

4271

concubines, why should not they raise the same objection against such of the Old Testament prophets whose number of wives and concubines had by far exceeded that number ?

David had six wives and numerous concubines (2 sam. v. 13 ; 1 Chron. iii, 1-9 ; xiv. 3) ; Solomon as many as 700 wives and as many as 300 concubines, (Kings xi. 3). Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 concubines (2 Chron. xi. 21), a plurality expressly forbidden to the sovereign of Israel, who was commanded not to multiply wives to himself (Deut. xvii. 17).

Honestly speaking, prejudice and partiality alone reign over all the writings of Christian missionaries, when they deal with the person and character of the Holy Prophet.

The mere fact that the Prophet Mohammad entered into polygamous relationship, should not be made the pretext for attacks on his unsullied character, vouched for by friends and foes alike. The circumstances, connected with the marriages of the Prophet must be taken into consideration, in order to come to a right conclusion. As already stated¹, he passed his adult days with an elderly widow and did not condescend to enter into another wedlock, even though the Meccan elders gladly agreed to place the most beautiful damsel of the wealthiest family at his disposal. However, later on, in the declining years of his life, he married a number of wives who, with the solitary exception of Ayesha, were either widows or divorced women. These facts, viewed in the light of the truth that the Prophet passed his days in preaching and actively pushing the cause of his new faith, and his nights in prayer, and that the Prophet was universally believed to be an honest man, endowed with all the qualities of moral greatness and all the attributes of virtuous manliness, bring home the conviction to every sound mind, that sensuality as a motive of action, is conspicuous by its absence in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Each of his marriages brought a world of social and political good to the Moslem community, and these marriages were a valuable instrument in welding together the contending factions of Arabia into a united community. Had polygamy, allowed by the Prophet under reasonable restraints and limitations, been a social bane, as some prejudiced critics try to assert, it would have hampered the moral elevation of the corrupted Arabs. But with the adoption of Islam as a moral code the moral improvement grew apace, and the transformation wrought in the moral condition of Arabia, is without a parallel in the history of the world.

(1) Vide pp. 68—70 of this Book.

XI

The Social Changes Brought about by the Prophet

Dealing with the social changes brought about by the Prophet, Dr. Noldeke states¹: “One fact among others, by which we can estimate the striking impression the Prophet produced upon the Arabs, is that as each tribe submitted, or adopted his religion, it renounced the right of retaliation for the bloodshed in the struggle. Under other circumstances, this renunciation of blood-revenge, or of wergild at least, would have seemed to the Arab the lowest depth of humiliation. This was, indeed, so striking a feature of the new brotherhood that it could not fail to makê a silent but deep impression upon the unbelieving multitude who now began to feel the power of the new religion.

“To those who seek miracles, this glorious result, achieved in less than a decade, constitutes a real and splendid miracle of Islam, which alone gives it the title, to be ranked as a great religion and a wonderful civilising agency. In an exquisitely beautiful passage, full of grace and wisdom, the Holy Koran draws a contrast between the life and manners of the Arabs in the shade of Islam and those in pre-Islamic times; and urges upon the true believers a true union of hearts, and dwells on the real purpose of the advent of the new religion. Here is a translation of the verses: ‘O ye believers, fear God as He deserveth to be feared; and die not but as true Muslims. And hold ye fast by the cord of God, all of you, and do not scatter yourselves, and remember God’s goodness towards you, *how that when you were enemies. He united your hearts, and through His grace, ye became brethren*, and when ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, He drew you back from it; thus clearly God showeth His signs, that ye may be guided. And let there be among you a people who invite to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong; and these are they who shall succeed. And be ye not like those who have broken into divisions and fallen into variance, after the clear proofs have come to them; and for those there waits a terrible chastisement.”

XII

The Political Organisation Wrought by the Advent of Islam

“Islam”, writes Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, “is a form of pure theism, simpler and more austere than the theism of most forms of modern Christianity², lofty in the conception of the relation of man to God, and

(1) Dr. Noldeke’s Book on Islam.

(2) In fact there is not to be found such a pure theism in any other religion than Islam.

noble in its doctrine of the duty of man to the lower creatures. There is little in it of superstition¹, less of complexity of dogmas : it is an exacting religion without the repulsiveness of asceticism ; severe but not merciless.

“Nothing in fact is more odious, according to the doctrines of Islam, than the self-inflicted torments and voluntary penance of the ascetics. It always recommends the cultivation of the social virtues and the practice of those qualities which form the graces of a corporate life. Islam laid the foundations of a social system which breathes the spirit of charity, friendship, and mutual trust among its members. So impressively did the Prophet bring these high lessons home to the Arab mind, both by precepts and example, that the tribal jealousies of centuries soon became extinct, the old spirit of revenge, inherent in the nation, died away, and the hearts of the true believers were knit together in the closest bond of sympathy and fraternity. They now felt themselves as the brethren of one and the same faith, and citizens of the same commonwealth, enjoying equal rights and privileges.

“Islam penetrated into the very hearts of the Arab people, and the old spirit of jealousy and vengeance, of hostility and ill-will, yielded place to a happy consciousness of the power of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling ; the very character of the Arab mind was changed, and many of the evils rooted in the nation were fast eradicated. Within the Islamic commonwealth the internecine wars, which were the cause of much wanton bloodshed, soon became a thing of the past ; and hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience ; and the valour which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels, was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy².”

XIII

The Political System of ISLAM

When the Prophet settled at Medina, he established a commonwealth based, not upon the old basis of consanguinity, but upon Religion, with the Prophet himself as the chief magistrate. The spirit of blood-revenge, derived from the fiery and sensitive temper of the Arabs which was responsible for the long-protracted blood-feuds between clan and clan, waned away, and in its place there grew up in each member of the new commonwealth a genuine, earnest desire to see the peace and unity of the community maintained. The sense of tribal pride and superiority lost much of its keenness ; the bond of consanguinity was greatly relaxed. They were taught to reverence the new institution, planted through the Prophet,

(1) There is not the slightest superstition in Islam.

(2) S. L. Poole's 'Lectures on Islam.'

by God Himself, and to sink their tribal dissensions in the common weal of the brotherhood of faith. "O men, verily, we have created you of one male and one female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes, that ye might have 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 cognisant¹."

Equality of rights was thus the distinguishing feature of the Islamite commonwealth. A convert from a humbler clan enjoyed the same rights and privileges as one who belonged to the noblest Koreish. Even a slave was admitted as a brother from the very moment of his conversion, and the highest dignitary in the state thought it no dishonour, to partake of his repast with him. Nor in the place of worship were suffered artificial differences between man and man: the high and the low, the prince and the peasant, the rich merchant of Mecca and the roaming bedouin of the desert, stood shoulder to shoulder in the presence of their common Deity. This equality and fraternity was, and is even to-day, though much weakened, the key-note of Islam and the secret of its power as a world-religion². This levelling principle, underlying the tenets of the new faith, proved a veritable blessing to the Arabs in particular. Tribes and races, hitherto at war with one another, were, in the embracing fold of Islam, welded into one nation, imbued with common ideas, common aims and aspirations, and devoted to a common cause. Conflicting interests were harmonised from a loyal desire to advance the public good. The Holy Koran laid down certain principal laws, intended to govern their new relations as members of the state, to extinguish the fire of the old tribal jealousy, and to affect a union of hearts unknown before. The laws soon succeeded in bringing order out of chaos and confusion and made civic life possible for the first time in Arabia. "O believers," so run the fine verses of the Koran, "if any wicked man come to you with news, make a thorough inquiry, lest through ignorance ye harm a people and have to repent on the morrow of what ye have done; and know that an apostle of God is among you. Should he submit to you in most matters, ye would certainly fall into difficulty. But God hath endeared the faith to you, and hath given it favour in your hearts, and hath made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. Such are they who pursue a right path,—a bounty from God and a grace: and God is knowing and wise. If two bodies of the believers are at war, then make ye peace between them with fairness and do justice; God loveth those who are just. Those who believe, are brethren; wherefore make peace between your brethren; and fear God, that ye may obtain mercy.

(1) Koran, ch. "The Apartments."

(2) T. W. Arnold, 'The Preaching of Islam.'

O believers, let not a people laugh, another people to scorn who haply may be better than themselves ; neither let women laugh women to scorn who haply may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by bad names. Wickedness is such a bad quality to adopt, after becoming true believers, and whose repent not (of this) are wrongdoers. O believers, avoid frequent suspicions ; verily some suspicions are a crime, and pry not into others' secrets, neither let the one of you traduce another in his absence. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother ? Surely you would loathe it. And fear ye God, for God is ready to turn, and Merciful. O men, verily We have made you of one male, and one female, and We have made you peoples and tribes that ye might know one another. Truly, the most worthy of the honour before God is he who feareth Him most. Verily God is Knowing, Cognisant¹."

Such were the principles, on which the political system of Islam was grounded. It was thoroughly democratic in character. It recognised individual and public liberty, secured the person and property of the subjects, and fostered the growth of all civic virtues. It Communicated all the privileges of the conquering class to those of the conquered who conformed to its religion, and all the protection of citizenship to those who did not. It put an end to old customs that were of immoral and criminal character. It abolished the inhuman custom of burying the infant daughters alive, and took effective measures for the suppression of the slave-traffic, it prohibited adultery and incestuous relationship ; and on the other hand, inculcated purity of heart, cleanliness of body, and sobriety of life²."

XIV

The Social Organisation of Islam

The Prophet Mohammad did not only promulgate a religion, but he also laid down a complete social system, containing minute regulations for a man's conduct in all circumstances of life, with due remarks and penalties, according to his fulfilment or otherwise of these rules. The social and the religious parts of Islam are so inseparably bound up that it is impossible to cut off the one from the other without destroying both. Religion according to Islam should not only lay down the law of relation of man to God, but should also regulate and distinctly define the proper relation between man and his fellow-creatures.

(1) Koran, ch. The Apartments.

(2) Bosworth Smith, 'Mohamed and Mohamedanism.'

The Holy Koran inculcates the softer virtues, such as friendliness, good temper, affability of manners, hospitality, forgiveness, fairness in dealing, regard for superiors, kind treatment of inferiors, respect for women, care of orphans, tending the sick, helping the helpless and the destitute, with a force and persuasion which it is difficult to find elsewhere¹. The critics of Islam have for the most part expressed their unstinted admiration for the heroic, or sterner virtues, to wit: patient endurance, fortitude, love of truth under personal risk, courage and manly independence, which Islam has always exalted and in the practice of which the Prophet himself and the early Moslems were so marvellously distinguished; but these critics often forget that Islam enjoins with equal emphasis the cultivation of the gentler virtues too. Lessons of modesty and benevolence and charity have been so often re-iterated in the Koran, and again, these virtues form so conspicuous an element in the life and conduct of the Prophet and his companions, that Islam can justly claim to be ranked as a Religion of Love. Every chapter of the Holy Koran begins with the name of "God, the Merciful, the Compassionate."

The Prophet of Islam has been denominated in the Koran as "the tender, the compassionate," and "the mercy for the universe." Himself the tenderest and the most loving of men, he was never tired of preaching to his followers the brotherhood of man and humanity to all God's creatures. "How do you think," he asks, "God will know you when you are in His presence? — "By your love of your children, by your love of your kin, of your neighbours, of fellow-creatures." He displayed the greatest consideration for the feelings and sensibilities of others. He loved his wives, and was kind to his servants. He was particularly fond of little children and discouraged the use of the rod for their correction. He enjoined humanity even to dumb animals.

Such being the ethics of the Koran and the teachings of the Apostle of Islam, it is easy to form some idea of the exact nature and extent of the change wrought thereby in the life and thought of the Arabs. Some of the first few converts to Islam, unable to bear persecutions at the hands of the idolaters, sought refuge in Abyssinia. When asked by the Negus as to the reason why they had left their country, Jaafar, a cousin of the Prophet, spoke thus as the mouthpiece of the small band of refugees:— "O King, We lived in ignorance, idolatry and unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak, we spoke untruth; we violated the duties of hospitality. Then a prophet arose, one whom we know from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith we are all acquainted. He told

(1) Stanley Lane Poole.

us to worship one God, to speak truth, to keep good faith, to assist our relatives, to fulfil the rights of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure, ungodly, unrighteous. And he ordered us to say prayers, give alms, and to fast. We believed in him; we followed him. But our countrymen persecuted us, tortured us and tried to cause us to forsake our religion; and now we throw ourselves upon thy protection. Wilt thou not protect us? ¹”

Dealing with this great spiritual revolution, Sir W. Muir observes as follows :— “Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life... Thirteen years before the ‘Hijra’, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced. A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one God, and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed a Revelation from Him; praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon through His Mercy and striving to follow after good works, alms-giving, purity and justice. They now lived under the constant sense of the omnipotent power of God and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. Mohammad was minister of life to them, the source under God of their new-born hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit submission ².”

