallel columns of the 99 excellent names, or attributes of Allah (God).

† 59 Sura. "The Emigration."

subsisting, the Eternal! neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him; to Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens or on the earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him, but through His good pleasure? He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge, but so far as He pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation of both is no burden unto Him. He is the High—the Mighty.”

“Blessed be He, in whose hands is the Kingdom, and over all things is He potent. Who hath created Death and Life, to prove which of you is most righteous in His deeds—He is the Mighty—the Forgiving—who hath created the seven heavens one above another; no defect canst thou discover in the creation of the God of Mercy! repeat thy gaze—Seest thou a single flaw? Then twice more repeat thy gaze, and it shall return unto thee, dulled and weary.”

“O Prophet, say to those who ask thee of God—that God is one, He has no partner, and there is none like unto Him. He is accessible to everyone who supplicates Him; He is the Master of everything; His grandeur appertains to Him alone, and there is none other that can be compared with it. He is eternal. He begetteth not, neither is he begotten, nor will He beget. He has no need for either son or heir; He had no parents nor was He born of any, and there is none like unto Him.” *

* Sura 112. This sura is held in special veneration by all Moslems, and, according to an authenticated tradition of the Prophet, is equal in value to a third part of the whole Korân. It was revealed in answer to the Koreish, who asked the Prophet what were the distinguishing attributes of the Deity he invited them to worship.

The Caliph Ali condemned in emphatic language all anthropomorphic and anthropopathic conceptions of the Deity. "God was not like any object that the human mind can conceive; no attribute can be ascribed to him which bore the least resemblance to any quality of which human beings have perception from their knowledge of material objects. The perfection of piety consists in *knowing* God; the perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His verity; the perfection of verity is to acknowledge His unity in all sincerity; and the perfection of sincerity is to deny all attributes to the Deity He who asks where God is assimilates Him with some object. God is Creator, not because He Himself is created; God is existent, not because He was non-existent. He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness; He is outside of everything, not from separation. He is the Primary Cause, not in the meaning of motion or action; He is the Seer, but no sight can see Him. He has no relation to place, time, or measure." *

This belief in an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent and all-wise Deity carries logically with it the fact that God's religion and rule of life must have at all ages been the same. To this religion is given the name of Islam—a word not only signifying resignation, or entire submission to the service and commands of God, but also meaning striving after righteousness.

In the second sura of the Korân the essence of the ethical principles involved and embodied in Islam are thus summarised:—"There is no doubt in this book; it is a guidance to the pious, who by faith believe in the Unseen, who observe the appointed prayers, and distribute (alms) out of what We have bestowed on them; and who

* Nahj-ul-Bâlaghat. See also "Life and Teachings of Mahomet," by Syed Ameer Ali, chap. 19.

believe in that revelation which We have sent down unto thee (Mahomet), and in that which hath been revealed by Us to the prophets before thee, and who have a fixed assurance in the life to come—these have received the direction of their Lord, and they shall prosper.”* .

“The principal basis on which the Islamic system is founded are (1) a belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator; (2) charity and brotherhood among mankind; (3) subjugation of the passions; (4) the outpouring of a grateful heart to the giver of all good; and (5) accountability for human actions in another existence. The grand and noble conceptions expressed in the Korân of the power and love of the Deity surpass everything of their kind in any other language.

The unity of God, His immateriality, His majesty, His mercy, form the constant and never-ending theme of the most eloquent and soul-stirring passages. The flow of life, light, and spirituality never ceases. But throughout, there is no trace of dogmatism. Appeal is made to the inner consciousness of man, to his intuitive reason alone.”†

The Moslem believes that this orthodox faith was revealed by God to Adam at his creation; but as years rolled along and generation succeeded generation the primitive faith of their forefathers became perverted, clouded with foolish traditions and clogged by idolatrous superstitions, until many of the inhabitants of the world had lapsed into absolute idolatry. Then God, in His infinite mercy, not desiring to punish the nations of the world without giving them an opportunity for repentance, inspired Noah and sent him to warn the people to quit their idolatrous and wicked

* Sura 2. (The Cow) verses 1 to 6.

† “Life and Teachings of Mohammed” by Syed Ameer Ali.

practices and to return to the worship of the only true God and the faith of Islam ; but the warnings of Noah being in vain, the deluge destroyed the evil doers. This mission of Noah's and its non-success is alluded to very fully in the Korân, as the following extract from the 71st Sura ("Noah") will show :—

“ Verily we sent Noah unto the people, saying, Warn the people before a grievous punishment overtake them. Noah said, O my people, verily I am a public warner unto you ; wherefore, serve God, and fear Him and obey Him : He will forgive you your past sins, and will grant you respite until a determined time ; for God's determined time when it cometh, shall not be deferred ; if ye were men of understanding ye would know this. And Noah said, O Lord, verily I have called the people night and day ; but my calling only increaseth their aversion : and whensoever I call them to the true faith, that Thou mayest forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, and cover themselves with their garments, and persist in their infidelity, and proudly disdain my counsel. Moreover, I invited them openly, and I spake to them again in public ; and I also secretly admonished them in private : and I said, Beg pardon of your Lord : for He is inclined to forgive ; and He will cause the heavens to pour down rain plentifully upon you, and will give you increase of wealth and of children ; and He will provide you gardens, and furnish you with rivers. What aileth you, that ye hope not for benevolence in God : since He hath created you. Do ye not see how God hath created the heavens, and hath placed the moon therein for a light, and hath appointed the sun as a taper ? God hath also provided and caused you to spring forth from the earth : hereafter He will cause you to return unto the same : and He will again take you thence,

by bringing you forth from your graves. And God hath spread the earth as a carpet for you, that ye may walk therein, through spacious paths. And Noah said,—Lord, verily they are disobedient to me, and they follow him whose riches and children do no other than increase his perdition.” *

Ages rolled on, the world was re-peopled, and again the nations perverted the true faith and lapsed into idolatry, and once more the Almighty sent another distinguished prophet to call the people from their sin and to point out to them the primitive faith; this was the patriarch Abraham. The father of Abraham was undoubtedly an idolater, even the Christian scriptures represent him as having served strange gods (Joshua xxiv., v. 2-14), and since Abraham's parents were idolaters, it appears to be a necessary consequence that he also was one in his younger days, and this is not only intimated in the book of Joshua, but acknowledged by the Jews.† At what age he came to the knowledge of the true God and left idolatry opinions vary. Some Jewish writers place it at the early age of 3 years, ‡ but others consider him to have been a middle aged man at that time. Maimonides, in particular, and Rabbi Abraham Zacuth, think him to have been 40 years old, which age is also mentioned by several of the learned commentators of the Korân. The general opinion of the Moslem doctors of theology is that he was about 15 or 16 years old.|| The story of Abraham's conversion is thus given in the Korân. (Sura 6. Cattle)

* The story of Noah is alluded to in Suras 7, 10, 11, 26, 29, 54, 56, and 71 of the Korân.

† Joseph, Ant. i. i. c. 7. Maimon, More Neo. part III. c. 29.

‡ Tanchuma, Talmud, Nedarim, 32 i. et apud Maimon.

|| Vide Hyde de religion. Veb. Persar, pp. 60, 61.

“ And thus did we show unto Abraham the kingdom of heaven and earth, that he might become one of those who firmly believe.

“ And when the night overshadowed him he saw a star, and he said, This is my Lord ; but when it set, he said, I like not gods which set. And when he saw the moon rising, he said, This is my Lord ; but when it set, he said, Verily if my Lord direct me not, I shall become as one of the people who go astray

“ And when he saw the sun rising, he said, This is my Lord, this is the greatest ; but when it set, he said, O my people, verily I am clear of that which ye associate with God : I direct my face unto Him who hath created the heavens and the earth. I am orthodox, and am not one of the idolaters. And his people disputed with him, and he said :

“ Will ye dispute with me concerning God ? since he hath now directed me, I fear not that which ye associate with him, unless that my Lord willeth a thing ; for my Lord comprehendeth all things by his knowledge ; will ye not therefore consider ? And how should I fear that which ye associate with God, since ye fear not to have associated with God that concerning which He hath sent down unto you no authority ? Which, therefore, of the two parties is the more safe, if ye understand aright ? They who believe, and clog not their faith with injustice, they shall enjoy security and be rightly directed.”

It is worthy of observation *en passant*, as external corroborative evidence of the strict accuracy of the Koranical narrative, that the idolatrous religion wherein Abraham was educated was doubtless the Sabian, which consisted chiefly in the worship of the heavenly bodies, and naturally being a man of a logical mind he would examine their nature and

properties ; and the star which he observed was probably one of the planets Venus, Mercury, or Jupiter. The method of Abraham's attaining to the knowledge of the Supreme Creator of the Universe given in the Korân is also conformable to the Talmudic tradition * and to the writings of Josephus †

The next distinguished prophet through whom the Deity again re-taught His will to mankind was Moses. We need not dwell at any length on the ministrations of Moses, as the account given in the Koran is so similar to that of the Christian scriptures that it would be simply retelling a well-known tale ; but the advice given by Moses unto the people is one which we all can take to heart and apply to ourselves. " Ask assistance of God, and suffer patiently ; for the earth is God's, He giveth it for an inheritance unto such of his servants as He pleaseth ; and the prosperous end shall be unto those that fear Him." †

The fifth of the series of super-eminent prophets is Jesus, He whom Christians adore as their saviour, and rank equally with God. This, indeed, is the great difference between the Christian belief and the faith of Islam. The ordinary Christian, not too well versed in the curious and intricate theology of his sect, has a vague idea that he believes in " The Trinity," and when asked of what this consists, he will reply, " The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and perhaps may add by way of explanation, " Three persons, but one God." When asked to explain this seeming inconsistency he will retort that it is a mystery, and if a Catholic or an English Episcopalian, may refer one to that truly Christian and Charitable proclamation

* Vide Bertolocc, Bibb. Rabb. part 1, p. 640.

† Josephus, Ant. of the Jews, book 1, chap 7.

‡ Sura 7.

known as the Athanasian creed, which, after summing up and declaring the essentials of the Catholic faith, concludes by consigning to everlasting perdition those who cannot accept every line, word, and syllable of that creed. The poet Byron has in his characteristic satirical style, cleverly described the feelings of the orthodox Christian on this matter in the following lines :—

“ So now all things are d—n’d, one feels at ease
 As after reading Athanasius’ curse,
 Which doth your true believer so much please :
 I doubt if any now could make it worse,
 O’er his worst enemy, when at his knees,
 ’Tis so sententious, positive and terse,
 And decorates the book of Common Prayer,
 As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.” *

The word “Trinity” is not a scriptural term, and is nowhere to be found in the Christian scriptures ; it was introduced into the Church in the second century, to express the belief in the union of the three persons in the Godhead.

The great theological writers are unable to explain this theory, and their treatises on the subject generally consist of apologies, or of declarations that it is an incomprehensible mystery. Dr. Robinson pens his feelings thus, “Equally above the boldest flight of human genius to invent, as beyond the most extended limit of human intellect fully to comprehend, is the profound mystery of the ever Blessed Trinity.”

If Dr Robinson is right, and such a mystery is “beyond the boldest flight of human genius to invent,” then the almost similar belief in Scandanavian and Ancient Egyptian mythology, in the Platonic school, and in modern Hindoo theology, must also be not of human invention but of Divine revelation. A proposition, we fancy, that Christians will not

be likely to accede to. Another writer* thus alludes to the same subject, "Even among Christians the sacred Trinity is more properly a subject of belief than of investigation; and every attempt to penetrate into it, further than God in His holy word has expressly revealed, is at best an injudicious, and often a dangerous, effort of mistaken piety." No; well-meaning, enquiring, pious Christian brethren, you must not attempt to penetrate this mystery. You must swallow it wholly without enquiry or investigation, and if your commonsense revolts against such treatment be comforted by the enunciation of the inflexible sentence that this is the Catholic faith, "which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." †

Strange as it may appear to Christians, it is no less a fact that throughout the whole of the Christian scriptures there is no passage which directly proves the doctrine of the Trinity but one, and that is (1 John, v. 7.) "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." And it is a remarkable fact that the Revision Committee have expunged this passage from the Revised Testament, giving as their reason that it could not honestly be left in. The Revision Committee are supported in their action by the works of Newton, Gibbon, Porson, and others who all prove that this text was an interpolation; and Calmet † himself acknowledges, that "*this verse is not to be found in any ancient copy of the Bible.*"

* "Adams' Religious World Displayed."

† Athanasian Creed.

‡ Augustine Calmet was a learned French theologian and historian, born in Lorraine in 1672, and died in Paris in 1757. At an early age he became a Benedictine monk, and studied philosophy and theology in various abbeys of that learned order. He wrote copiously on subjects of

Our readers may also, while on this subject, consider the reply given by Christ himself to a certain ruler who put this question to him, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit everlasting life?" And Jesus said unto him, "Why callest thou *me* good; none is good save one—that is God." (Luke xvii, v. 18-19). They who contend that Christ is the One whom he thus distinguished from himself ought to ponder well over this passage.

So much for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and the deification by them of the great teacher Jesus. Let us now see what is the faith of Islam on this point, and by way of premise we feel justified in asserting that, to human intelligence, the idea of a God-man, or a man-God, is in itself an illogical absurdity. It is not a reasonable idea, or conception; but the confusion, blurred and undefined of two separate ideas or conceptions which are each mutually exclusive of one another. Moslems believe that in God there is no contradiction. The Almighty Creator in his unerring wisdom has endowed us with reasoning faculties. All knowledge comes from reason. Granted that our reason may possibly be very

sacred learning, in the form of commentaries and dissertations. His commentaries were published in French at Paris in 23 vols., quarto, in 1707-16 and extended to all the books of the Old and New Testament. His writings and publications were exceedingly numerous, not only in biblical literature, but also in history, topography, genealogy, biography, and antiquities. The works by which he is best known are "Dictionnaire Historique et Critique de la Bible," Paris 1730, which has been translated into English, German, Italian and Dutch; the English translation appeared in 1732, and "Trésor d'Antiquités Sacrées et Profanes," Paris 1720-22. As a biblical scholar Calmet was more distinguished for erudition than for critical acumen, and he was deficient in the departments of rabbinical learning and oriental philology. The two works named above have always been highly esteemed, not only in his own church, but also by Protestant theologians.

circumscribed, nevertheless it is to us, so far as it goes, the distinct voice of God's own undeniable truth. It may not be able to measure the infinities and eternities ; that is within the power of God alone, but in what it is reasonably capable of deciding there we may trust it as we would trust the Deity himself. And it is a plain matter of simple common-sense and reason, entirely within the limits of our own understanding, that the same person cannot be both God and man.

What is man ? A creature undoubtedly gifted with wonderful and noble endowments, yet of finite power in every conceivable direction. He is limited in physical strength, in intellectual understanding, in knowledge and in the stretch and scope of his affections. And not only is he limited in all these things, but in every one of them he commences with a very small beginning, and as years roll by he grows not only in body but also in mind and in feelings. The very conception of a man is that of a finite and growing being ; and if Christ was man, he was a finite and growing being ; and if he was not a finite and growing being, whether, as Christians claim he was the Deity, or otherwise, then at least he was not man.

Now let us look at the other side of the picture. What is God ? What is this other nature which Christian theologians tell us was combined with the natural man in Jesus ? What but the infinite, undefinable, Omnipotent Power, that sustains and controls the brilliant orbs of heaven and penetrates the Universe ; “ unto whom belongeth the kingdom of heaven and of earth ; who hath created all things, and disposed the same according to His determinate will ? ”*

Had this God a beginning ?

* Sura 25, “ Al Forkan.” Korân.

Has there ever been in God, growth, gradual enlargement of capacity, and rising by degrees to an acme of faculty not grasped primarily ?

No, a thousand times repeated, No. Perish the mere transient thought of such a slur upon the dignity of God, "the One God ; the Eternal God, who begetteth not, neither is he begotten ; and there is not anyone like unto Him." * What then of this so-called "holy mystery," this "God-man," which your Christian creeds claim to be "perfect man and perfect God ?"

If he is perfect man, then he is limited in every faculty !!

If he is perfect God, then he is not limited in any faculty whatever !!

As man, he grew from the impotence and ignorance of infancy.

As God, he was all powerful and complete from all eternity and never grew.

Christian you are on the horns of a dilemma.

Don't try and explain it by the cant phrase and parrot cry of "It is a mystery and therefore *must* be believed."

There is no mystery about it at all, except the wonder that anyone should be such an arrant stupid as to believe it.

It is sheer nonsense, pure unadulterated folly, and nothing but a flat contradiction.

Commonsense and reason repels against being humbugged with an apparent absurdity.

From this jargon of unmeaning bosh, which is derogatory not only to the character of Christ, but also to the dignity of God himself, let us turn to the Korân, and there we will find a logical explanation of the true nature of Jesus.

* Sura 112. "The Declaration of God's Unity." Korân.

“ Verily Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God, and His Word, which He conveyed into Mary, by a spirit proceeding from Him.

Believe, therefore, in God and His apostles, and say not there are three Gods ; forbear this, it will be better for you. God is but one God.

Far be it from Him that He should have a son !

Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth ; and God is a sufficient protector. Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto God ; neither the angels who approach near to His presence.

God declareth unto you these precepts, lest ye err : and God knoweth all things.” *

“ Christ, the son of Mary, *is no more than an apostle* ; other apostles have preceded him ; and his mother was a veritable woman ; † they both ate food.” ‡

Probably the orthodox Christian will strongly protest against this, and will vehemently decry us, because, as he puts it, we make Christ “ a mere man ; ” but surely this is a hasty and ill-considered expression, the adjective “ mere ” cannot be applicable ; as if man necessarily is a miserable creature—poor, low, mean and contemptible. Man is a being that communes with the Almighty God, whom the most merciful and compassionate Deity loves with an infinite love, to whom the mighty God speaks through conscience and by every witness of the beautiful and true, a being with the capacity of offering prayer, and whose prayers have the due consideration of

* Sura 4, “ Women.” Korân.

† *i.e.*, Never pretending to partake of the Divine nature, or to be the mother of God.

‡ Sura 5, “ The Table.” Korân.

Allah himself. God is man's Creator ; man is a creature created by God. And therefore when we say that Christ was a man, and a prophet, we do him no dishonour. We admit that he had in a superlative degree some of the greatest endowments the Almighty Creator has given to any creature. Are we Moslems, therefore, not fully justified in saying with all tenderness and kindness, but with the unswerving firmness of the most supreme conviction, that this illogical fancy of Christians, of this unexplainable anachronism, a " God-Christ " has stood in the way of the proper understanding of the actual nature of the true God, and held many men aloof from professing any form of religion ?