XV

Refutation of Certain False Charges by Prejudiced Writers against Islam

I.

“Force and Compulsion Were Employed for the Dissemination of Islam”

Islam took its birth, and has since lived, in the broad daylight of history. The Moslems adhere to the faith of Islam not because they were born and bred in this faith, but because it is the most historical religion and can bear with perfect safety even the severest possible criticism.

If those who brought the above charge, had cared to deal with their subject in an honest, straightforward manner, they should have gone through the teachings of Islam, as embodied in the Holy Koran, and then

(1) Sir William Muir. cf. pp. 36, 37 of this book

(2) Sir William Muir's "Life of Mohammed."

pondered over the fact, that the early Moslems were so much devoted to the letter, as well as the spirit of this Book, that they sacrificed everything to obedience to the injunctions contained in it, and did not swerve even a hair's breadth from the path laid down in their Book. If the Book enjoined force and compulsion for the spread of Islam, then the Moslems must have fought and worked havoc for the propagation of Islam. There is not even a single verse in the Holy Koran which directly or even indirectly insinuates the alternative of death or Islam for the unbelievers. "There is no compulsion in religion" trumpets forth loudly the peaceful spirit of Islam. The commandment is absolutely positive and admits of no exception. The use of force and compulsion is, then, totally forbidden, and the imperative and highly dictatorial character of the injunction leaves no room for any chance of making an exception in favour of the employment of war-like means, for the purpose of popularising Islam. The mere fact that in the history of Islam one meets with fighting and bloodshed, can in no way lead to the conclusion that Islam was spread by the sword. There is no religion, the history of which is not stained with blood. The Crusades, the Christian conquest of Spain, the subsequent persecution and expulsion of the Moslem Moors, the days of the Inquisition, the massacres of St.-Bartholomew's day and other similar tragedies, perpetrated in the name of religion, recurring to the memory, send a new horror and dismay throughout the world.

No reasonable person will therefore be prepared to accuse the adherents of any religion, of allowing force and compulsion, on the flimsy ground that the story of such religion makes mention of bloodshed and fighting. Islam will be to blame, if it can be proved that it sanctions the use of force and compulsion for the propagation of the faith. But on the contrary, we find clear and explicit injunctions forbidding force for the purpose of religion. The only possible conclusion that can be drawn from the above considerations, is that if the Moslems were acting in accordance with the teachings of Islam, they did not take up arms for the sake of forcing conversions. A glance at the history of those days will bring to light the fact, that they were persecuted, and were subjected to all sorts of torture and ill-treatment. They left their homes to save their lives, but the merciless enemies followed them. At last, when all peaceful means had failed, and the aggressive spirit of their antagonists reached its zenith, the enemies having made up their minds to annihilate the embryo dispensation, the handful of Moslems were driven to have recourse to arms. They fought and fought, till there was no danger left to retard, free growth and expansion of Islam. If facts alone are looked at, there should be no difficulty in realising the real situation of the early Moslems who had to fight for the sake of self-preservation. Later on there was also a good

deal of fighting, and although much of this later fighting had little to do with religion, there is certainly nothing in it, to blame the Moslems for. The political development of a nation is another problem which needs careful handling and which I leave for students of politics to examine. With regard to those verses of the Holy Koran, in which war is enjoined upon Moslems against the infidels, and that "wherever they are found they shall be taken and killed with a general slaughter," these verses and their likes, as already stated, bear upon the defensive war of the Holy Prophet. The Moslems can produce any number of verses from the Holy Koran which enjoin all courtesy, politeness and civility, even in the case of severe persecutors. The example of the Prophet is clear on this point. He granted pardon to the Meccan persecutors when, quite vanquished, they threw themselves on the mercy of the Holy Prophet. God says: "And the servants of the God of Mercy are they who walk upon the earth softly; and when the ignorant address them, reply 'Peace'; and they pass the night in the adoration of their Lord, prostrate (at times) and standing (at others) for prayers."

I appeal to the good sense of the readers as to whether there can be found a higher ideal for humanity to pursue. God's servants are required to walk humbly and harmlessly, and when they are confronted with ignorance which is only another name for lack of manners and manly behaviour, even there, when hedged round by ill manners and ill-treatment, the true Moslem is called upon to wish for peace. His sole object in his social capacity should be to spread peace, even when harassed by bad behaviour and inconsiderate treatment. Peace is the Moslem's watchword, whatever circumstances he has to pass through. When comparing this highly practical ideal with the Christian injunction "Love your enemy," a Moslem is constrained to admit his impression that the Christian code of morality is only a set of fair-seeming platitudes, not meant for practice, but merely for controversial purposes. It is all very well to love one's enemy, but is it, a Moslem asks, in consonance with human nature, to be able to show anything like real and true love, where there exists enmity? Our enemy, if he is an enemy at all, in the natural sense of the word, cannot be expected to feel favourably disposed, much less loving and affectionate, to us. However pious and godly we may happen to be, hatred and contempt, the necessary characteristics of enmity, must re-act on us, and our attitude, at best, will be supposed inactive hatred, and in no case real love. Love begets love, and hatred begets hatred. This is the law of nature, and a wise man cannot ignore the course of nature, and frame a line of conduct conflicting straightway with it. Islam does not require us to be hypocritical lovers of our enemies, but calls upon us to be reconciled with our enemies, and to be at peace with them. Thus, removing the cause of

enmity, if it is possible to do so, a Moslem should be sincerely loving. But if the cause cannot be removed, our hostilities should not be active and aggressive, for we are, in the honest discharge of our religious duties, bound to wish for peace under all circumstances and all events.

I have already stated with sufficient fulness, and need not repeat it over and over again, that Moslem wars, as allowed in the Koran and explained by the sayings of the Prophet, were entirely defensive, and therefore the attacks recommended are never aggressive. The religion of Islam is essentially for peace, and even in fighting the aim was nothing but peace¹.

The defensive wars of the early Moslems are a matter of history. It is an historical truth, and no reasonable person can refuse to accept it. After thirteen long years' persistent persecution, when all peaceful measures had failed and proved unavailing, when war or death were the only alternatives, it would not have been right to act upon the Gospel verdict "Love your enemies and do good to them that hate you," and thus to allow the enemies of Islam to revel in the wholesale massacre of harmless worshippers of the one true God, and to sweep the only living faith out of existence. Moslems who were bent upon the preservation of their beloved faith at all hazards, Moslems who loved God above all worldly considerations, even their very lives, Moslems who were by all sorts of ruthless tortures and merciless butcheries, goaded by natural anger, so far kept down by the peaceful ordinances of Islam, could not of course adopt the "love your enemy" maxim as their guide. The enemy of God and his blessed dispensation which preaches love, peace and fellow-feeling, can scarcely be expected to deserve real love at the hands of a sincere lover of God. A Moslem cannot afford to love an enemy who hates God. He cannot go against human nature. His ideal will be peace, he refuses to play the aggressive part, he takes the initiative in the reconciliation and shows sincere love there-after. A zealous enthusiastic Moslem writer makes the following remarks on the attitude of Christian critics who lay great stress on the defensive wars of the Holy Prophet, as follows :—

"Our Christian friends love to conceal facts while dealing with Islam. They are ever prepared to dwell upon the defensive wars of the Prophet and his holy followers, but they take good care to keep us away from what Jesus is reported to have said with positive definiteness : 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.' Again we read : 'I am come to send fire upon the earth and what will I if it be already kindled.' We read again in the Gospels : 'Suppose

(1) Vide T. W. Arnold 'The Preaching of Islam'

ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division.' Once more we read in the Gospel: 'Then said he unto them, but now he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.' It is now as clear as the day, that if Jesus had had the opportunity of gaining political strength, he would have filled the earth with war and bloodshed, notwithstanding his saying 'Love your enemy.' Peace is the thing a Moslem is called upon to maintain by whatever means he can; but peace, according to the above statements attributed to Jesus, is the very thing Christ came to destroy¹."

Instead of the Christian commandment, 'Resist not evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' the Moslems follow their Koranic verdict, to wit: "Ward off evil in the best possible manner²."

If evil is not to be resisted, it would be allowed to grow unchecked, and eat away the very vitals of humanity. All gaols, reformatory schools, and law-courts should be abolished forthwith, so that under the charitable teachings of the Christian faith, evil may have perfect freedom and run riot in whatever way it can. When it is a sin to resist evil, the natural consequence is the abject toleration, or rather encouragement, of all sorts of nefarious designs and mischievous courses. Human nature is not safe under the assumed Christian teachings; therefore it naturally, revolts against them. Never has mankind, even in the very heart of civilisation which is said to be the direct result of Christian teachings, acted upon these teachings which are against the intellect, nature and instincts of humanity. The Holy Koran strikes at the very root of evil. It stops the very source of it. It says: "Ward off evil in the best possible manner." The measure to be taken for the removal of evil is not positive non-resistance which is not a sensible policy at all, but on the contrary the most effective methods ought to be used for the extirpation of evil. The means suited to particular cases are to be employed, whether they be harsh or mild. Whatever is productive of desirable results should be resorted to for the eradication of evil.

2.

"Mohammadanism : A Religion of Sex-Indulgence."

As regards the assertion that Islam is a religion of sex-indulgence, nothing can be farther from the truth. A comparison of the moral conditions of the countries, populated by Moslems and Christians respectively,

(1) Qazi Abdul Haque, 'The Review of Religion' (Sept. 1913).

(2) Koran.

will clearly show that the number of illegitimate births is alarmingly greater in Christian than in Moslem countries. The honour of the fair sex is more in jeopardy in the former than elsewhere, and the freedom of the softer sex is nowhere so cruelly abused and insulted as in Christian lands. Islam enjoins upon its followers to live and act under a constant sense of the fear of God. Whatever a Moslem does, he does it God-fearingly. Fear of God is the prevailing passion with a Moslem, and governing all his thoughts, words, and actions. Even in conjugal relations and connubial dealings, fear of God is the main motive of action.

I give, below, in extenso, the nuptial sermon, universally preached on the occasion of marriage, in imitation of the Holy Prophet :—

“O ye believers, fear God as He deserves to be feared, and die not without having become Moslems. O men, fear your Lord Who hath created you of one progenitor, and of the same species created He his wife, and from these twain hath spread abroad so many men and women. And fear ye God, in Whose name ye ask mutual favours, and reverence the wombs that bore you. Verily, God is watching over you. O believers, fear God and speak with well-guided speech, that God may bless your doings for you and forgive you your sins. And whoso obeyeth God and His apostle, with great bliss he surely shall be blest.”

The sermon is a collection of Koranic verses, and their repetition at each and every wedding, is meant to remind the Moslem men and women of their duties and obligations. It opens with a commandment to fear God, and the self-same commandment is repeated quite a number of times in the course of the sermon, showing that the whole of the ceremony is to be carried through with fear of God so that from beginning to end it may be a pure, moral binding, and no selfish equivocation or hypocritical prevarication may mar the sanctity of the sacred rite. The obligations accepted by the pair at the time when the marriage sermon is delivered, will thus be real and will exercise a lasting influence on the future life of the couple, as man and wife. The institution, based solely on fear of God, is bound to be holy and those who hold to such a holy institution cannot be charged with sinister motives, if they are true Moslems. Such a sacred system can never be productive of sex-indulgence. A man who God-fearingly enters into a contract and binds himself to certain obligations, cannot be termed a sexual man. The verses clearly give the Moslem to understand that the ultimate object of the marriage contract is to win the pleasure of God. When acting from such motives, it cannot be conceived that a Moslem considers himself to be pleasing God, while indulging in sensuality. Sensuality is an abomination to God, and a Moslem knows that fact from the Koran, more than anybody else. It is

impossible, therefore, to incur displeasure where the avowed object is to win approval. Thus it is clear that Islamic marriage makes life pure and chaste, and does not afford occasion to taunt any one with the vice of sensuality.

Whether a Moslem weds one wife or the fullest admissible number of wives, he cannot lose sight of the object of his life. He is not born for anything but the adoration of God. He turns heretic if he even for an instant, even in the moment of sexual intercourse—the moments of utmost enjoyment and therefore of utmost self-forgetfulness—banishes from his mind the purpose, for which he was brought into being. Marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, is for a Moslem the means of attaining the nearness of God¹.”