Christians dub all persons who are unable to accept this curious and unnatural dogma of the divinity of Christ as " infidels." The Mussulman smiles at their bigotry and credulity, and replies, " They are surely infidels, who say, Verily God is Christ the son of Mary ; since Christ said, O, children of Israel, serve God, my Lord and your Lord." *

The prophet Jesus poured out his whole heart in pleading with men to go straight to God with their love, confidence and prayer. He never put himself between them, and even if we take the record of the Christian Gospel itself we find there that when he taught his disciples how to pray he bade them say " Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, forgive *us our* trespasses, &c." †

The last and greatest of all the prophets Moslems believe to be Mahomet, who was born at Mecca on the 10th April, in the year 569 of the Christian era. His family was of the illustrious tribe of the Koreish, one of the most influential

* Sura 5. " The Table." Korân.

† Gospel of Matthew, chap. vi. verses 9 to 13 ; also, Luke, chap. xi. verses 2 to 4. Christian Bible.

tribal families throughout Arabia, claiming as it did, to be descended from Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham, and his grandfather was custodian of the Kaaba, the head quarters and temple of Arabian idolatry.* His father, whose name was Abdullah, died before his birth; he lost his mother when but six years old, and then fell to the charge of his uncle Abu Talib. He was of a very delicate constitution, and excessively sensitive to bodily pain. It was while under the care of this uncle, who treated him in every respect as one of his own children, that Mahomet began to exhibit indications of an intelligent and inquiring mind. He was very fond of indulging in solitary meditation, and on one of his playmates requesting him to join in their amusements he replied, "Man is created for a nobler purpose than indulging in frivolous pursuits." He possessed wonderful powers of imagination, great elevation of mind, and delicacy and refinement of feeling. He was of an excessively amiable and affectionate disposition, fond of children, given to almsgiving, self-denying, and unpretending in social intercourse. According

* Before Mahomet's time the Kaaba was the place of worship and pilgrimage of the idolatrous Arabs and contained 360 idols, equalling the number of days in the Arabian year. There was a tradition to the effect that it had been erected by Abraham and Ishmael. More authentic history, however, placed the period of its erection at 993 years before that of Solomon's temple, or 2000 years before the Christian era. This building still exists though now divested of its idols and consecrated to the worship of the true God. The ceiling is supported by pillars of aloë-wood, between which hang silver lamps, while a golden spout carries off the rain water from the roof. The walls are hung on the outside with black damask, ornamented with a gold band, which is changed annually. The great traveller Burckhardt, describing the Kaaba at the present day, says, "The effect of the whole scene, the mysterious drapery, the profusion of gold and silver, the blaze of lamps, and the kneeling multitude, surpasses anything the imagination could have pictured."

to tradition he was of middle height, and dignified and imposing in appearance.* As to acquired learning in the ordinary acceptance of the word, it must be admitted that Mahomet had none at all, in fact that he was so ignorant of what we term book learning that he could neither read nor write ; this fact is alluded to in the 29th Sura of the Korân in the following passage: “ Thou couldst not read any book before this ; neither could thou write it with thy right hand.”

When about forty years of age Mahomet withdrew, as had been his custom to do annually for some preceding years, to a dark cave in Mount Hira,† (“ a huge barren rock, torn by cleft and hollow ravine, standing out solitary in the full white glare of the desert sun, shadowless, flowerless, without well or rill.”) about one hour’s journey from Mecca. Here in this cave he continued for about a month, sitting alone, occupying his time with religious meditation. While thus passing in this grotto the month of Ramazân, he lay wrapped in his mantle during the silent watches of the night. About midnight he heard a voice : twice was it repeated, and twice he made efforts to avoid hearing it, but it could not be ignored ; he felt as if a fearful weight were upon him, and as though his last moment had arrived. A third time he heard the sound, and could not stop his ears against it ; uncovering his head, a flood of light suddenly broke in upon him of such intolerable splendour that he swooned away. On regaining his senses he beheld before him an angel in human form, who thus addressed him :

“ Oh, Mahomet, I am Gabriel ! ”

The angel then displayed a silken cloth covered with written characters.

* “ Islam, Its Genius and mission.”— *Lake*.

† Now called the Mount of Light.

“Read!” said the angel.

“I know not how to read!” replied Mahomet. “I am a man untaught.”

The answer of the angel is preserved in the 96th Sura of the Korân.

“Read! in the name of God!

In the name of God who hath created all things—who hath created man from a clot of blood.

Read in the name of the most beneficent God, who taught man the use of the pen!

Who taught man what he knew not!

Verily, verily, man is rebellious:

Is insolent because he groweth in riches.

True unto God is the return of all!

What of him who holdeth back, who forbiddeth a servant, when he prayeth?

What of him? Doth he follow right, or command unto piety?

Dost not see that he rejecteth truth and turneth back?

Doth he not know that God seeth?

Verily, verily, if he desist not we will drag him by the forelock:

The lying, sinful forelock.

Let him call his assembly:

We will call the guards of the Abyss!

Nay, obey him not, but adore and draw nigh!”

The angel ceased, and Mahomet instantly felt his understanding illumined with celestial light, and looking at the cloth, read the decrees of the Almighty written upon it, which were afterwards promulgated in the Korân. When he had finished the perusal, the heavenly messenger again spoke and said, “Oh, Mahomet, truly thou shalt be the prophet of God,

even as I am His angel Gabriel," and vanished. Terrified at this vision, as soon as the day had dawned * Mahomet hastened home, trembling and agitated, and narrated to his wife Khadijah the events of the night, adding that he was perplexed, not knowing whether what he had heard and seen was true, and that he was decreed to be a prophet and instrumental in effecting a reform in religion; or whether it might not be a dream, or a delusion of the senses, or worse than all, the apparition of an evil spirit. Khadijah, however, with the acute penetration of feminine nature, saw what had occurred in its true light, and exclaimed: "Joyful tidings dost thou bring! By Him, in whose hand is the soul of Khadijah, I shall henceforth regard thee as the prophet of our nation. Rejoice, O dear husband, and be of good cheer, God will not suffer thee to fall to shame. Hast not thou been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbours, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, faithful to thy word, and ever a defender of the truth?"

Khadijah hastened to communicate what she had heard to a kinsman of hers named Warika, son of Naufal, who was old and blind, and "knew the scriptures of the Jews and Christians," and he also accepted at once, and with eagerness, this miraculous annunciation.

"God be praised!" exclaimed Warika, "the son of Abdullah speaks the truth; there shall come unto Mahomet the great law, like unto the law of Moses; verily this is the messenger who came to Moses. Thy husband will be the prophet of his people. Tell him this: Charge him to keep hope in his heart; I will stand by him!" †

* This was the morning of the 24th of Ramazân.

† "The Saracens," by the Rev. A. Gilman.

Subsequently the two men met in the street, and then the blind old student of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, who had searched in them for consolation and found none, but who knew of the promise therein held out to mankind of a Deliverer and a Comforter, * grasped Mahomet by his hand and said "I swear by Him in whose hand Warika's life is, God has chosen thee to be the prophet of this people. The Holy messenger has come to thee. They will call thee a liar, they will persecute thee, they will banish thee, they will fight against thee. Oh that I could live to those days : I would fight for thee," and so saying he kissed him on his forehead. †

Despite these assurances, Mahomet at first still was perplexed and anxious ; he felt that he had been spoken to by Gabriel, and the words he had read were still imprinted on his heart, but he was not yet sure that his mission was to preach ; added to which certain of the Koreishites ridiculed him. In this condition of perplexity he sought the wild mountain side, and sat wrapped in his cloak, pondering over the past events.

While thus musing the angel again appeared to him and said :

" Oh thou that art covered !
 Arise and preach,
 And magnify God !
 Purify thy garments,
 And shun abominations ;

* Deuteronomy, Chap. xviii, v. 15, 18 & 19 (Jewish Pentateuch). Quoted by Christians in Acts, Chap. iii, v. 22 to 24, and Chap. vii. v. 37, but by them mistakenly applied to Christ. See also Gospel of John, Chap. xvi, v. 7 to 13 (Christian New Testament).

† Rouzat-us-Safa —Ibn Hishâm, p. 103. Warika died soon after this event.

Grant not favours for increase ;
 Wait patiently for God.

When the trumpet shall sound, Verily that day shall be distress and uneasiness for the unbelievers." *

Mahomet now felt that he was in direct communication with the angel, and messenger of God, and that he had been commissioned to preach, and would be taught what to say. He rose superior to all his former trembling forboding and exultingly cried : †

“ By the splendour of midday !

By the stilly night !

The Lord hath not forsaken thee,

Neither doth He hate thee !

Verily the life to come shall be better than the present one !

In the end God shall reward thee,

And thou shalt be pleased.

Did He not find thee an orphan, and give thee a home ?

Find thee erring, and guide thee ?

He found thee poor and made thee rich.

Wherefore oppress not the orphan,

Nor repel the beggar,

But declare the great bounty of God !” ‡

Mahomet returned home and began at first to quietly disseminate the truth ; his wife, a young nephew Ali, and a few of his immediate relations early believed in him ; but his family generally treated his pretensions with contempt. It is strongly corroborative of Mahommed's sincerity, that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted as they must

* Sura 74. “ The Covered.”