The Gospel's commandment “Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his mind,” shows us that an evil look is forbidden; but a look having no wicked intention behind it is permitted. Moslems, however, are bound by their religion not to look repeatedly and freely at a strange woman, for the pleasure of doing so. According to human nature a woman, on account of her charms, is an object of temptation; and whoever exposes himself freely to temptation prepares the way for his moral destruction. Too much indulgence in the habit of looking freely at beauties, as it seems to be allowed according to the Gospel's text, leads to evil. The best way to guard against evil, is to avoid the path that leads to temptation. The Koran forbids both pure and impure free looks; for too much recourse to pure looks is likely to prompt impure ones. To be safe, temptation must be kept at arm's length and not nourished freely to exhaust one's patience and power of resistance. The Koran's injunctions on the subject are as follows :—

“Ask the believers to cast down their eyes and observe continence. Thus will they be more pure. Of a truth, God is well aware of what they do. And ask the believing women to refrain their looks and observe continence; and to display not their ornaments except those which are external, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and to display not their ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers or their husband's fathers or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons or their women or their slaves or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who note not women's nakedness. And let them not strike their feet together, so as to

(1) Al Ghazali.

discover their hidden ornaments. And be ye wholly turned to God, O ye believers ; then it shall be well with you¹”

Thus, both men and women are required to refrain from unnecessarily looking at each other. The softer sex is required to walk about so carefully as not to be a stumbling block for any weakling, and therefore the social morality and individual chastity are kept intact. Promiscuous intermingling of both sexes, and the reckless display of charms on the part of the fair sex, have gone a long way towards undermining the moral tone of Christian countries.

A learned man², commenting on the charge that Islam stimulates sex-indulgence, writes in the Review of Religions :—

“The living facts speak volumes for themselves, and no one who has had occasion to read up certain articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, can afford to question the truth of the sad state of affairs so strikingly brought to light in them. We cannot shut our eyes to the ennobling influence of the growing civilisation of Europe, but civilisation with all its softening and elevating forces, has not yet been able to obviate the necessity of food, and alleviate the pressure of all the cravings of nature. If, therefore, attraction of charms, is a natural aptitude, as surely it is, one cannot help admitting, that unlike other natural desires, this craving of nature also remains unaffected by the advance of civilisation. No amount of learning and no sort of culture and scholarship can alter human nature ; and it follows, therefore, that civilisation can scarcely prove a bar to the inborn desire of man for woman, and vice versa. To assert that civilised Europe is proof against the resistless onslaught of passion, is a ridiculous statement when, civilisation has failed to do away with other natural desires of mankind. To give a moral lift to the Christian countries, it is necessary to introduce the Islamic moral code which pays equal attention to the intellectual, moral and social advancement of the people. But under the present circumstances, it is sad to note that Christian Europe improves the intellectual side at the sacrifice of the moral one.”

(3)

Islam and Polygamy

Islam enjoins marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, as the conditions of life necessitate, with due regard to piety, so that there may be no violence to human nature ; and the desire for sexual intercourse,

(1) Koran.

(2) Qazi Abdul Haque.

like other cravings of nature, being duly gratified, may lead to the perfect safety and the complete security of social morality. Thus the Islamic system of marriage, harmonising with the practical need and requirements of mankind, gains fresh lustre when brought under the search-light of unbiassed criticism. The Prophet's example in the matter of marriage is specially striking. It refutes the commonplace objection of ignorant people, that it is impossible to deal fairly with more than one wife. One need not waste time and energy in discussing the practicability of monogamy or polygamy for mankind. The example of the Prophet is vividly before us. He had as many as nine wives, but how lovingly and fairly he behaved towards them, is known to all students of religion. The love he bore to each individual wife, and the consummate spirit of good will that characterised the mutual relation of the Prophet and his wives, is above the possibility of suspicion. We have the absolutely credible evidence of the wives themselves. They state him to be the embodiment of love and justice¹. Never was there any real grievance on the part of the wives against his treatment. The Prophet with his perfect example has proved up to the hilt, that it is quite possible for a polygamous husband to maintain justice and equality of treatment among his wives, if only he has a mind to do so. When the Prophet could do perfect justice towards nine, there should be no reason why we cannot do justice towards only four, even less than half the number. The excess allowed to the Prophet is not to permit him to indulge in sensuality, as certain critics would have us believe, for the Prophet's life is unsullied and above such base charges, but it is meant to show to the world how the Prophet was endowed with superhuman feeling of love and affection towards his wives. It was also intended to show the Moslems how it was within the range of possibility, to deal kindly and justly with a plurality of wives. He left no room for discussion. He acted and asked his followers to act. Polygamy must not be discarded, if it be found conducive to social happiness, on the clumsy pretext that it is impossible to live smoothly with more than one wife. The Prophet did live peacefully with nine wives, and we Moslems can also do so, under given conditions, with four wives, if we follow the noble example of the Holy Prophet in all our doings and actions. It is only when we fail to live up to the standard of the Prophet's perfect manners, that we fail to secure a peaceful and loving attitude towards a plurality of wives, nay even towards a single wife.

The natural causes that go to prove the necessity of polygamy are many. According to the Pioneer (Allahabad, India) infant mortality in India,

(1) Ibn Athir, Abul Feda, Sir W. Muir & c. & c.

is always very high and there is no province where the returns are more lamentable than Bengal. In the annual report of the Sanitary Commission for 1912, it is stated that nearly 34,000 children died during the first year of their existence, this representing a loss of twenty one per cent of the births. Under these conditions the only way to protect the numerical strength of the human race against the undermining effect of infantile diseases, is to resort to polygamy. Heat that engenders sickness cannot be prevented ; therefore it is impossible to better the climate of the hot region in this direction at least. As long as the maladies, fatal for children, cannot be effectively combated, it is unwise not to adopt another counter-active measure. If mortality cannot be reduced, the birth rate should be increased to a very high degree. The fatal influence of the sickness can be encountered by producing a large number of healthy children, so that a good number of children may survive the bad effect of the climate. This necessitates Polygamy. By two or more wives one can beget more children, and thus contribute to the preservation of the human race. The high number will make up for the increased death-rate among the young, and keep the population from dwindling.

This is one of the many natural reasons that go to prove the necessity of polygamy¹.

The writer takes this opportunity to point out, that our critic friends have no cause to lose their temper at the mention of polygamy. Islam does not enforce polygamy. It enjoins marriage where no disabilities stand in the way. Monogamy is the general rule, polygamy is a provision for urgent emergencies. It is unwise to question the general wisdom of an institution in exceptional cases. If a man can be content with one wife, Islam does not compel him to resort to polygamy. If Christian critics find that their way of living obviates the necessity of a plurality of wives, they are not bound to have recourse to polygamy. Let them live with one wife and refrain from reviling Islam, as Islam does not make polygamy obligatory. If they clearly understand the problem of polygamy, I hope they will come to entertain a better feeling towards the law of the Holy Prophet. Islam simply permits polygamy, if one cannot live in happiness and piety with one wife. But if Christians can live piously and happily with one wife, Islam does not interfere. Islam is as much monogamous as Christianity, the difference being, that the former makes a provision for urgent needs, with due regard to the rights of the wife, whereas the latter does not. Should a man fail to find any emergency calling for a plurality

(1) Physical inability on the part of a married woman to fulfil the duties of marriage is evidently a justification of polygamy, for instance.

of wives, let him live with one wife, and Islam will not be a bar in his way.

Polygamy is not essential in Islam. To consider polygamy an essential in Islam, would be an unpardonable mistake. In fact, the teaching of the Koran is to the contrary, and strongly recommends monogamy, as already shown. Islam claims to be a universal religion. It was not revealed to meet the requirements of a particular race or age; with its world-wide mission, Islam had to look to the requirements of all ages, countries, and civilisations. Besides the substantial laws, the code of Islam, as every wise legislation must do, provides certain ordinances which may be looked upon as auxiliary or remedial laws, with an elasticity to meet the contingencies of place and time. It deprecates their abuses, and lays down proper restrictions as to their use.

The events of the world sometimes give rise to circumstances which cause appreciable paucity in the number of men. Inter-tribal or international wars often lead to the same result; and leave numberless members of the weaker sex without home or protection. The great European war (1914-18) is a quite recent example of international calamity that caused an unimaginable decrease in the number of males, leaving hundreds of thousands of females without guardians or protectors. With all our refined ideas of chivalry and broadmindedness, no other institution than marriage can safely come to save the situation. Other measures under similar circumstances have been schemed and resorted to, but they could not avoid undesirable results. To maintain strict continence and piety in society, Islam would not recommend any woman to seek refuge under the roof of any man who does not stand in marital, or within the prohibited degree of relation to her. Our experience also goes for to endorse the advisability of Islamic policy in this respect. Polygamy is the only specific remedy to meet the need. But woman has not been left without her own choice in the matter. To secure her peace, comfort, and happiness, if she needs no other help or protection, no Moslem would compel her to marry a man who is already the husband of another woman. Thus polygamy, as said before, is a sort of remedial law in Islam which may come into operation when opportunity arises, and should not be resorted to when there is no occasion for it. It is not only for connubial purposes, that equality of number in men and women is a necessity. In human life there are occasions when only men are in requisition. How to fill up the shattered ranks, if similar calamities cause the dearth of men? The only two resorts left are either to encourage bastardy or adopt polygamy. To recruit the number no one having the least sense of decency, would recommend the former measure. One, indeed, cannot understand the wisdom

of the law in the West which, practically speaking, condones what it condemns under the name of bigamy. Marriage after all is only a union of man and woman which under specified formalities received the sanction of society. Therefore, if the special circumstances of an age do demand the multiplication of units in a nation, why not legalise what has already received the sanction of practice and usage, and save thousands and thousands of souls from the ignominy of being called 'bastard' sons or daughters, and thus give them the right to inherit from those who gave them their body? It would tend to improve morality, and enhance the sacredness of nuptial rights. Thus, polygamy sometimes becomes a national necessity.

This institution has also its legitimate uses in individual cases as well. Propagation of one's species is the most important of all the purposes of marriage, and if all hopes of an issue through the first wife are at an end, there seem to be only three ways open to a man: either to divorce his wife; to deny himself the pleasure of having issue—the desire of nearly every married man; or to wait till the death of the wife, and spoil his whole life. Is not then a second contemporaneous marriage to be preferred to any of the above alternatives? A man may do it and save heart-burnings, if he is strongly attached to his first wife. The case of Napoleon presents a good illustration. He had to divorce his well-beloved wife, Josephine, a lady possessing virtues and abilities of a very high order. There was the warmest attachment between the two, but Napoleon could not have issue from her, and the country therefore insisted upon her divorce. The account of her divorce, as related by historians and biographers, is extremely pathetic. Napoleon married another wife, he reigned splendidly and enjoyed the benefits of a prosperous kingdom; then came calamities, upon him, which continued until his death. Josephine had been divorced, but their love for each other underwent no change. She remembered him with ardent love and sympathy in his troubles and calamities as in the days of happiness. But the strong cord which bound them together had snapped asunder. If polygamy had been allowed—and this was, I say, one of the rare occasions where the jurists of Islam have sanctioned polygamy—Napoleon and his widow, would not have suffered this extreme affliction. Moslem ladies have often allowed their husbands in such cases to take another wife and beget an issue¹.

Of course, those who indulge in polygamy without obvious reasons, are not acting in accordance with the spirit of their religion. Islam placed

(1) 'Muslim Home' by H. H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam Sahiba, Ruler of Bhopal, India.

the institution under restrictions which gradually proved to be a most efficacious check to polygamy, and made the largest portion of the Moslem world observe strict monogamy. The best check indeed has been provided in the very verse of the Koran which is held to authorise polygamy: "Then marry what seems good to you of women, two, three or four (wives); but if ye fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one (wife) only¹."

In this verse the licence given to polygamy is curtailed by the proviso which enjoins strict equity and justice towards all wives as obligatory on man. In case a man feared that he could not act equitably and justly between his wives, he was directed to be content with one wife only. The word 'fear' in the verse deserves special notice; that is to say, if a man is afraid that he will not be able to comply with the proviso, he must not go beyond one wife. And it need hardly be pointed out, how difficult it is to give every one his (or her) own just due; nor is every one able to do it. Nay, the Book of God itself admits in another verse the inability of man, to observe the required equality of treatment in every respect to all of his wives, and thus emphasises the desirability of having only one wife; but suggests, at the same time, a very wise course to those who under unavoidable circumstances have been compelled to have more than one wife. The verse is as follows: "And ye can never act equitably between women, although ye covet (it); but turn not with all partiality (towards one of them) nor leave the other like one who is in suspense; but if ye be reconciled, and fear (to do wrong), verily God is Forgiving, Compassionate²." Again: "And if a wife fear ill-usage or aversion from her husband, it shall be no crime in them both that they should be reconciled among themselves with some reconciliation; for reconciliation is best. And souls are prone to avarice; but if ye be good and God-fearing, verily God knows what ye do³."

It will thus be clear from the above instructions that when a man has married two wives in the belief that he is able to treat them equitably, and he then finds that he is inclined towards the one to a degree amounting to aversion against the other, and is prepared to divorce one of his wives, the above verses lay down directions for the guidance of both man and wife, namely, that they should come to an understanding between themselves and be reconciled—the wife by foregoing some of her rights, and the man by self-control. This would save each of them the troubles attendant upon a divorce.

(1) Koran IV : 3.

(2) Koran IV : 129.

(3) Koran IV : 128.

But the best remedy to avoid future unpleasantness lies in the hand of the woman in Islam, where marriage is a civil contract and can be saddled with adequate conditions, to violate which would in itself bring marriage to nullity. Thus, a woman who fears the possibility of a second-marriage on the part of her betrothed, can make provisions against its unpleasant effects, before she is married. She may get such special damages, as are provided in the contract of marriage, when the contingency arises; she may have the option of living separately from her husband with a suitable maintenance; or get herself divorced and lead an independent life, and recover damages as well. But this should all be provided for in the contract of marriage.

“Polygamy in a word, in Islam, is a remedy. It has its uses and abuses. Islam guards against the latter, and allows the former under restrictions and within stringent limits. More knowledge of human needs and exigencies would enlighten the world and enable it to see the necessity of allowing an institution, like polygamy, with its rare and limited use as in Islam¹.”

Polygamy is not an institution originated by Islam. “Now Mohammed,” writes Mr. B. Smith, “was a legislator and a statesman, as well as the founder of a religion and why is the defence which we allow to Solon, and the praise we bestow upon the limited scope of the Mosaic legislation, denied to Islam?”

“Polygamy is, indeed, next to caste, the most blighting institution, to which a nation can become a prey. It pollutes society at the fountain-head, for the family is the source of all political and all social virtues. Mohammed would have more than doubled the debt of gratitude the Eastern world owes to him, had he swept it away; but he could not have done so, even if he had fully seen its evil. It is not fair to represent polygamy as a part of Mohammedanism any more than it is fair to represent slavery as a part of Christianity. The one co-exists with the other, without being mixed with it, even as the muddy Arve and the clear Rhone keep their currents distinct, long after they have been united in one river bed. Perhaps it is strange that they ever could have co-existed, even for a day; but we have to deal with facts as they are, and it is a fact, that slavery has co-existed with Christianity, nay, has professed to justify itself by Christianity even till this nineteenth century. Mohammed could not have made a ‘tabula rasa’ of Eastern society, but what he could do he did. He at least put strict limitations on the unbounded licence of Eastern polygamy, and the facility of

(1) H. H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam Sahiba, Ruler of Bhopal, India.

Eastern divorce. If the social touch-stone of a religion is the way, in which it regards the poor and the oppressed, Mohammed's religion can stand the test. He improved the condition of women by freeing them from the arbitrary patriarchal power of the parents or the heirs of the husbands, by inculcating just and kind treatment of them by their husbands themselves, by giving them legal rights in case of unfair treatment, and by absolutely prohibiting the incestuous marriages which were rife in the times of ignorance, and the still more horrible practice of the burying alive of female infants. Nor was this all, for besides imposing restrictions on polygamy, by his severe laws at first, and by the strong moral sentiment aroused by these laws afterwards, he has succeeded, down to this very day, and to a greater extent than has ever been the case elsewhere, in freeing all Mohammedan countries from those professional outcasts who live by their own misery, and by their existence as a recognised class, are a standing reproach to every member of the society, of which they form part¹."

XVI

The Status of Women in Islam

It has been said that Islam, as a social system, has been a total failure, because "it has misunderstood the relations of sexes . . . and by degrading women, has degraded each successive generation of their children down an increasing scale of infamy and corruption, until it seems almost impossible to reach a lower depth of vice." This is certainly strong language and calls for an investigation, as to whether Islam has really misunderstood the relations of the sexes, and whether it has really degraded women.

Very few of the critics take pains to determine what actually are the teachings of Islam in this respect, as embodied in the Holy Koran; and fewer still is the number of those who care to study the life of the Prophet, which is the most authentic commentary on the text of the Holy Book. It is therefore most regrettable that misconception should have arisen about the status of women in Islam — a point, on which the attitude of Islam is clear and unmistakable. I am afraid, many in Europe and in America form such strange opinions from a study of the tales of romance or books of travelling, written by professional globe-trotters. They see in the "harem," which is by the way a name in the East for the ladies' apartment, a home of gross sensuality and voluptuous pleasures. Such ideas have unfortunately prevailed in the West for a very long time; and supported by

(1) "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" by R. B. Smith, M. A., pp. 174-176.

the wrong interpretations that have been put, from time to time, on certain verses of the Koran and certain sayings of the Prophet of Islam, they have a firm hold on the imagination of the critics of the West.

One of the verses of exquisite beauty which have been subject to misconstruction in certain quarters, is : "They (the wives) are a garment for you and you are a garment for them." It is garment that hides one's nakedness ; so do husband and wife, by entering into marriage relations, secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body ; so does the husband find comfort in his wife's company, as she in his. The garment is the grace, the beauty, the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands, as the husbands, to them.

Another verse which has been similarly misconstrued is the verse which the Rev. Rodwell translates thus : "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities, with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God hath of them been careful." From this verse several critics have drawn the erroneous inference that in Islam woman holds a very subordinate position, and that she has been placed under man's tyrannical sway, she having no choice but to submit to his arbitrary dictates and self-willed decrees. Even accepting the Rev. Rodwell's translation of the verse as correct, the sense of the verse appears to be nothing more than this : that man should treat his wife with love and affection and provide for her from his abundance, while woman should preserve her honour, attend to domestic duties and look up to him as her friend, philosopher and guide. Understood thus, the verse has nothing revolting to our feelings, and describes the relationship between husband and wife as it naturally ought to be. There is nothing in the verse to imply that the wife's judgment is in any way fettered, that she is simply the slave of her husband's desires, or that she is at best an 'ornamental article of furniture.' Neither, according to respectable commentators of the Koran, does the verse admit of the meaning which superficial critics have wilfully put upon it. These commentators understand the verse to point out a man's right to exercise a certain control over his wife, and his duty to provide for her security and sustenance. The superiority of man over woman rests on certain innate qualities which man generally possesses in greater proportion, in regard to knowledge and power. In power of endurance, in audacity and courage, man has a decided advantage over his fair sister. Prophets, apostles, distinguished philosophers and commanders of armies have all been men, not women. Lecky, himself undoubtedly a clear thinker and discerning critic, while discoursing on the distinctive difference between the sexes,

observes thus : "Physically, men have the indisputable superiority in strength, and women in beauty. Intellectually, a certain inferiority of the female sex can hardly be denied, when we remember how almost exclusively the foremost places in every department of science, literature and art have been occupied by man... It is as impossible to find a female Raphael, or a female Handel, as a female Shakespeare, or Newton." Lecky, however, thinks, and perhaps rightly enough, that morally the general superiority of women over men is unquestionable. Be that as it may, when once we admit the physical and intellectual superiority of man over woman, we cannot deny that woman has to depend upon, and take advantage of, the intellectual resources and superior strength of the opposite sex; and this is precisely what Moslem doctors hold to be the import and significance of the verse under consideration.

Some critics made needless comments on the following saying of the Prophet : "Treat women with kindness, for woman was made of a rib which is crooked in the upper part; if you try to bend it straight, you will break it, and if you leave it as it is, it will remain so." In these words the Prophet only appeals to the good sense of man and the kindness of his heart, by reminding him of the natural weaknesses of the fair sex; so that we may not expect of women things out of proportion to their talents and capabilities; for in such expectations we are likely to be disappointed, and our disappointment may tempt us to accord to them harsh treatment. The Prophet, therefore, exhorts his followers to be rather generous and forgiving than severely exacting and calculating. It is as if the Prophet said to his followers : "I am giving you sound advice relative to what your treatment should be towards women, carry out therefore my will respecting them. Do good to them; and be not angry with them, if they act in a way not acceptable to you, unless, of course, the deed involves any positive sin; for, they are made of a crooked rib (and, as such, are naturally liable to error.)

Elsewhere, the Prophet has positively warned us against running after scandals and constant searching after the secrets and faults of women, since such a course of action may impair the conjugal relations, and finally lead to the absolute dissolution of the marriage bond.

Close acquaintance with the teachings of Islam repudiates the false charge, that the Prophet is responsible for the degradation of woman. The Prophet saw the weak points of woman's character, as well as its strong points. He regarded woman as physically and intellectually inferior to man in general, but richer in nobler emotions of the heart, in tenderness and delicacy of feeling. No body can be so bold as to say, that the Prophet saw nothing good in woman, and conceived her to be a bundle

of unmixed evils. He said : "Let not any Moslem be harsh in his treatment of his wife ; for if certain aspects of her conduct displease the husband, certain others will please him." He neither desired that woman should be the bond-slave of her husband, nor did he countenance the idea, that woman should be so far free as to overstep her proper limits and encroach upon the sphere of her husband. On the principle of division of labour, Islam assigns to each a particular sphere of work, on the faithful discharge of which depends the happiness of hearth and home. Woman, in her capacity of a good mother and a devoted wife, is the queen of her home, while the husband is to protect her from all danger and temptation, earn his bread by the sweat of his brow in the open world, and provide for the maintenance of the family. In connection with this setting apart of spheres of work with regard to the nature, constitution, mental habitude and position of the person concerned, the Prophet of Islam said : "All of you are so many sovereigns, and all of you will be required to render account in respect of whatever persons or things you have under your charge. So the chief who is sovereign over his subjects, shall be questioned about the treatment he accorded to men placed under his control ; the head of the family is the sovereign of the house and he shall be questioned with respect to the members of the house ; and woman is sovereign in the house of her husband, and rules her children and she shall be questioned about these, and the slave is sovereign over his master's belongings, and he shall be questioned about them."

The ruling idea in the teachings of Islam with regard to man and woman, is that the husband and the wife should supplement each other, call into play the distinctive excellence of their respective character, and, in mutual confidence, strive to work out their united happiness. Woman is to exercise her beneficent, humanising influence over her husband, soften the hardness of his nature and level down the stiffness of his character ; while man, for his part, is to educate her mind and help her to realise those womanly qualities, in which she by her very nature excels. This is the conception of wife hood which the Prophet of Islam favoured, as is inferred from some of his sayings. "A woman is married for four reasons," said he, "either in consideration of her wealth, or her noble parentage, or her beauty, or her piety. Succeed then in getting a woman of piety for your wife, for she is to her husband a helper in life, and she remains content with little."

On another occasion he told a certain woman who had brought a complaint against her husband : "There is no woman who removes something to replace it in a proper place, with a view to decorate her husband's house, but that God sets it down as a virtue for her. Nor is

there a man who walks with his wife hand in hand, but that God sets it down as a virtue for him ; and if he puts his arm round her neck in love, his virtue will be increased tenfold.”

Once again, he was heard praising the women of the Koreish, “because,” said he, “they are the kindest to their children while they are infants, and because they keep a careful watch over the belongings of their husbands.”

In another instance the Prophet of Islam said : “There are four things, such that if a person is endowed with any one of these, it is as if the blessings of both worlds were showered upon him : first, a heart that is grateful ; second a tongue that utters constantly the name of God ; third, a mind that is patient and calm amid troubles ; fourth, a wife that is never guilty of a breach of trust, either in respect of her own person or in respect of her husband’s property.”

I will now give some further sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, on the question under discussion, which I hope will shed more light on the position assigned to women in Islam.