† “ The Saracens,” Gilman.

‡ Sura 93, “ The Brightness ” Korân.

have been with the secrets of his private life, could not have failed to have detected those discrepancies, which in a greater or less degree invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver in public, and his actions in the privacy of his own home.

For the next few years Mahomet's life was passed in a continual state of insult, ridicule and persecution, which extended also to his few disciples. Once, indeed, his opponents made offers of wealth or of leadership if he would abandon his purpose. The prophet replied by reciting the 41st Sura of the Korân, one verse of which runs :—

“ If a lure from Satan entice thee, then
Take thou refuge in God, for He is the
Hearing, the Allwise.”

Mahomet's adversaries answered this by requesting him to work a miracle in proof of his divine mission : but he refused, saying that he was sent to spread the truth, and not to perform miracles ; and at the same time, challenging the unbelievers to produce any work which could rival even a single chapter of the Korân, in either beauty or sublimity.

No proof, indeed, has ever been adduced, that Mahomet at any time descended to any artifices or pseudo-miracles to enforce his doctrines, or to establish his claim to be one of the prophets of God. On the contrary, he relied entirely upon common sense, reason and eloquence, and supported by the innate conviction of the inspiration of the Almighty he continued his work, in the teeth of all the opposition which ignorance or fanaticism offered to its progress.

Mahomet thus preached publicly in Mecca, daily adding to the number of his disciples, his favourite places for preaching being the hills of Safa and Kubeis, both in the neighbourhood of the city. At last his opponents became angry and attempted to silence him by force and threats of violence.

When the opposition was assuming its fiercest character, the courage of Mahomet arose. His uncle endeavoured to persuade him from pursuing the matter further; but the prophet had made his decision and replied, "That if they set the sun against him on his right hand, and the moon on his left, he would not leave his enterprise." *

Persecution increased at Mecca against Mahomet and his disciples, and at last the prophet advised his followers to seek safety by flight to Medina, where there resided a number of converts to Islam. Most of the Moslems accepted this advice and left Mecca; but Mahomet remained behind still preaching and declaring the doctrine of the Unity of God. At length his enemies determined to assassinate him, and a body of desperate villains set out to murder him as he slept; but before they had reached his house Mahomet was divinely warned of the impending danger, and the prophet went to the house of Abu Beker, and arranged with him for instant flight. The murderous gang arrived at Mahomet's dwelling, and peeping through a crevice of the door, perceived, as they thought, the prophet lying asleep on his couch wrapped in his green mantle. They waited for awhile, consulting whether to fall on him while sleeping or wait until he should go forth. At length they burst open the door and rushed towards the couch. The sleeper started up; but instead of Mahomet, Ali stood before them. Astounded and amazed, they cried, "Where is Mahomet?" "I know not! I am not his keeper!" replied Ali, sternly, and walked forth; nor did they venture to molest him. †

* "Islam, Its Genius and Mission."—*Lake*.

† Irving's "Life of Mahomet."

In the meanwhile the prophet and Abu Beker, profiting by the darkness of the night, left Mecca and secreted themselves in a cave at the foot of Mount Thor, a hill to the south of Mecca. The fury of the idolatrous Koreish was now unbounded. The intelligence that the band of would-be assassins had been unsuccessful, and that the prophet had escaped, aroused their whole energy. Horsemen mounted on swift steeds scoured the country. A price was set upon Mahomet's head. †

Scarce had the fugitives got within the cave when they heard the distinct sounds of pursuit. Abu Beker, although a brave man, now became fearful lest their place of refuge should be discovered. "Our pursuers," said he, "are many, and we are but two."

"Nay," replied Mahomet, "we are three; God is with us, and He will protect us."

The fugitives remained for three days undiscovered in the cave, and on the fourth day Mahomet set out for Medina, and on arrival there was received by the inhabitants more as a conqueror returning in triumph than a fugitive exile seeking an asylum.

Prior to entering Medina, Mahomet had rested at a village called Koba, in order to be fully assured that his proposal to take up his abode there would be agreeable to the inhabitants. Being assured that such was the case, he determined to remove thence on the following Friday. By that time the faithful Ali, who had been severely maltreated by the idolaters after their disappointment at the escape of the prophet, had arrived and accompanied him. In the morning the prophet mounted his favourite camel, with Abu Beker behind him. A

† The blood money offered was the value of a hundred camels, vide Ibn-Hasham, p. 328; Ibn-al-Athir, vol. II., p. 81.

host of followers surrounded them ; a powerful chieftain at the head of seventy horsemen acted as a guard of honour ; others of the faithful took turns in holding a canopy of palm leaves over his head ; one enthusiastic follower unfolded his green turban, and tying it to the point of his lance bore it along as a standard. *

In passing it is worthy of notice that all Moslem historians calculate the years from the date of Mahomet's flight to Medina, which is called the "Hegira," and is considered the first year of the Moslem era. This of course is similar to Christians calculating their years from the traditionary date of the birth of Christ. †

At Mecca Mahomet had been persecuted and derided, but at Medina all was changed. As the men of this city of refuge came to know him they devoted themselves to him heart and soul ; "No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting." ‡ And yet with all this he still remained the same noble, but yet humble, true-hearted man.

He went out for the last time into the mosque, two days before his death, and publicly, before the assembled worshippers, asked, "Have I injured any man ? If so, let my own back bear the stripes." No one answered. "Do I owe any man ought ?" A voice answered, "Yes, me three drachms," borrowed on such an occasion. Mahomet ordered them to be paid. "Better be in shame now," said he, "than at the Day of Judgment."

* Hence the colour of the Sacred Standard of Islam (Green).

† The decree appointing the "Hegira" or "flight" as the first year of the Moslem era was made by the Caliph Omar, some years after the death of the Prophet. The Arabian year was and is a lunar one, and commences on the first of the month of Moharram.—Crichton's "History of Arabia."

‡ Carlyle, "Heroes and Hero Worship."

Space will not permit us to further extend this sketch of the life and work of Mahomet; suffice it to say that the first small company multiplied to thousands and tens of thousands until the whole of Arabia knelt to worship the true God. The prophet felt that his time on earth was drawing to a close, and he spent his last days in prayer and praise. Finally, the time of his departure to the heavenly regions arrived, and lying on his couch he sighed: "Oh God, succour me in the agonies of death; come Thou close to Thy servant." His wife prayed by his side, and, as she prayed, the prophet muttered: "Oh God, grant Thy servant pardon of his sins and join him to the companionship on high . . . Eternity in paradise . . . Pardon . . . Yes . . . I come . . . The companionship of the blessed on high!" and thus peaceably expired on a carpet spread upon the floor.* The prophet's soul was with his God. It was Monday, June 8th, in the year 632 of the Christian era, and in the tenth year after the Hegira.

"Thus died the only man in the world's history who was at once a poet, prophet, and legislator: the founder of a religion and an empire." †

Much has been written by various Christian writers upon the character of Mahomet, and most of their productions have been tinged with an amount of bigotry and rancour which it is regrettable to observe among persons who profess to be followers of the "meek and lowly Jesus." Some writers, however, of modern times, have come to learn that vituperation is not argument, and have admitted the many excellencies of the prophet's character, and the mightiness of his work. On this subject Mr. John Davenport, in his excellent work

* Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,"

† "The Saracens."—*Gilman*.

“Mahomet and the Korân,” * writes, “The more insight is obtained from undoubted historical sources as to the real character of Mohammed, the less reason will there be found to justify the strong and vituperative language poured upon his head by Maracci, Prideaux and more recently by Frederick Schlegel and others.”

The view taken by Thomas Carlyle of the prophet is so original just and striking, that we cannot refrain from inserting it:—“The deep-hearted son of the wilderness, with his beaming black eyes, and open, social, deep soul, had other thoughts in him than ambition. A silent, great soul; he was one of those who cannot but be in earnest; whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. While others walk in formulas and hearsays, contented enough to dwell therein, this man could not screen himself in formulas; he was alone with his whole soul and the reality of things. The great mystery of existence glared in upon him, with its terrors, with its splendours; no hearsays could hide that unspeakable fact, ‘Here am I!’ Such *sincerity*, as we named it, has in truth something of divine. The word of such a man is a voice direct from Nature’s own heart. Men do and must listen to that, or to nothing else; all else is wind in comparison. From of old, a thousand thoughts in his pilgrimages and wanderings had been in this man. ‘What am I? What is this unfathomable thing I live in, which men name Universe? What is Life? What is Death? What am I to believe? What am I to do?’ The grim rocks of Mount Hara, of Mount Sinai, the stern sandy solitude answered not. The great heaven rolling silently over head with its blue glancing stars, answered not. There was no answer. The man’s own soul, and what of God’s inspiration dwelt therein, had to answer!”

* Published by J. Davy & Sons, 137, Long Acre, London, 1882 (Note to page 53).

Let us now briefly proceed to set forth the tenets of Islam not previously alluded to.

We have already seen that the great leading principle of Islam is the belief in one God in unity and an abhorrence of idolatry in any form. We have also alluded to the six distinguished and super-eminent prophets; in addition to these there are a host of minor prophets such as David, Solomon, Ezra, Job, Zacharias, John, Elias, Ismail, Edris, Hud, and many others. *

The other primary doctrines are, Faith in God's holy angels, or ministering spirits. They are various in their degrees and duties, and in their favour with the Deity. Some worship around the celestial throne; others perpetually hymn the praises of God; some are winged messengers to execute His orders, and others intercede on behalf of mankind. The most distinguished of this heavenly host are the four archangels—Gabriel, the angel of revelations, who writes down the divine decrees; Michael, the champion, who fights the battles of the faith; Azrail, the angel of death; and Israfil, who holds the awful commission to sound the trumpet on the day of resurrection. Among the angels of inferior rank is a class named Moakkibat, two of whom keep watch upon each mortal—one on the right hand, the other on the left—taking note of every word and action. At the close of each day they ascend to heaven with their written report, and are replaced by two similar angels on the following day. According to Moslem tradition, every good action is recorded ten times by the angel on the right; and if the mortal commit a sin, the same benevolent spirit says to the angel on

* David, Solomon, Job, and several of the other names given in the text are mentioned in the 6th Sura; Ismail and Edris are alluded to in the 19th Sura, Hud in the 23rd Sura.

the left, "Forbear for seven hours to record it; peradventure he may repent and pray and obtain forgiveness."

Another article of belief is in the holy books of divine revelation, and particularly in the latest revealed one which is known as the "Korân."

The word Korân is derived from the verb *kaara*, to read, and signifies literally in Arabic, "the reading," or rather "that which ought to be read." The Koran is divided into 114 larger portions of very unequal length, which are termed *Sowar* or *Sûras*, answering to chapters. Every chapter is sub-divided into small portions, or verses, which are also of a very unequal length. Each Sura is known by a distinctive name or title, which is taken sometimes from a particular matter treated of, or person mentioned therein; but usually from the first word of note in the Sura.

Next after the title, at the head of every chapter, except only the ninth, is prefixed the following solemn form generally called the "Bismillah," "In the name of the most merciful God."

The Korân is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, and is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue. The style is generally beautiful and fluent, especially where it assumes the prophetic character. A considerable portion of the book is composed of historical references to the works of God, and the acts of His prophets in former times. The other part is taken up in the declaring of necessary laws and directions, in frequent admonitions to moral and divine virtues, and above all to the worshipping and reverencing of the only true God, and resignation to His will.*

* Sale's Korân, "The Preliminary Discourse."

From a literary point of view, apart from its claims to be an inspired volume, the Korân is the most poetical work of the East. The great portion of it is in a rhymed prose, conformably to the taste which has, from the remotest times prevailed in the above portion of the globe. It abounds with splendid imagery and the boldest metaphors. Emerson, in many places in his writings, has spoken reverently of the Korân, and Goethe is of opinion that "The Korân is a work with whose dullness the reader is at first disgusted, afterwards attracted by its charms, and finally irresistibly ravished by its many beauties," while Carlyle says: "When once you get this Korân fairly off, the essential type of it begins to disclose itself; and in this there is a merit quite other than the literary one. If a book come from the heart, it will contrive to reach other hearts: all art and authorcraft are of small amount to that. One would say the primary character of the Kâran is that of its *genuineness*, of its being a *bona fide* book. Sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Korân; it is, after all, the first and last merit in a book; gives rise to merits of all kinds—nay, at bottom, it alone can give rise to merit of any kind." *

Sir William Muir thus speaks of the sacred book: "The Korân abounds with arguments drawn from Nature and Providence; with a view to prove the existence of God, as the Supreme Ruler, and to enforce His sovereign claim on the obedience and gratitude of mankind. The retribution of good and evil in the world to come, the obligation to follow virtue and eschew vice; the duty and happiness of the creature in worshipping and serving the Creator, and such like topics, are set forth in language of beauty and vigour, abounding often with real poetry. Thus, also, the reason-

* "Heroes and Hero Worship."--*Carlyle*.

ableness of the Resurrection is taught by many forcible considerations, and especially by the analogy, so striking in southern climes, of the earth long dry and dead, quickened suddenly into exuberant life by the copious rain from heaven." And Washington Irving, alluding to the same subject writes : "The Korân contains pure, elevated and benignant precepts." *

The injunctions of the Korân are not confined to moral and religious duties. "From the Atlantic to the Ganges," says Gibbon, "the Korân is acknowledged as the fundamental code, not only of theology, but of civil and criminal jurisprudence, and the laws which regulate the actions and the property of mankind are governed by the immutable sanction of the will of God." In other words, the Korân is the general code of the Moslem world ; a social, civil, commercial, military, judicial, criminal, penal and yet religious code : by it everything is regulated, from the ceremonies of religion to those of daily life ; from the salvation of the soul to the health of the body ; from the rights of the general community to those of each individual ; from the interests of man to those of society ; from morality to crime ; from punishment here to that of the life to come. † "The Mahomedan Law is binding upon all, from the crowned head to the meanest subject ; it is a law interwoven with a system of the wisest, the most learned, and the most enlightened jurisprudence that ever existed in the world." ‡ The Korân consequently differs materially from the Christian Bible, which, according to Combe, § "contains no system of theology, but is composed chiefly of narratives, des-

* "The Life of Mohammed."—*Washington Irving*.

† "Mahomet and the Korân."—*Davenport*.

‡ Edmund Burke. (Impeachment of Warren Hastings.)

§ "Essay on the relation between Science and Religion."

criptions, sublime effusions, of devotional emotions, and much sound morality, bound together by no striking logical connexion." Mahomet was so convinced of the danger attending priesthoods in political states, and of their tendency to corrupt all governments, that he disapproved of the continuance of any such institution, and desired that every Mussulman should possess a copy of the Korân, and be his own priest.

Islam, therefore, is without a priesthood. The doctors of the law are the doctors of divinity, because the law is the Korân ; yet they are not supported by tithes nor church property ; their functions are not sacerdotal, but judicial.

The Korân teaches that all men are equal in the sight of God :—" O, men ! verily we have created you of a male and female : and we have divided you into peoples and tribes that ye might take knowledge one of another. Truly the most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who feareth Him most. Verily, God is knowing and wise." * " And if God had pleased He had surely made you all one people ; but He would test you by what He hath given to each. Be emulous then in good deeds. To God do ye *all* return." ¶

" Islam recognizes no distinction of race or colour ; black or white, citizens or soldiers, rulers or subjects, they are perfectly equal, not in theory only, but in practice. In the field or in the guest chamber, in the tent or in the palace, in the mosque or in the market, they mix without reserve and without contempt. The first Muezzin of Islam, a devoted adherent and an esteemed disciple, was a negro slave." ||

We need not allude to the Moslem belief in the resurrection and final judgment. In Paradise, and a system of rewards

* Sura 49. " The Inner apartments."

¶ Sura 5. " The Table."

|| " Life and Teachings of Mahommed." Syed Ameer Ali.

and punishments; and also in the doctrine of Predestination as anyone at all acquainted with ordinary Christian theology will comprehend thoroughly the meaning of these terms.

The spirit of charity is strongly enjoined upon all true believers, as the following passage from the Korân will show:—

“Serve God, and associate no creature with him: and show kindness unto parents, and relations, and orphans, and the poor, and your neighbour who is of kin to you, and also your neighbour who is a stranger, and to your familiar companion, and the traveller, and the captives whom your right hand shall possess; for God loveth not the proud or vainglorious or the covetous, who recommend covetousness unto men, and conceal that of which God in His bounty hath given them, . . . and who bestow their wealth in charity to be seen of men.” *

And again in the following passage:—

“The first give food unto the poor, and the orphan, and the bondsman, for His (i.e. God’s) sake, saying, We feed you for God’s sake only: we desire no recompense from you, nor any thanks. Wherefore God shall reward them.” †

Almsgiving is especially enjoined as we have just seen, and as the two following passages will show.

“They will ask thee also what they shall bestow on alms? Answer what ye have to spare.” †

And again,

“Who giveth his substance in alms, and by whom no benefit is bestowed on any that it may be compensated, but who bestoweth the same for the sake of the Lord, the Most

* Sura 4.

† Sura 76.

‡ Sura 2.

High, hereafter he shall be well satisfied with his reward." *

The morality of the Korân, is of the highest character :

Evil speaking is condemned :

" God loveth not the speaking evil of any one in public." †

O true believers, carefully avoid entertaining a suspicion of another ; for some suspicions are a crime. Enquire not too curiously into other men's failings : neither let the one of you speak ill of another in his absence." †

Covetousness is also forbidden :

" Covet not that which God hath bestowed on some of you preferable to others." §

Respect to females is inculcated.

No legal code in the world enjoins so much respect to mothers as the Moslem law. The Korân contains the injunction :

" Fear God by whom ye beseech one another ; and respect women who have borne you, for God is watching over you." ||

And when the great prophet was asked where Paradise was, and how it could be attained, he replied : " Paradise is at the foot of the mother."

And this is no mere lip service or cant phrase amongst Moslems. To-day there can be seen in Constantinople, in Cairo, and in Alexandria, and many other places, stalwart young Mussulmans carrying on their backs their old and decrepit Christian mothers to their places of worship on the Christian Sabbath, and waiting outside these edifices until the conclusion of the service, in order to carry their maternal parent back home again.

Respect is not only enjoined upon every true believer to his mother, but kindness and justice required to be shown to all of the weaker sex.

* Sura 92.

† Sura 4.

‡ Sura 49.