1. “Among my followers the best of men are they who are best to their wives, and the best of women are they who are best to their husbands.... To each of such women is set down the reward equivalent to the reward of a thousand martyrs... Among my followers, again, the best of women are they who assist their husbands in their work, and love them dearly for everything, save what is a transgression of God’s laws. The best of men, on the other hand, are they who treat their wives with the kindness of a mother to her children. To each of such men is set down a reward equivalent to that of a hundred martyrs.” On being asked by Omar, who afterwards rose to be the second Caliph, why woman’s reward should be ten times greater than man’s, the Prophet said : “Do not you know that woman deserves greater reward than man ? for, verily, Almighty God exalts the position of a man in heaven, because his wife was pleased with him and prayed for him.”

2. “The best among you is he who is the kindest to his wife, and I am the kindest of you all to my wives.”

3. “What are the rights that a wife has over her husband ?” asked Moawiyah ; and the Prophet forthwith replied : “Feed her when thou takest thy food ; give her clothes to wear when thou wearest clothes, refrain from either giving a slap on her face or even abusing her ; separate not from thy wife, save within the house.”

4. “Verily, of the believers he has the most perfect faith who has the

best manners, and shows the greatest kindness to his wife and children.”

5. “Fear God in regard to the treatment of your wives, for verily they are your helpers. You have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful by the words of God.”

6. Once the Prophet portrayed an ideal wife in the following words : “She is the ideal wife who pleases thee when thou lookest at her, obeys thee when thou givest her direction ; and protects her honour and thy property when thou art away.”

7. “The world is full of objects of joy and delight, and the best and the most profitable source of delight is a pious, chaste woman.”

8. “Paradise lies at the feet of mothers.”

9. “Search after knowledge is obligatory both on Moslem men and Moslem women.”

1. The Object of Marriage

The object of marriage was defined by the Prophet in clear unambiguous words. It was never meant to be a means of satisfying the sensual appetite ; but, on the other hand, it was instituted, in the first place, as a safe-guard against lewdness and incontinence, and, in the second place, as a means of procreation. It is on these and similar grounds, that he always encouraged a married life in preference to a life of celibacy, and laid so much stress on the piety and fruitfulness of women. “Whoever marries a woman solely for her power and position,” said the Prophet, “God but increases his humiliation ; whoever marries a woman solely for her wealth, God but increases his poverty ; whoever marries a woman solely for her beauty, God but increases his ugliness ; but whoever marries a woman, in order that he may restrain his eyes, observe continence, and treat his relations kindly, God putteth a blessedness in her for him, and in him for her.”

Thus piety and continence are uppermost in the conception of Islam, as the prime motive of marriage. This is clear enough in another saying of the Prophet. “There are three persons,” said he, “whom the Almighty Himself has undertaken to help—first, he who seeks to buy his freedom ; second, he who marries with a view to secure his chastity ; and third, he who fights in the cause of God.”

Another saying of the Prophet is equally clear on this point : “He who marries, completes half his religion ; it now rests with him to complete

the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of God."

That Islam viewed marriage as means of procreation, and not for gratification of sensual desires, is clear from a short but pregnant saying of the Prophet: "Marry and generate." On another occasion he said: "Marry a woman who holds her husband extremely dear, and who is richly fruitful."

The Prophet advised great circumspection in the selection of the bride, and even permitted that the intended bride be seen, before her betrothal, by him who seeks her hand, lest a blunder in choice or an error of judgment should defeat the very end of marriage.

2. Marriage and Divorce

The laws of marriage and divorce were so framed by the Prophet, that they may ensure the permanence of marriage relations, without impairing individual freedom. These laws display a wonderful insight into human nature, inasmuch as they never lose sight of exceptional circumstances, requiring special treatment. In the formulation of the laws of marriage and divorce, extremes have been avoided in favour of a golden mean. If, under certain circumstances, more than one wife is permitted, or dissolution of marriage is favoured, it is because of the operation of the same principle of flexibility that governs the entire body of the Islamic laws. It is certain that the Islamic laws of marriage and divorce have been abused; and sometimes flouted in certain Moslem lands; but the laws themselves are not responsible for the delinquencies of the individual.

The Islamic laws have recognised women as free and responsible members of society, and have assigned to them a convenient position. A Moslem woman is entitled to a share in the patrimony, along with her brothers, and though the proportion is different, the distinction is founded on a just appreciation of the relative position of brother and sister. No male member of the family, not even her husband, can manipulate her property which during the marriage remains absolutely **her** own and quite at her disposal. The exigible portion of the stipulated dower is payable to her on demand, as soon as the status of marriage is established, and the deferred portion on the termination of the marital relation, unless the woman is guilty of a manifest wrong. Under the Moslem law, the dower settled upon the wife, is an obligation imposed by the law on the husband, as a mark of respect for the wife, the non-specification of which, at the time of marriage, does not affect the validity of the marriage. In the event

of dissolution of marriage, the husband can retain no part of the wife's property, including her ante-nuptial settlement; and, if the administration of the wife's estate was entrusted to him, he must render the wife an account of such administration. Her property is in fact jealously guarded on all sides, and no restrictions are placed on the individual right she has in her belongings. She possesses the right of dividing and alienating her property, and this right of alienation is in regard, not only to her husband but to every body else. She can sue her husband, as she can sue her other debtors, in the open court. She does not require her husband or father, to represent her at law. She can act as an executive and can enter into any contract independently.

A Moslem wife retains her distinct individuality even after marriage, and she never assumes her husband's name. Coverture has no place in the marriage of Islam.

Marriage under Islam is but a civil contract, and not a sacrament, in the sense that those who are once joined in wed-lock can never be separated. It may be controlled, and under certain circumstances, dissolved by the will of the parties concerned. Public declaration is no doubt necessary, but it is not a condition of the validity of the marriage. Nor is any religious ceremony deemed absolutely essential. Two witnesses are required to attest that the contract has been concluded¹.

(1) The whole history of the Christian laws, of marriage and divorce, furnishes a very interesting and instructive reading to a Moslem jurist: for, he perceives, perhaps not without a feeling of just pride, that his Christian brethren are coming nearer to Islam, at least in their conception of marriage and the relations to which it gives rise. In all European countries, the laws relating to marriage and divorce have been revised and recast, and the changes introduced, when examined will be found to exhibit in some of their broad features, a very close analogy to the Islamic laws, framed several centuries before. Thus, in Germany, for instance, the code of 1900 recognises civil marriages alone. 'It is effected by the declaration of the parties before a Registrar, in the presence of each other, of their intention to be married. Two witnesses of full age must be present. The Registrar asks each of the parties whether he or she will marry the other, and on their answer in the affirmative, declares them duly married, and enters them in the register. The marriage must be preceded by a public notice.' Dissolution of marriage has long been recognised in Germany and the United States of America. In England, divorces were very rare till 1857, when the powers exercised in matrimonial matters by the house of Lords, the Ecclesiastical Courts of Common Law were transferred to a lay court termed, 'The Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes,' and constituted for the administration of all matters connected with divorce. In France, a similar change came about in the year 1884. In Italy divorces are still almost unknown.

3. The Guardian and the Consent of the Bride

Though the Islamic Laws recognise the consent of a woman as an indispensable element of a valid marriage, they recommend that the consent of her guardian be also taken. Moslem jurists are, no doubt, divided in their opinions, as to whether the consent of the bride's guardian is essential, but they all agree in holding that 'a woman who is sui-juris can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent.' According to the Hanafi Islamic School of Law, the capacity of a woman who is adult and of sound mind, to contract herself in marriage, is absolute. The same school explicitly lays down that 'a woman who is adult and of sound mind may be married by virtue of her own consent, although the contract may not have been made or acceded to by her guardian, and this whether she be a virgin, or a 'Thayyiba'.' On the same principle, the marriage of an adult woman under compulsion, has been held to be invalid. It is related on good authority, that an adult woman who was married by her father to a man against her will, came and spoke about it to the Prophet who declared the marriage void. According to the Hanafi School also, the marriage of a minor under compulsion of her father or grand-father, holds good, on the assumption that a marriage thus contracted is, prima facie, in the best interests of the child, and therefore she cannot cancel the contract of marriage when she arrives at her full age, unless there be good grounds for such a step. If, however she was given in marriage by a guardian, other than her father or grand-father, she can exercise, if she like, 'the option of puberty,' and ask the Court to set aside the marriage.

It is clear, then, that under the Hanafi School of law, a marriage can be contracted with or without a guardian, provided the girl is adult and has given her consent to the contract.

The Shafei and the Maleki Schools of law, on the other hand, maintain that a maiden cannot personally consent to her marriage. According to them, the Wali's (the guardian's) consent, in the case of a maiden, is one of the essential factors of marriage, though not in the case of a thayyiba. The distinction seems to have been derived from the idea that a thayyiba's judgment is naturally more reliable than a virgin's, and that she is expected to understand better the nature of the marriage contract. In support of their view they refer to the tradition, related by Ayesha, that the Prophet said that the contract of marriage is absolutely void, if a woman enters into such without the consent of her guardian.

(1) Namely, a girl who is not a virgin; a widow or a divorced woman.

The great majority of the girls being quite innocent of the nature of the contract, it is therefore necessary that the guardian of the girl should intervene and protect her from being duped by interested persons, or from the evil consequences likely to flow from the choice of the girl, when injudicious or against her own interest.

4. The Inequality of the Two Sexes with regard to Divorce

Marriage being regarded as a civil contract and as such not indissoluble, the Islamic law naturally recognises the right in both the parties, to dissolve the contract under certain given circumstances. Divorce, then, is a natural corollary to the conception of marriage as a contract, and it is regrettable that it should have furnished European critics a handle for attack. Even Sale, that eminent scholar, has fallen into the same error; for he too seems to entertain the view, that the Islamic law permits a man to repudiate his wife "even on the slightest disgust¹." Whether the law permits, or favours, repudiation on the slightest disgust, we shall presently see. But as to the other point raised by the same learned critic, namely; the inequality of the two sexes in regard to the right of obtaining a divorce, one has to remember that this inequality is more seeming than real. The theory of marriage, no doubt, points to a subordination of the wife to her husband, because of her comparative inferiority in discretionary powers; but in practice the hands of the husbands are fettered in more ways than one. The theoretical discretion must not be understood as giving a tacit sanction to the excesses of a brutal husband; on the other hand it is intended to guard against the possible dangers of an imperfect judgment. The relations between the members of the opposite sexes which marriage legalises are, however, so subtle and delicate, and require such constant adjustment, involving the fate and well-being of the future generations, that in their regulation the law considers it expedient to allow the voice of one partner, more or less, predominance over that of the other².

Perhaps it is here worthy of notice that in Europe the two sexes are not placed on an equal footing in respect of the right of divorce. Lord Helier, P. C., K. C. B., who was President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, 1892-1905, observes on this point: "Much comment has been made on the different grounds, on which

(1) G. Sale's Prelim. Disc. to his translation of the Koran. Sec. vi.

(2) Mohamman Jurisprudence, page 327.

divorce is allowed to a husband and to a wife,—it being necessary to prove infidelity in both cases, but a wife being compelled to show either an aggravation of that offence or an addition to it. Opinions probably will always differ whether the two sexes should be placed on an equality in this respect, abstract justice being invoked, and the idea of marriage as a mere contract, pointing in one direction, and social considerations in the other. But the reason of the legislature for making the distinction, is clear. It is that the wife is entitled to an absolute divorce only if her reconciliation with her husband is neither to be expected nor desired. This was no doubt the view taken by the House of Lords¹."

5. Limitations of Divorce

A Moslem is not free to exercise the right of divorce "on the slightest disgust." The law has put many limitations upon the exercise of this power. Then, again, the example and precepts of the Prophet in this particular, have rendered divorce, most repellent to the Moslem mind. A Moslem is permitted to have recourse to divorce, provided there be ample justification for such an extreme measure. The whole Koran expressly forbids a man to seek pretexts for divorcing his wife, so long as she remains faithful and obedient to him, "If they (namely, women) obey you, then do not seek a way against them²." The law gives to the man primarily the faculty of dissolving the marriage, if the wife, by her indocility or her bad character, renders the married life unhappy; but in the absence of serious reasons, no Moslem can justify a divorce, either in the eyes of religion or the law. If he abandons his wife or puts her away from simple caprice, he draws upon himself the divine anger, for 'the curse of God' said the Prophet, 'rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously.'

Intrinsically, divorce is an evil, and must be regarded as such, wherever there is the least respect for the law of God and the precepts of the Prophet. The pagan Arab, before the time of the Prophet, was absolutely free to repudiate his wife or wives, whenever it suited his whim or purpose. He was not bound to offer any reasons for the exercise of the power of divorce. The mere expression of his will was enough to effect a separation. The wife was a mere plaything. Sometimes the husband would

(1) The Review of Religion, April, 1913.