§ Sura 4.

The Korân says: "Men's souls are naturally inclined to covetousness; but if ye be kind towards women and fear to wrong them, God is well acquainted with what ye do. Turn not from a wife with all manner of aversion, nor leave her like one in suspense; if ye agree, and fear to abuse your wives, God is gracious and merciful; but if they separate, God will satisfy them both of His abundance." ||

"Men ought to have a part of what their parents and kindred leave behind them when they die; and women also ought to have a part of what their parents and kindred leave, whether it be little or whether it be much, a determinate part is due to them." *

Islam is the greatest temperance society in the world, as in the Korân both drunkenness and gaming are forbidden: ||

"They will ask thee concerning wine and lots; answer, "In both there is great sin."¶ Also, "O true believers; surely wine, and lots, and images, and divining arrows, are an abomination of the work of Satan; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper. Satan seeketh to sow dissension and hatred among you, by means of wine and lots, and to divert you from remembering God and from prayer, will ye not, therefore, abstain from them?" †

The Korân also condemns debauchery and excesses of every kind (Suras 4, 17), avarice and pride (Suras 4, 17 and 18), covetousness (Suras 4, 33), hypocrisy (Suras 4, 63), and the thirsting after worldly goods (Suras 100 and 102).

In the thirtieth Sura, ‡ usury, bribery, and other forms of extortion are condemned. "Whatever ye shall give by way of a bribe, or shall take as extortion, usury, or illicit gain, to be an increase of men's substance, shall not be increased by

|| * Sura 4. "Women."

¶ Sura 2.

† Sura 5.

‡ Sura 30, v. 38, entitled "The Greeks"—revealed at Mecca.

the blessing of God ; but whatever ye shall give in alms, for God's sake, for that ye shall receive a twofold reward."

"They who devour usury shall not arise from the dead, but as he ariseth whom the evil one has infected by a touch : this shall happen to them because they say, ' Truly selling is but usury ' ; and yet God hath permitted selling and forbidden usury. He, therefore, who when there cometh unto him an admonition from his Lord, abstaineth from usury for the future, shall have what is past forgiven him, and his affair belongeth unto God. But whoever returneth to usury, that one shall be the denizen of the place of punishment, and shall continue therein for ever. God shall take His blessing from usury, and shall increase alms : for God loveth no infidel or ungodly person. But they who believe and do that which is right, and observe the stated times of prayer, and pay their legal alms, they shall have their reward with their Lord : there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved. O, true believers, fear God, and remit that which remaineth of usury, if ye really believe ; but if ye do it not, hearken unto war which is declared against you from God and his apostle ; yet, if ye repent, ye shall have the capital of your money. Deal not unjustly with others, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. If there be any debtor under a difficulty of paying his debt, let his creditor wait till it be easy for him to do it ; but if ye remit it in alms it will be better for you, if ye knew it. And fear the day wherein ye shall return unto God ; then shall every soul be paid what it hath gained, and they shall not be treated unjustly."*

But although usury is thus condemned, lawful commerce is allowed. " One of the signs of God is, that he sendeth the

* Sura 2, " The Cow," v. 276 et seq.

winds, bearing welcome tidings of rain, that he may cause you to taste of his mercy; and that ships may sail at His command, that ye may seek to enrich yourself of His abundance by commerce; and that ye may give thanks." *

Amongst other things bearing on the true principles of brotherly love the Korân contains the following :

"Give just measure, and be not defrauders; and weigh with an equal balance; and diminish not unto men aught of their matters; neither commit violence in the earth acting corruptly." †

As regards orphans :

"Give to orphans when they come of age their substance; and render them not in exchange bad for good; and devour not their substance by adding it to your substance, for that is a great sin." ‡ "Oppress not the orphan nor repulse the beggar." §

The Korân is opposed to mere ceremonial and ritualism, and points out that it is sincerity of heart and good actions that proves the true-believer. "There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or towards the West; but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the scriptures; who, for the love of God, disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who beg, and for ransoms, who observeth prayer and payeth the legal alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have contracted them, and who are patient under hardships and in time of adversity; these are they who are just and pious, these are they who fear the Lord."

* Sura 30 v 45.

† Sura 26,

‡ Sura 4.

§ Sura 93.

The following virtues are also inculcated: filial piety, gratitude towards God, fidelity to engagements, sincerity, justice without respect to persons, chastity and decency even in words, the ransoming of captives, patience, submission, benevolence, forgiveness of injuries, the returning of good for evil, and the walking in the path of virtue, not with the view of obtaining the approbation of the world, but for being acceptable unto God.

Amongst other things denounced in the Korân are, wanton cruelty to slaves, self murder and extravagance. Humility is enjoined upon all true believers, and the putting off all repentance until the approach of death is condemned.*

Prayer is regarded by all Moslems as an indispensable adjunct to true religion; and Mahomet thought it so necessary a duty that he used to term it "*the Pillar of Religion, and the Key to Paradise;*" in fact, the prophet evidently considered with James Montgomery that—

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

* See Suras 3, 17, 24, and 26.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
 Returning from his ways ;
 While angels in their songs rejoice
 And cry, ' Behold he prays ! '

Prayer is the Moslems' vital breath,
 The Moslems' native air ;
 His watchword at the gates of death ;
 He enters heaven with prayer. †

And it is recorded, that in the 9th year of the Hegira, when the Thakifites sent to make their submission to the prophet, after the keeping of their favourite idol had been denied them, they begged, at least, that they might be excused from saying the appointed prayers. Mahomet refused their request and answered : " That there could be no good in that religion wherein was no prayer,"

The Korân contains many passages enjoining upon true believers the necessity of prayer—the following extracts may be taken as typical of the rest :—" Recite that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Korân, and be constant in prayer, for prayer restraineth from the filthy and the blameworthy, and surely the remembering of God is a most important duty."

" Verily, they who recite the Book of God, and observe prayer, and give alms in public and in private, from what we have bestowed upon them, may hope for a merchandise that shall not perish."

" Enjoin prayer on thy family, and dost thou persevere therein."

" Glorify God therefore, when ye reach the evening, and when ye rise at morn ; and to Him be praise in the heavens

† Hymn, " What is prayer ? "— *James Montgomery*.

and on the earth ; and at sunset, and when ye rest at noon ”

The Korân abounds with many suitable passages which are used by Moslems as model prayers, just in the same manner as Christians repeat what they term “ The Lord’s Prayer.” As an example, we will take for instance what is known as the “ Initial Prayer,” which comprises the first Sura of the Korân.

“ Praise be to God, the Master of the Universe ;
 “ The most merciful, the Ruler of the day of judgment.
 “ Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we beg assistance.
 “ Direct us in the right way,
 “ In the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious ;
 “ Not of those against whom Thou art incensèd,
 “ Nor of those who go astray. Amen.”

Another is called the “ Angel’s Prayer,” and is found in the 40th Sura, * and runs thus :—

“ O Lord, Thou encompassest all things by Thy mercy
 and knowledge ;
 “ Wherefore forgive those who repent and follow Thy
 path,
 “ And deliver them from the punishment of perdition :
 “ O Lord, lead them also into gardens of eternal abode
 “ Which Thou hast promised unto them,
 “ And unto everyone who shall do right,
 “ Of their fathers, and their wives, and their children ;
 “ For Thou art the Mighty, the Wise God.
 “ And deliver them from evil ;
 “ For whomsoever Thou shalt deliver from evil on that
 day,
 “ On him wilt Thou show mercy ;
 “ And this will be great salvation.”

* Entitled “ The True Believer ; ” revealed at Mecca.

The Korân condemns pretentious prayers and ostentatious almsgiving.

“ Verily, the hypocrites would deceive God ;
 “ But He will deceive them !
 “ When they stand up for prayer,
 “ They stand carelessly to be seen of men,
 “ And they remember God but little,
 “ Wavering between faith and infidelity,
 “ And adhering neither unto this nor to that.” *
 “ Woe then to those who pray,
 “ Who in their prayers are careless ;
 “ Who make a show of devotion,
 “ But refuse assistance to the needy.” †

A learned writer † has remarked, “ The utmost solemnity and decorum are observed in the public worship of the Moslems. Never are they guilty of an irregular word or action during their prayers ; they appear wholly absorbed in the adoration of their Creator, without affected humility or a forced expression of countenance.”

Among the many excellencies of the Korân are two eminently conspicuous ; one being the tone of awe and reverence which it always observes when speaking of or referring to the Deity, to whom it never attributes either human frailties and passions ; the other the total absence throughout it of all impure, immoral and indecent ideas, expressions, narratives, &c., blemishes, which, it is much to be regretted, are of too frequent occurrence in what Christians style the “ old Testament.” So exempt, indeed, is the Korân from these undeniable defects, that it needs not the slightest castration, and may be read,

* Sura 4. “ Women.”

† Sura 107. “ Necessaries.”

‡ Lane, “ Modern Egypt,” Vol I., p. 120.

from beginning to end, without causing a blush to suffuse the cheek of modesty itself. *

Many other authors have also written in terms highly eulogistic of the Korân and its contents ; one of these † expresses himself thus :—“ By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammed is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of laws, a book of common prayer, and a bible in one, and is revered to this day by a sixth of the whole human race as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom, and of truth. It is the one miracle claimed by Mohammed—his standing miracle he called it ; and a miracle indeed it is.” In the “ Popular Encyclopedia,” ‡ I find the following :—“ The language of the Korân is considered the purest Arabic, and contains such charms of style and poetic beauties, that it remains inimitable. Its moral precepts are pure. A man who should observe them strictly would lead a virtuous life.” And in the Herbert lectures occurs the following passage :—“ The Law of Islam contains admirable moral precepts, and, what is more, succeeds in bringing them into practice and powerfully supporting their observance,” while an eminent Christian Cleric || says, “ The code of the Korân makes, doubtless, a deeper impression than has been made on Christianity by the code of the Bible.”

Much has been made by opponents of the Moslem faith, by the reiteration of the accusation that Fatalism and Islam are synonymous terms. On this subject I can only say that such a statement is only proof of the astounding bigotry and ignor-

* “ Mahomet and the Korân.”—*Davenport*.

† “ The Life of Mohammed,” by *Bosworth Smith*, p. 343.

‡ The Popular Encyclopedia, Division, viii., p. 326.

|| Dean Stanley, “ Eastern Church,” page 279.

ance of the persons uttering it. So far as the life of Mahomet and the language of the Korân go to prove, Fatalism is an utter and absolute invention, for not once but frequently, as if to especially guard against such an assumption, Mahomet denied it as emphatically as he could. And this view is supported by such able Christian writers and scholars as John Joseph Lake, Fellow of the Meteorological Society, and author of "The Christian religion: Its Philosophical Principles and its Enemies," and by the learned Dr. Deutsch.*

The Korân repudiates the idea of any vicarious sacrifice for sin; but on the contrary expressly teaches the commonsense doctrine that each soul must account for itself to the Deity, to "God who is wise and knowing, who will not defraud you of any part of the merit of your works; and who is inclined to forgive and be merciful,"† and throwing on one side the mass of mystery and superstition taught by Christians under the names of "Redemption and Regeneration," lays upon each individual the task of atoning for his own sin, of securing pardon, and of rendering himself fit for admission to paradise.

"A burdened soul shall not bear the burden of another; and if a heavy burdened soul call on another to bear part of its burden, no part thereof shall be borne by the person who shall be called on, although he be ever so nearly related."‡
 "If I err, verily I shall err only against my own soul; but if I be rightly directed, it will be by that which my Lord revealeth unto me; for He is ready to hear, and nigh unto those who 'call upon Him.'"¶

* Vide his article in the "Quarterly Review."

+ Korân Sura 49. "Inner Apartments."

‡ Sura 35. "The Creator."

¶ Sura 34. "Saba."

“The mercy which God shall freely bestow on mankind, there is none who can withhold ; and what He shall withhold, there is none who can bestow, besides Him ; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.” *

It may be just as well here, to allude to an absurd notion amongst Christians that Moslems believe that women have no souls, or if they have that they will perish, like those of brute beasts, and will not be rewarded in the next life. This doctrine is not held by true believers ; on the contrary there are several passages in the Korân which affirm that women, in the next life will not only be punished for their evil actions, but will also receive the rewards of their good deeds, as well as the men, and that in this case, God will make no distinction of the sexes. †

The following extract from the 4th Sura (“ Women ”) may be taken as a sample of a number of similar passages in the Korân dealing with this subject :— “ Whoso doeth evil, shall be rewarded for it ; and shall not find any protector or helper, other than God ; but whoso doeth good works, *whether male or female*, and is a true believer, that one shall be admitted into Paradise, and shall not in the least be unjustly dealt with.”

The stock charge against Islam is, generally, that it is a religion propounded by the unrestrained use of the sword. Never was there a greater fallacy. Islam has never interfered with the dogmas of any faith—never persecuted, never established an inquisition, never aimed at compulsory proselytism. It offered its religion but never enforced it, the maxim of the Mussulman being the text of the Korân “ Let there be no violence in religion.” § “ Had the Saracens, Turks, and

* Sura 35. “ The Creator.”

† Vide Korân, Suras 3, 4, 13, 16, 40, 48, 57, etc.

§ Sura 2. “ The Cow.”

other Mahomedan tribes," says Chatfield ("Historical Review," page 311), "adopted the same conduct towards the Christians as the European natives had practised towards the followers of the Korân, it is probable that the Christian religion would have been extinguished in the East." "It may be truly said," observes Mons. Jurieu, "that there is no comparison between the cruelty of the Saracens against the Christians and that of Popery against the true believers. In the wars against the Vaudois, or in the massacre alone on St. Bartholomew's day, there was more blood spilt on account of religion than was shed by the Saracens in all their persecutions of the Christians. It is expedient to cure men of this prejudice, namely, that Mahomedanism is a cruel sect, which was propagated by putting men to their choice of death or the abjuration of Christianity. This is in no wise true; and the conduct of the Saracens was an evangelical meekness in comparison with that of Popery, which exceeded the cruelty of the cannibals." And finally, the argument which Carlyle has employed on this question is at once so cogent, unanswerable and unique, for its dissimilarity to any previously given, that the temptation of quoting it cannot be resisted. "Much has been said of Mahomet's propagating his religion by the sword. Yet withal, if we take this for an argument of the truth or falsehood of a religion, there is a radical mistake in it. The sword indeed! but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a *minority of one*. In one man's head alone, there it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it; there is one man against all men. That *he* take a sword, and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must first get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can. We do not find, of the Christian religion either, that it always

disdained the sword, when once it had got one. Charlemagne's conversion of the Saxons was not by preaching. I care little about the sword: I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach, and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, beak and claws, whatsoever is in it; very sure that it will, in the long run, conquer nothing that does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong; the thing which is deepest-rooted in Nature, what we call *truest*, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last."*

We claim for Islam that it is free from "cant and rant;" we want no hypocrites, no time servers in our ranks, we have no time or taste for platitudes, *our religion is our life*. Carlyle with his keen piercing intellect, perceived this trait in our prophet and his followers, and thus alludes to it: "Withal I like Mahomet for his total freedom from cant. He is a rough self-helping son of the wilderness; does not pretend to be what he is not. There is no ostentatious pride in him; but neither does he go much upon humility; he is there as he can be, in cloak and shoes of his own clouting; speaks plainly to all manner of Persian Kings, Greek Emperors, what it is they are bound to do; knows well enough, about himself, "the respect due unto thee:" no *Dilettantism* in this Mahomet; it is a business of Reprobation and Salvation with him, of Time and Eternity: he is in deadly earnest about it! *Dilettantism*, hypothesis, speculation, a kind of

*The reader who desires to pursue this branch of the subject further will find it fully dealt with in the author's work, "The Religion of the Sword."

amateur-search for truth, toying and coquetting with truth: this is the sorest sin. The root of all other imaginable sins. It consists in the heart and soul of the man, never having been *open* to truth—"living in a vain show." Such a man not only utters and produces falsehood, but *is* himself a falsehood. The rational moral principal, spark of the divinity, is sunk deep in him, in quiet paralysis of life-death. On the other hand Islam, like any great Faith, and insight into the essence of man, is a perfect equaliser of men: the soul of one believer outweighs all earthly kingships; all men according to Islam, too, are equal. On the whole, we will repeat, that this religion of Mahomet's is a kind of Christianity; and has a genuine element of what is spiritually highest looking through it. For these twelve centuries it has been the religion and life guidance of the fifth part of the whole kindred of mankind. Above all things, it has been a religion heartily *believed*. These Arabs believe their religion, and try to live by it! No Christians since the early ages, or only, perhaps, the English Puritans in the modern times, have ever stood by their faith as the Moslems do by theirs,—believing it wholly, fronting Time with it and Eternity with it, This night the watchman on the streets of Cairo when he cries, 'Who goes?' will hear from the passenger, along with his answer, 'There is no God but God.' *Allah Akbar, Islam* sounds through the souls, and whole daily existence, of these dusky millions. Zealous missionaries preach it abroad among Malays, black Papuans, brutal Idolaters—displacing what is worse, nothing that is better or as good." *

On this subject Dr. Marcus Dods observes:—"There are two features of the devout character which the Mohammedans

* "Heroes and Hero Worship." (The Hero as a prophet.)—*Carlyle*.

have the merit of exhibiting with much greater distinctness than Christians do. They show not the smallest hesitation or fear in confessing God, and they reduce to practice the great principle that the worship of God is not confined to temples or any special place:—

“ Most honour to the men of prayer
 Whose Mosque is in them everywhere!
 Who amid revel’s wildest din,
 In war’s severest discipline,
 On rolling deck, in thronged bazaar,
 In stranger land, however far,
 However different in their reach
 Of thought, in manners, dress or speech—
 Will quietly their carpet spread,
 To Mecca turn the humble head,
 And, as if blind to all around,
 And deaf to each distracting sound,
 In simple language God adore,
 In spirit to His presence soar,
 And in the pauses of the prayer,
 Rest as if wrapt in glory there.” *

“ It is one of the glories of Islam,” says another Christian writer,† “ that its temples are not made with hands, and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God’s earth, or under His heaven.”

Such is the faith of Islam, such is the belief of about 240,000,000 of human beings who still follow the teachings of the last and greatest of the prophets, and five times a day address to Almighty God the prayers of the faithful.

* “ Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ,” by Marcus Dods, D.D. (p. 30.)

† “ Our Indian Mussulmans,” p. 179—*Hunter*.