(2) Koran. IV : 34. Obedience here signifies obedience to man only in matters recommended by the law of God. This significance is made clear by a comparison with Koran, 33 : 31, 33 : 35 and 66 : 5. This verse Al Ghazali holds to mean "Seek not a pretext for separation."

revoke the divorce and again divorce her, and again take her back, to divorce her again, and so on indefinitely. Sometimes, again, she was divorced, but she was not free to marry. Women under such circumstances, were in a perpetual state of suspense, as it were. At last, the Prophet, the Mercy for the Universe, came. He declared divorce to be 'the most disliked of lawful things in the sight of God.' He was indeed never tired of expressing his abhorrence of divorce. Once he said : 'God created not anything on the face of the earth which He loveth more than the act of manumission, nor did He create anything on the face of the earth which He detesteth more than the act of divorce.' On another occasion he said : 'Forbidden is the fragrance of paradise to her who demands divorce from her husband without unavoidable reasons.' Nor is this all. The Prophet actually imposed many conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce, and so vehemently did he protect the women against the tyranny of their husbands, that there soon grew up a general feeling among the women of the time, that the Prophet would defend their cause, whether it be just or unjust, and that his decision would be invariably in their favour. His defence of the cause of women, and of orphans and of children, had in fact passed into a byword.

In the Holy Koran, there is a most edifying verse which is generally overlooked. "Associate with the wives," so runs the verse, "with goodness ; and if ye dislike them, it may be that ye dislike a thing and God may put abundant good in it¹." Thus the Koran enjoins forbearance, even with a wife one does not like. One really wonders at the boldness of the critics who say that the law of Islam permits divorce "even on the slightest disgust."

Many and various are the sayings of the Prophet of Islam that teach love, untiring patience, forgiving disposition and, above all, fear of God in the treatment of women. "The man who bears with the ill manners of his wife," said the Prophet, "shall receive from God rewards equivalent to what the Lord gave unto Job, when he suffered his affliction : And to the woman who bears with the ill manners of her husband, God granteth rewards equivalent to what He granted to Assiyah, the wife of Pharaoh."

The great Moslem commentator, Al Ghazali, observes that divorce is allowable when the object is not to trouble the wife by divorcing her without just grounds, as refractory or unseemly behaviour on her part, or extreme necessity on the part of the husband.

It is clear, then, that Islam discourages divorce in principle, and permits it only when it has become altogether impossible for the parties, to

(1) Koran.

live together in peace and harmony. It avoids, therefore, greater evil by choosing the lesser one, and opens a way for the parties to seek agreeable companions and, thus, to accommodate themselves more comfortably in their new homes.

For, under Islam, a divorced woman, like the husband who divorces her, acquires the right of marrying any person she or he likes, the moment the separation is recognised by the law¹.

Fully recognising the evils that arise from divorce, the Prophet of Islam took very cautious steps in framing the laws; and the ruling idea seems to be, that divorce should be permitted only when marriage fails in its effects, and the parties cease to fulfil the duties that spring from the marriage relation. There is in fact no justification for permanently yoking together two hostile souls, who might make themselves quite comfortable in new homes, if they were permitted to effect a separation. To compel them to live together "in pursuance of a most vexatious law under a yoke of the heaviest slavery,—for such is marriage without love—would indeed be a hardship more cruel than any divorce whatever. God, therefore, gave laws of divorce, in their proper use, most equitable and humane²." For, most appalling consequences sometimes follow, unless divorce is permitted where it is desirable. Justinian the great Roman emperor, had to repeal the prohibition of his predecessor on divorce by mutual consent, despite the opposition of the clergy, and the ground stated by the enactment was, that it was difficult "to reconcile those who once came to hate each other and who, if compelled to live together, frequently attempted each other's lives." "He yielded" writes Gibbon, "to the prayers of his unhappy subjects, and restored the liberty of divorce by mutual consent, the civilians were unanimous, the theologians were divided, and the ambiguous word³ which contains the precepts of Christ, is flexible to any interpretation that the wisdom of a legislature can demand."

6. Islam's Suggestions for Reconciliation

A careful study of the laws of the Koran which relate to marriage and divorce, will show that the spirit of the verses unmistakably points to a

(1) With Christians the case is not so: Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Matt. v: 32.

(2) A Treatise on Christian Doctrine by J. Milton.

(3) St. Matt. v. 32.

prevention of divorce, and that everywhere a reconciliation is recommended in the most appealing terms. Before the parties proceed to the extremity of divorce for unavoidable reasons, it is expressly laid down, that all lawful means be adopted for avoiding a breach ; and it is only in the event of their failure that a separation is permitted, of course, as a last recourse. Under such extreme circumstances, divorce is not merely permissible, but has been held quite expedient, and recourse to it is recommended, in spite of deterrents, like poverty. It is believed, God Himself opens out many a way for those whose intentions are honest : “And if they separate, God will make them richer out of his abundance, for God is extensive and wise¹.” It is interesting to note that very nearly the same idea is expressed in the Koran where those who are single are exhorted to marry. “Marry those who are single among you, and such as are honest of your men-servants and your maid-servants, if they be poor, God will enrich them of His abundance².” It follows, then, that according to the Islamic laws, divorce, under certain circumstances, is as necessary as marriage.

The directions of the Koran in respect of the adoption of the courses that tend to make reconciliation possible, are as explicit as they are full of wisdom. Thus, in the chapter on women, we read :—

“Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband’s absence, because God hath of them been careful. But those, for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear, chide ; remove them into beds apart ; and chastise them, but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them : verily God is high and great. And if ye fear a breach between husband and wife, send a judge out of his family, and a judge out of her family : if they are desirous of agreement, God will effect a reconciliation between them ; for God is knowing and apprised of all³.”

If a woman is chaste and mindful of her duties as wife, the Islamic law makes it obligatory upon the husband to associate with her on the best of terms, and with kindness and courtesy. But, if she proves refractory in her behaviour, the law confers on the husband the power of correction if exercised in moderation⁴.”

(1) Koran. IV : 129.

(2) Koran. XXIV : 32.

(3) Koran. IV : 33, 34.

(4) The law of England similarly vested in the husband the right of chastising his wife for levity of conduct, “and the husband in quite recent times, was allowed to restrain her personal liberty, but his right so to do was first expressly negated by decision of the Court of Appeal in the year 1891.” Holland’s Jurisprudence, page 240.

The drift and tone of the verses quoted above, point to the desirability of exercising the power of correction in three degrés. He may begin with a reprimand, if her conduct calls for such. Then, if she still remains rebellious, he may banish her from his bed for a few days. If this also proves unavailing, he may next beat his wife, but not so as to cause her permanent injury, for he is not allowed to use violence, even under extreme provocation¹. In the event of the failure of all these expedients, divorce need not follow, but a resort to arbitrators is advised, each party being represented by a member of his or her family. The arbitrators after hearing both sides, shall endeavour by all possible means, to bring about a reconciliation. If their efforts prove unsuccessful, they may grant a repudiation, when empowered by both parties to do so.

The Holy Prophet, who no doubt understood the import of the Koranic verses better than anybody else, is reported on good authority to have said: "Feed thy wife as thou feedest thyself, clothe her as thou clothest thyself, strike her not on her face, separate not from her, except within the house; but if she persists in her refractoriness . . . begin with admonitions, and awaken in her the fear of God the Most High; if she does not submit, banish her from thy bed, and converse not with her for three days; if she still refuses to mend her manners, beat her but not so as to leave any mark on her person, as would be the case if a rod were used: for the object is to correct her, and not to destroy her. Should this course fail to mend matters, let the case be referred to two Moslem arbitrators, free and just, one chosen from the family of each of the parties; and they shall see whether in that particular case reconciliation or separation is desirable; and their decision shall be binding upon them both²."

When, however, the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband, the wife is certainly not given the power of correction, but then, she is empowered by the Islamic law to obtain a divorce, if she so desires. Before the advent of Islam, neither the Jews nor the Arabs recognised the right of divorce for women: and it was the Holy Koran that, for the first time in the history of Arabia, gave this great privilege to women. And, at the same time, it must be remembered, the spirit of the Koran is opposed to an indiscriminate exercise of this privilege. The Prophet warned women, not to play the hypocrite, and men are advised in the most emphatic terms, to refrain from seeking a breach, where a little moderation on

(1) "The Mohammdan Law," stated the Lord of the Privy Council, on a question of what is legal cruelty between man and wife, "would probably not differ materially from our own" (Abdul Kader 1886.)

(2) "Ghunyat el Talibeen ch : Manners of Marriage."

their part, may perhaps do away with the difference. I give below some of the verses of the Holy Koran, and the reader will see how they ask us to make allowance for the frailties, to which our human nature is prone, and in what manner a reconciliation is recommended. It is impossible to read the verses without being impressed with their appealing tone and graceful simplicity. "And if a woman," so runs the fine verse, "fear ill-usage or aversion, on the part of her husband, it shall be no fault in them, if they can agree with mutual agreement; for agreement is best¹. Souls are prone to avarice², but if ye act kindly and fear God, then verily your actions are not unnoticed by God. And ye will not have it at all in your power to treat your wives alike, even though you fain would do so; but yield not wholly to disinclination, so that ye leave one of them, as it were, in suspense; but if ye come to an understanding, and fear God, verily God is forgiving and merciful; but if they separate, God can compensate both out of His abundance, for God is vast and wise³."

We have seen, then, that divorce is permissible in Islam only in cases of extreme emergency. When all efforts for effecting a reconciliation have failed, the parties may proceed to a dissolution of the marriage by "Talaq" or by "Kholaa⁴," When the proposal of divorce proceeds from the husband, it is called "Talaq," and when it takes effect at the instance of the wife it is called "Kholaa."

Under many systems of law, divorce was certainly permitted, but it could not be revoked. But the Islam legislator, while he permitted divorce, recognised under certain circumstances, the right of return in the husband. This privilege, in the infancy of Islam, was indefinitely exercised, and often abused to the detriment of women, until the Prophet received revelations, setting limits to the act of divorce, and forbidding wanton cruelty to wives, by keeping them in suspense for an indefinite period⁵. "You may divorce

(1) To wit, agreement is better than separation, better than ill-usage and better than aversion. (Razi Commentary.)

(2) "Avarice" here implies whatever is an impediment to reconciliation. On the part of the wife it takes the form of an uncompromising attitude and a tenacious insistence on her rights which may prevent a meeting half-way; and as applied to the husband, it means unwillingness to associate with the wife for ugliness of her features or old age, or other like causes. (Razi Commentary.)

(3) Koran; IV, 127-129.

(4) There is a third way, also called "Mubarat," which is divorce by mutual consent.

(5) "A man divorced his wife, took her back, when the period of retirement was coming to an end, again divorced her, saying—By God, I will neither accept thee, nor allow thee freedom to marry another. So God revealed the verse: "You may divorce your wives etc." (Malik's Mowattaa.)

your wives, and then either retain them with humanity, or dismiss them with kindness¹." "When ye divorce women, and the time for sending them is come, either retain them with generosity, or put them away with generosity; but retain them not by constraint so as to be unjust towards them. He who doth so, indeed injures himself²."

7. The Form of Separation—A Check on Separation

The Holy Prophet imposed certain such conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce that while, on the one hand, they served as a powerful check on the injudicious and arbitrary use of this power, they afforded, on the other hand, many opportunities to the parties for an amicable agreement, if they so desired. Of the several forms of divorce recognised by Islamic law, the one that bears the impress of the Holy Prophet's sanction and approval is the "Ahsan" type of "Talaq³." This form of repudiation involves the following conditions, each of which being intended to prevent a permanent breach :

(a) The husband, in the first place, must pronounce only one repudiation, the object of this limitation being, that he may subsequently, when better sense prevails, revoke the repudiation — if he has pronounced it from caprice or in a moment of excitement — within the period of the wife's retirement consequent upon that repudiation and that, he may re-marry her, if the period expires without the right of return having been exercised by the husband⁴.

(b) The repudiation must be pronounced when the wife is in a state of purity, and there is no bar to sexual intercourse, it being declared unlawful to pronounce repudiation when the wife is in menses, or when she is pure, but has already been approached⁵."

Again :

"Men used to divorce their wives, and take them back, not because they intended to retain them, but because they wanted to tease their wives by putting off the divorce indefinitely; so God revealed the verse : "Retain them not by constraint etc."