The Moslem faith prevails from Morocco along the whole north coast of Africa and southwards to the Transvaal, including Zanzibar. It dominates in Egypt, and the Turkish Empire, in Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, and Turkestan, has over 57,000,000 of followers in India, is powerfully represented among the Malays, and has now a firm footing in China; there are fifteen thousand Moslems in Cape Colony alone, while its mosques can be found in the wilds of Siberia, and in St. Petersburg there is a by no means uninfluential Mahommedan congregation, while missionary efforts for its propagation are succeeding in various parts of the world, not excepting the United Kingdom.

This is the brotherhood to which we now invite our countrymen in England; this is the faith we offer for their acceptance. We ask them to fling aside the prejudices that have been engrafted upon their minds from the bigotry of generations of crafty and ingenious theological metaphysicians. To cease to be satisfied with the lame explanation of a seemingly impossible theological tenet that *it is a mystery*. Mysteries, delusions, and hallucinations are discordant notes in the great harmony of the simple faith revealed by the Almighty to primitive man.

Anything incomprehensive or tinged with improbability must of necessity create doubt and distrust, and perhaps confusion in the mind of the seeker for truth, and most of all is this to be dreaded in the case of religious belief where the issues are so momentous, and the consequence of error or fallacy so serious. What we desire to know is the great facts as to our own spiritual nature and destiny. Islam gives the answer in simple language. It teaches man to be resigned to the inscrutable and allwise will of the Almighty Deity.—“From God ye came and unto Him must ye return.” Perish

all human ambitions, the care from any human institution or personal interest and reputation. Perish all systems, and all mysterious creeds, however honoured and venerable they may be, rather than that man, the last and noblest work of the Creator, should be led astray from the plain and straight path of truth and righteousness. But it may be argued—Are you not giving an under value to men's beliefs? Surely they who protest that beliefs are nothing, cannot have measured the natural effect of their own words, as one modern lecturer* has aptly said: "In what region is it that a man's belief is of no value? Certainly not in the commercial world, where a man's beliefs go far to account either for his success or his failure. He is unwisely credulous and embarks his capital in enterprises which bring only loss, disaster and ruin. He is timidly sceptical, and he loses the opportunity which to men of truer insight and more courageous faith opens the way to distinguished success. Not in the literary or scientific world where it must be at once apparent that the adoption of a false principle will vitiate an entire chain of arguments, and where consequently wise students think no amount of observation and no number of experiments too excessive if they be necessary for the testing of a particular conclusion. Not in the ordinary life of a man where a false belief—say in the innocuous character of a poison—may be the cause of a practical mistake with fatal consequences. Wherever a man has to act upon a belief, it is of the highest moment that the belief should itself be in harmony with fact."

Dr. Maudsley, in pregnant and well-chosen words, has truly said, "It should be every man's steadfast aim, as part of his nature—his patient work—to cultivate such entire sincerity of relations with it; to be so completely one with it

* "Orthodoxy and Scepticism," by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, B.A.

in life, that when the summons comes to surrender his mortal part to absorption into it, he does so, not fearfully, as to an enemy who has vanquished him, but trustfully, as to a mother who, when the day's task is done, bids him lie down to sleep." And in such language may be expressed the resignation of the Moslem to the Divine will.

In conclusion let me warn those who are ready to embrace, as well as those who have already had the courage of their convictions and renounced Christianity and embraced Islam, that they must expect to be sneered at, reviled, and their motives questioned and misconstrued.

It was so in the days of Mahomet and will be so until the end of the world. And for their comfort and consolation the Almighty has Himself revealed a passage in the Korân to sustain them in their faith :

“ They upbraid thee that thou hast embraced Islam.

“ Answer them and say, Upbraid me not with having embraced Islam :—

“ Rather God upbraideth you whom He hath also directed to the faith.

“ Verily, God knoweth the secrets of heaven and earth : and God beheldeth that which ye do.” *

* Korân, Sura 49, last verses.

APPENDIX

THE 99 EXCELLENT NAMES OF GOD (ALLAH).

The title Allah is called *ism-uz-zât*, or the essential name of God; the ninety-nine other titles are called *al-asma'ol-hasnâ*, or the "excellent names." This is referred to in the Korân: "But God's are *excellent names*; call on Him thereby."* This verse is commented upon in the Hadees, or Traditions, and Abu Horaira states that the Prophet said, "Verily there are ninety-nine names of God, and whoever recites them shall be one of those who shall enter into Paradise."

In the same Tradition these names, or attributes, are given thus:—

1. AR- RAHMÁN	The Merciful,
2. AR- RAHIM	The Compassionate,
3. AL- MALEK,	The King,
4. AL- QUDDUS,	The Holy,
5. AS- SALÁM,	The Peaceful.
6. AL- MÔMEN,	The Faithful.
7. AL- MOHAYMEN,	The Protector.
8. AL- AZIZ,	The Dear One.
9. AL- JABBÁR,	The Repairer.
10. AL- MOTAKKABER,	The Great.
11. AL- KHÁLEQ,	The Creator.
12. AL- BARI,	The Maker.
13. AL- MOSAWWIR,	The Fashioner,
14. AL- GHAFFÁR,	The Forgiver.
15. AL- QAHHÁR,	The Dominant.

* Sura 7. Text, (Ayat) 179.

16. AL- WAHHÁB,	The Bestower.
17. AR- RAZZÁQ,	The Provider.
18. AL- FATTÁH,	The Opener.
19. AL- ÁLEM,	The Knower.
20. AL- QÁBEZ,	The Restrainer.
21. AL- BÁSET,	The Spreader.
22. AL- KHÁFEZ,	The Keeper of Secrets.
23. AR- RÁFI',	The Exalter.
24. AL- MO'EEZ,	The Honourer.
25. AL- MOZIL,	The Destroyer.
26. AS- SÁMI',	The Hearer.
27. AL- BASIR,	The Seer.
28. AL- HÁKEM,	The Ruler.
29. AL- ADIL,	The Just.
30. AL- LATIF,	The Beautiful.
31. AL- KHABIR,	The Aware.
32. AL. HALIM,	The Clement.
33. AL- AZIM,	The Grand.
34. AL- GHAFUR,	The Forgiving.
35. AS- SAKUR,	The Grateful.
36. AL- ALI,	The Exalted.
37. AL- KÁBIR,	The Great.
38. AL- HÁFIZ,	The Guardian.
39. AL- MOQUIT,	The Strengtheners.
40. AL- HASIB,	The Reckoner.
41. AL- JALIL,	The Majestic.
42. AL- KARIM,	The Generous.
43. AR- RAQIB,	The Watcher.
44. AL- MOJIB,	The Approver.
45. AL- WÁSÉ,	The Comprehender,
46. AL- HAKIM,	The Wise.
47. AL- WADUD,	The Loving.

48. AL- MANNAN,	The Magnificent.
49. AL- BÂES,	The Raiser.
50. AS- SHAHID,	The Witness.
51. AL- HAQQ,	The Truth.
52. AL- WAKIL,	The Advocate.
53. AL- QAWI,	The Strong.
54. AL- MATIN,	The Firm.
55. AL- WALI,	The Patron.
56. AL- HAMID,	The Laudable.
57. AL- MOHSI,	The Counter.
58. AL- MOBDI,	The Beginner.
59. AL- MCID,	The Restorer.
60. AL- MOHYI,	The Quickener.
61. AL- MOMIT,	The Killer.
62. AL- HAI-YE,	The Living.
63. AL- QAYYUM,	The Subsisting.
64. AL- WÂJED,	The Finder.
65. AL- MAJID,	The Glorious.
66. AL- WÂHED,	The One.
67. AL- SAMAD,	The Eternal.
68. AL- QÂDER,	The Powerful.
69. AL- MOQTADER,	The Prevailing.
70. AL- MOQADDEM,	The Bringing Forward.
71. AL- MOAXXER,	The Deferrer.
72. AL- AWWAL,	The First.
73. AL- ÂKHER,	The Last.
74. AZ- ZÂHER,	The Evident.
75. AL- BÂTEN,	The Hidden.
76. AL- WÂLI,	The Governor.
77. AL- MOTAÂLI,	The Exalted.
78. AL- BARR,	The Righteous.
79. AT- TAWWÂB,	The Acceptor of Repen- tance.

80. AL- MONTAQEM,	The Avenger.
81. AL- AFUW,	The Pardoner.
82. AR- RAUF,	The Kind.
83. MÁLEKU'L MULK,	The Ruler of the Kingdom.
84. ZU'L JALÁLÉ W'AL EKRÁM,	The Lord of Majesty and Liberality.
85. AL- MOQSET,	The Equitable.
86. AL- JÁMI,	The Collector.
87. AL- GHANI,	The Independent.
88. AL- MOGHNI,	The Enricher.
89. AL-MO'TI,	The Giver.
90. AL- MÁNÉ,	The Withholder.
91. AZ- ZARR,	The Distresser.
92. AN- NÁFÉ,	The Profiter.
93. AN- NUR,	The Light.
94. AL- HÁDI,	The Guide.
95. AL- BADI,	The Incomparable.
96. AL- BÁQI,	The Enduring.
97. AL- WÁRES,	The Inheritor.
98. AR- RASCHID,	The Director.
99. AS- SABUR,	The Patient.

The list either begins or closes with Alláh, thus completing the number of one hundred names, which are usually recited on a rosary at leisure moments by many devout Moslems.

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