(Malik's Mowattaa).

(1) Koran, ch. II : 229.

(2) Koran, ch. II : 231.

(3) Ehyiaa-el-Uloum, by Ghazali.

(4) Fatawi Moughiri.

(5) Ehyiaa-el-Uloum, by Ghazali.

(c) The husband must abstain from connubial intercourse with his wife after pronouncing repudiation for the period of three months ¹."

There is a tradition of accepted authenticity that throws considerable light on the wisdom underlying the last two restrictions. Abdullah ibn-Omar divorced his wife while she was in her menses ; and the matter was reported to the Prophet who, much exasperated at the levity of his conduct, said : "Let him take her back and retain her ; till she be pure and again have her courses and again gets pure. Then, if he thinks it prudent, let him divorce her, but he should do so when she is clean and has not been approached : and this is the period of retirement (Iddat) which God has ordered for divorce."

Some learned commentators observe in connection with this tradition that the purpose of this condition is, to avoid a rash and hasty procedure on the part of the husband, through aversion arising from the wife's impurity, and, by fixing a long period of abstinence, to give him opportunities to reconsider his decision about the divorce, so that perchance he may repent, and exercise the right of return before the expiry of the term.

During this period of probation, the marriage subsists between the parties, and the husband retains his marital authority over his wife. He may, therefore, have access to the wife even without her permission, and can treat her as his wife, but this would actually amount to his exercising the right of return. During 'iddat,' the husband is under legal obligation to lodge the wife in his house, though in a separate apartment, and maintain her. The laws of the Koran are quite clear on this point. "O Prophet, when ye divorce women, divorce them at their appointed time, and compute the term exactly, and fear God your Lord. Oblige them not to go out of their apartments, nor allow them to depart, unless they be guilty of manifest uncleanness ²."

"House the divorced, as ye house yourselves, according to your means, and distress them not, by reducing them to straits. And if they are pregnant, then be at charges for them, till they are delivered of their burden ; and if they suckle your children, then pay them their hire ; and consult among yourselves, and act generously ³."

If, the husband has pronounced one, or even two repudiations, and if within the prescribed period, he abstains from intercourse with his wife,

(1) These three months constitute the 'iddat' period which is obligatory on such wives with whom the marriage has been consummated. "The women who are divorced shall wait concerning themselves until they have their courses thrice." Koran. II : 228.

(2) Koran, ch. LXV : 1.

(3) Ibid : 6.

and does not exercise the right of return on the repudiated wife, he loses the power of recantation at the expiration of the term, and complete cessation of the marital rights and duties takes place, a fresh marriage being necessary for the parties to re-unite¹.

It is obvious, that the very spirit of the prescribed traditional form of repudiation is towards a revocation of the divorce and a reconciliation between the parties concerned. If, however, the parties fail to take advantage of the prescribed interim, and are determined to break from each other, the husband may pronounce the repudiation for the third time and thus dissolve the marriage definitely. The divorced wife is forthwith rendered unlawful to him, and he cannot remarry her, unless the wife marries first another person by a valid and binding contract, is divorced by this person, after a bona fide consummation of marriage, and completes the period of 'iddat' consequent upon such repudiation².

This severe condition, has been the subject of much comment by the critics ; but they forget that the very existence of such a condition demonstrates most strongly that the principles of Islam are entirely opposed to the alleged facility of divorce. The object of laying down such a rule, was to prevent a definite dissolution of marriage, by appealing to the sense of honour of the people.

“Sautayra and Sedillot agree with the Mohammadan jurists, in thinking that this rule was framed with the object of restraining the frequency of divorce in Arabia. Sedillot speaks of the condition as a 'very wise one,' as it rendered separation more rare, by imposing a check on its frequent practice among the Hebrews and the Heathen Arabs of the Peninsula. Sautayra says that the check was intended to control a jealous, sensitive, but half cultured race, by appealing to their sense of honour³.”

Sir W. Muir erroneously thinks that Islam positively sanctions the hiring of a temporary husband, to legalise re-marriage with a thrice-divorced wife⁴. The idea of getting the divorced wife married to a third person, on an express understanding that he would divorce her in favour of her former husband, was condemned by the Prophet in the most emphatic terms.

In the other form of divorce, three repudiations are pronounced in the period of purity, either on one occasion or on three separate occasions. This divorce is valid, but is an act of sin. This form of divorce is called “Talaq Bid-à,” i.e. not in conformity with pious practice.

(1) Koran, II : 232.

(2) Koran, chap. II : 230.

(3) Personal Law of the Mohammadans, p. 335.

(4) Sir. Wm. Muir's 'Life of Mahomet.' vol. III. p. 349.



It is to be remembered that the abuses, likely to arise from the laxity of the laws, may conveniently be counteracted by other lawful impositions. The wife or her guardian, for instance, may stipulate, at the time of marriage, against the arbitrary exercise of the power of divorce by the husband. The right of dissolution of the contract may be stipulated to be with the wife, instead of with the husband, if necessary. The same object may also be achieved indirectly, by fixing the dower at a large sum, beyond the means of the husband to liquidate. The wife may also, by stipulation, reserve to herself the power of dissolving the marriage under certain legitimate circumstances, for example, if the husband marries a second wife.

In the event of a divorce, the Islamic laws are very particular in providing for the protection of the wife's property against the avarice of the husband. If the divorce is due to a cause imputable to the husband, he has to make over to her all her property, and pay off the dower that had been settled upon her. If, however, the divorce has been resorted to at the instance of the wife, without any justifiable cause, she has simply to abandon her claim to the dower. "The wife thus occupies," observes Syed Ameer Ali, "a decidedly more advantageous position than the husband."

8 "Kholaa" Divorce

Kholaa divorce is defined thus: When married parties disagree and are apprehensive that they cannot observe the bounds prescribed by the divine laws,—that is, cannot perform the duties imposed on them by the conjugal relationship,—the woman can release herself from the tie, by giving up some property in return, in consideration of which the husband is to give her a "Kholaa," and when they have done this, an irreversible divorce would take place."

"Kholaa" is therefore a repudiation with consent, and at the instance of the wife, in which she agrees to give a consideration to the husband for her release from the marriage tie. But if the wife fails to pay the compensation, there is yet another means to dissolve the marriage, namely, "Mubarat," according to which no compensation has to be paid, and a complete separation is effected, merely by mutual consent of the parties. If, however, the husband gives a "Kholaa" to his wife *without* any compensation, the respective claims of husband and wife are not cancelled forthwith, and they are quite competent to sue each other for the payment of any debts which may be due.

The compensation is a matter of arrangement between the husband and wife. The wife may return the whole, or a portion of the dower, if it has been paid ; or she may simply surrender her dower or other rights, such as the right to maintenance and lodging during the "iddat" period, or she may make any other agreement for the benefit of the husband such as for instance, to nurse their child during its two years of suckling, or to keep and maintain the child for a fixed period, at her own expense after having weaned it.

It should be remembered that the distinction between "talaq" and "kholaa" is real and not merely technical. If the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband, or if he alone wishes for a "talaq," he must pay off the settlement debt to the wife. But, in case the proposal for a divorce emanates from the wife, because of her aversion to the husband, and her consequent failure to perform her duties as a wife, or if she alone wishes for a "kholaa," she has to surrender her dower or abandon some of her rights, as compensation. If the wife be so unfortunate as to be subject to abuse by a brutal husband who may wish her either to forfeit the whole of her dower, or live with him, she need not forfeit the whole of her dower. Let her only go to the judge, prefer a complaint against her husband and demand a formal separation by the decree of the Court. If her allegations are true, the judge will call upon the husband to repudiate her. In case he refuses to do so, the judge himself pronounces a repudiation which will operate as a valid repudiation, and the husband will be liable for the whole of the deferred dower. This procedure is known as "tafriq," or legal separation, in the Mohammadan law, and is based on the words of the Prophet : "If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken off ¹."

The first "kholaa" case in Islam is quoted by Bukhari in the following words : The wife of Thabit-ibn-Qais came to the Prophet and said 'O Messenger of God, I am not angry with Thabet for his temper or religion ; but I am afraid that something may happen to me contrary to Islam, on which account I wish to be separated from him.' The Prophet said : "Will you give back to Thabit the garden which he gave to you as your settlement ?" She said, 'Yes' : Then the Prophet said to Thabit, "Take your garden and divorce her at once ²."

This tradition clearly tells us that Thabit was blameless, and that the proposal for separation emanated from the wife who feared she would not

(1) Bukhari's Commentary.

(2) Bukhary is the greatest commentary of Mohammadan orthodox traditions

be able to observe the bounds set by God namely not to perform her functions as a wife. The Prophet here permitted the woman to release herself by returning to the husband the ante-nuptial settlement, as compensation for the release granted to her.

In the "kholaa" form, the basic principle of repudiation is, that the husband is lawfully entitled to compensation, only when he is not at all responsible for the breach—neither wholly nor in part,—but when the wife is alone responsible, as in the tradition quoted above.

Moslem jurists are all agreed, that the compensation extorted from an innocent wife is unlawful. Compensation is absolutely unlawful for the husband, even when the wife happens to be partly responsible for the disagreement. The Moslem religion is the only one that can produce a set of laws which jealously protects the property and person of a wife against her "husband's cupidity and tyranny."

I now advert to a passage in the Koran which expressly forbids the husband to resort to cruelty or other violent means, with a view to compel a woman to enter into "kholaa" and to relinquish her dowry. "O believers, it is not allowed you to be heirs of your wives against their will; nor to imprison them¹, in order to take from them a part of the dowry you gave them, unless they have been guilty of manifest crime; but associate kindly with them; for, if ye are estranged from them, haply ye are estranged from that, in which God hath placed abundant good. And if ye be desirous to exchange one wife for another, and have given one of them a talent, make no deduction from it. Would ye take it by slandering her, and with manifest wrong? How, moreover, could ye take it, when one of you hath gone in unto the other, and they (the wives) have received from you a strict bond of union²." It is impossible to think of a more appealing and forcible exhortation to a husband, to deal kindly with his wife, even if she happens to be a woman of unseemly manners. It is forbidden in the strongest terms, to lay hold on her property in the event of a separation.

Before these verses were revealed, brutal husbands used to maltreat their wives, and even to imprison and torture them until, unable to bear their sufferings, they were forced to relinquish the dowry settled upon them at marriage; and this property they used to endow their new wives with. This was expressly forbidden by the verses quoted above.

According to the Malikite Moslem School of law,—if a husband has

(1) Sometimes the phrase is translated, 'Do not hinder them from marrying others.'

(2) Koran, IV : 18.

forced his wife to enter into a "kholaa," the wife is entitled to get back the dowry, but the separation will be valid in law.

I have already made mention of the procedure known as "Tafriq," which legally means dissolution of the status of marriage by a judicial decree. I give here some of the causes, for which a wife can demand a divorce by authority of the Court. It must be remembered that, where the wife has the right to prefer a claim of "tafriq," the husband is entitled to no compensation, as he is so entitled in "kholaa." A divorce may be granted by the Court for :—

- (1) Habitual ill-treatment of the wife.
- (2) Non-fulfilment of the terms of the marriage contract.
- (3) Insanity. (4) Incurable incompetency.
- (5) Quitting the conjugal domicile without making provision for the wife.
- (6) Any other similar causes which in the opinion of the Court justify a divorce.

We have seen, then, the position of woman and her legal status in Islam.

To sum up, in the words of Syed Ameer Ali : "Her legal status is decidedly superior to that of European women. The social immunities she enjoys, allow the fullest exercise, on her part, of the powers and privileges which the law gives to her. She acts, if sui-juris, in all matters which relate to herself and to her own property, in her own individual right, without the intervention of husband or father. She appoints her own attorney, and delegates to him all the powers she herself possesses. She enters into valid contracts with her husband and her male relations, on a footing of equality. If she is ill-treated, she has the right to have the marriage tie dissolved. She is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a creed different to that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observances. . . Her ante-nuptial settlement is her own by absolute right, and she can deal with it according to her own will and pleasure. To become entitled to its enjoyment, she requires no intermediaries, trustees or next of kin. When she is aggrieved by her husband, she has the right to sue him in her individual capacity."

It is both interesting and instructive to compare this extract with another, from the writings of J. S. Mill, which gives us an idea of the corresponding position of women in Christianity : "We are continually told" says he, "that civilisation and Christianity have restored to woman her just rights. Meanwhile, the wife is the actual bond-servant of her

husband ; no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slaves commonly so-called. She vows a lifelong obedience to him at the altar, and is held to it all through her life by law. Casuists may say that the obligation of obedience stops short of participation in crime, but it certainly extends to everything else. She can do no act whatever, but by his permission, at least, tacit. She can acquire no property, but for him ; the instant it becomes hers, even if by inheritance, it becomes ipso facto his. In this respect the wife's position under the Common Law of England is worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries ; by the Roman Law, for example, a slave might have peculium which, to a certain extent, the law guaranteed him for his exclusive use¹."

9. Female Seclusion

The Islamic laws regulating the social intercourse of the Moslems, have often given rise to needless criticism in Europe. In their enthusiasm for social liberty, the Western critics say, that these laws are degrading to Moslem women, and are responsible for the low state of morality among Moslems. However, the true fact is, that these laws, strict as they are, had for their very aim the preservation of good morals in society. Indeed, preservation of good morals—and not unrestricted freedom of social intercourse among men and women, such as is prevalent to-day in Christian Europe—is the intention of the Islamic laws. Female seclusion is misunderstood in many quarters in foreign countries, for the apparent reason that sanctions of religion and usage have not been kept apart, as they ought to have been, but have been grossly mixed one with another. Failing to distinguish between the two, our Western critics have fallen into the very serious fault of disseminating a false notion among their countrymen, that Islam is responsible for the seclusion of females, and for all the evils that flow therefrom.

I will dwell on the subject a little, and make an attempt to show whether the religion of Islam actually sanctions the seclusion of women, as is misunderstood by European critics.

The following verse occurs in the Koran, which touch on our present subject : "Speak unto the female believers that they restrain their eyes, and keep themselves from immodest actions ; and that they display not their charms and ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers, or their

(1) The Review of Religions, May 1913. Evidently J. S. Mill wrote prior to the Married Women's Property Act of 1882.

husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who distinguish not women's nakedness. And let them not strike their feet together, so as to discover their hidden ornaments. And be ye all turned to God, O ye believers, that it may be well with you¹."

The chief object of these verses is to secure greater purity of heart and increasing chastity of mind ; and hence the believers are here reminded that God is well aware of what they do, and that it shall be well for them, if they constantly turn to Him. To attain this moral purity, the believing man is first directed to restrain his eyes and observe continence. Then the believing woman is likewise directed to cover her person and ornaments from public view, to restrain her eyes and observe continence. A Moslem woman is at liberty to go out of her house, if necessary, after she has obtained permission from her husband or guardians. Only, she has to take good care to dress herself properly, so as to cover her person from head to foot, and to walk in the street with downcast eyes.

It is needless to point out, that the injunction with respect to looking down, is useless and uncalled for, if the women are never to walk abroad. Likewise the reference to external ornaments, too, becomes pointless, if women are to appear only before persons mentioned in the verses quoted above. It is allowable for a woman to uncover part of her face, fingers of her hands, soles of her feet, when she feels the necessity of going out. The rest of the body must be concealed before strangers, but before the persons enumerated in the verses, it is enough that the part from breast to knee remains covered.

It is clear then, that the verses quoted above deal with propriety of dress, and forbid women to flirt and coquet, in order to gain admirers. On the other hand, they enjoin upon the faithful women modesty of deportment, purity of heart, and fear of God.

It can be confidently asserted, that the excellent teachings upon chastity, together with the remedies for incontinence, as contained in the Holy Koran, are a peculiarity of Islam. One particular point deserves especial attention. The natural inclination of man is to sexual desire, over which he cannot have full control, except by undergoing a thorough transformation. The divine injunction in this respect is, therefore, not that we may look at strange women and their beauty and ornaments, or their gait and dancing, so long as we do it with pure looks, nor that it is lawful for us to listen to

(1) Koran : XXIV ; 31.

their sweet songs, or to the stories of their love and beauty, provided it is done with a pure heart; but that it is never lawful for us, to cast glances at them, whether to lust or otherwise, and to listen to their voices, whether with a pure or an impure heart. We are forbidden to do an act, in the doing of which we are not treading upon sure ground. If the eyes are accustomed to look after strange women, there is a fear, lest this practice should, some time, lead to dangerous consequences. The Word of God, as revealed in the Holy Koran, therefore, restrains the carnal desires of man, and enjoins upon him, to avoid the occasions, where there is danger of the excitement of the evil passions.

We now advert to another passage in the Holy Book, where the 'mothers of the faithful' are thus addressed: "O Wives of the Prophet, ye are not as other women. If ye fear God, be not too complaisant of speech, lest the man of unhealthy heart should lust after you, but speak with discreet speech. And abide still in your houses, and go not in public, decked as was common in the days of ignorance, but observe prayer and give alms, and obey God and the Apostle: God but desireth to put away all impurity from you, O ye the household of the Prophet, and purify you thoroughly. And study what is rehearsed to you in your houses, of the Book of God, and of Wisdom: for God is keen-sighted and cognisant of all¹."

The wives of the Prophet, who were destined to be patterns for all faithful women, are here given positive injunctions, to fear God, purify their hearts, observe prayer, give alms, obey the Prophet, and read constantly the Holy Koran,—in short, to lead a life of purity, devotion, and piety. In the sublimity of their thoughts, these noble women were not unmindful of the humbler duties of domestic life. The great lesson which their noble husband taught, was that woman's proper sphere is her house, and the claims of domestic duties should receive her first and best consideration. He set up an ideal before his wives, and through them, to all believing women: it was the ideal of plain living and high thinking.

It is to be remembered, that the wives of the Prophet were all accessible to religious inquiries. Ayesha was, as it were, the repository of the traditions, and was frequently consulted on matters of religion and ritual. Men came from distant parts of the country and straightway saw the wives of the Prophet, and all of these visitors were certainly not of blameless character. It was quite natural, that the wives of the Prophet should have received guidance with regard to general deportment and propriety of speech. By "discreet speech," in the above quoted verse, is meant that the

(1) Koran, XXXIII : 32-34.

wives of the Prophet should speak to these religious inquirers, as mothers would do to their sons.

The next verse, to which we would like to allude, is called the verse of the veil, and it occurs further on in the same chapter : “And when ye would ask any gift of his wives, ask it from behind a veil. Purer will this be for your hearts and for theirs¹.”

According to some commentators, strangers may approach the wives of the Prophet, and talk to them, if they are veiled ; and presumably this applies to the generality of Moslem women as well. Aiming, as it does, at the purification of the heart, the verse only forbids too familiar an intercourse between strangers and the wives of the Prophet. It does not warrant the conclusion, that the Koran laws are responsible for the immurement of the fair sex.

There are other commentators, who follow a stricter interpretation of the verse, namely, that the wives of the Prophet were here commended, not to appear before strangers, even though they were veiled. Those who uphold this interpretation, are careful to limit the applications of the verse to the Prophet's wives only. “If any other Moslem woman appears before stranger, she commits no fault ; but if she does not appear at all, it is better still².”

The occasion of this verse, in accordance with one version, also lends support to the view, that the verse was intended for the wives of the Prophet alone. Omar, who afterwards was elevated to the Caliphate, once happened to come upon the wives of the Prophet, who were still sitting in a mosque in company with many other women. Such a sight was not to Omar's liking, for he was always in favour of the seclusion of the Prophet's wives. He there and then exclaimed—“What a happy thing it would have been, if the ‘mothers of the faithful’³ had been under veils.” In that case, thought he, their superiority would have been established over other women, much in the same way as the superiority of their noble husband is established over other men⁴.

In studying these verses, many forget to take into account the circumstances and conditions that prevailed in those times in Arab Society. A sort of chivalrous spirit doubtless existed ; but it existed in Arab poetry, rather than in the actual life of the people. Women were no better than

(1) Koran, XXXIII : 53.

(2) Zamakhshari's Commentary of The Koran.

(3) Thus were the wives of the Prophet termed in the Koran.

(4) Zamakhshari, p. 1141.

cattle and furniture. Free women, as well as slave women, freely walked in the open, with their heads bare, and often with scanty clothing. The houses were not large enough, and the rooms were narrow and few in number. In most cases, one and the same room served many different purposes. It is easy to see, therefore, that amid such conditions, it was very difficult to maintain privacy. Indeed violation of privacy, and even of decency, was an every day occurrence. It was to put a stop to such an undesirable state of things, that the following teachings were revealed :

“O ye who believe, enter not into other houses than your own, until ye have asked leave, and have saluted the family thereof ; this is better for you : haply ye will bear this in mind.

“And if ye find no one therein, then enter it not, till leave be given you ; and if it be said unto you, ‘Go ye back’, then go ye back. This will be more pure for you, and God knoweth what ye do.

“There shall be no harm in your entering houses, in which no one dwelleth. God knoweth that which ye discover and that which ye conceal¹.”

Commentators mention a significant tradition about a person who, after the revelation of these verses, inquired of the Prophet, if it were necessary for him to get permission even from his mother, before entering into her chamber, “Yes,” said the Prophet. “But she has none to attend to her, except myself,” put in the Arab inquirer. “Likest thou to see your mother naked ?” observed the Prophet. “Certainly not,” replied the man. “Ask her permission then,” said the Prophet emphatically.

Likewise, we find that, at certain times of the day, even domestics and children should not come into our presence without notice. Here are the instructions bearing on the occasion :

“O ye who believe, let your slaves and those of you who have not come of age, ask leave of you, three times a day, ere they come into your presence ; before morning prayer, and when ye lay aside your garments at mid-day, and after the evening prayer. These are three times of privacy. No blame shall attach to you or to them, if after these times, when ye go your rounds of attendance on one another (they come in without permission). Thus doth God make clear to you His signs : and God is knowing, wise. And when your children come of age, let them ask leave to come into your presence, as they who were before them, asked it².”

Under such circumstances and conditions Arab society grew. The

(1) Koran : XXIV : 27-29.

(2) Koran : XXIV : 57-58.

influence of Islam was a blessing to the Arab race. It was Islam that awakened in the Arab mind respect for women, and a high sense of decency, and social decorum. It was only an extension of the laws of decency and social decorum, when too close intercourse between strangers and the Prophet's wives was forbidden, as we have seen in the verse of the veil. It is really to be much regretted, that the critics of Islam will not see all this, and should obstinately ascribe the framing of all these healthy rules, to motives of selfish jealousy.

There is one more verse, in the same chapter, to which reference may be made in this connection : "O Prophet, speak unto thy wives, and thy daughters, and the wives of the true believers, that they cast their outer garments over them (when they walk abroad) ; this (will be) more proper, that they may be known (to be matrons of reputation), and may not be affronted (by unseemly words or actions) God is gracious (and) merciful."

The purport of this verse is quite clear, and requires no elucidation. The wives of the Prophet, as well as the wives of the faithful, are permitted to go abroad, if necessary,—and they are required to cover themselves with large wrappers. The object of this qualification, as briefly indicated in the verse, may be best understood by a reference to the fact, that before the revelation of this verse, both the free women, as well as the slave women, used to go abroad, without any wrappers on, and with their heads bare ; and wicked men very often affronted them in the streets. If in the case of a free woman, any altercation ensued, these men were ready with their explanation that they took them for slave women. The free women were, therefore, commanded by this verse, to cover themselves with wrappers, when they walked out of doors, so that they might easily be distinguished from slave women, and thus be safe from the insolence of street-men. Nor was the wrapper, a mere mark of their social states—it was a mark of their chastity as well. For, by using large wrappers, and thereby covering the bodies, including the faces, which it is not at all obligatory to cover, they bore a silent, but strong testimony to their moral purity, and inspired awe, even in the tainted hearts of wicked people.

The Koranic verses are very clear on this point, and leave little room for doubt. Leaving aside the difference of interpretation, two facts stand out in bold relief :

(1) That the object of the verses is to secure chastity of heart and mind, and purity of looks for man and woman.

(2) That the verses actually forbid an unrestrained and promiscuous mingling of both sexes, and this in the interest of good morals and social well-being.

Islam does not compel a woman to remain within her house under all circumstances. It permits her to go out, whenever there arises any legitimate necessity for her to go out. It is certain, that she has to take permission, either express or implicit, from her husband. There are, however, occasions when the husband cannot deny his wife such a permission, as for example, when she intends to acquaint herself with the opinion of the learned on any matter affecting herself, or to visit her sick parents, etc.

As regards attending public prayers, there is nothing to prevent women from doing so under certain reservations, but it is preferable that they should pray at home. "It is more meritorious," said the Prophet, "that a woman should say her prayers in the courtyard of her house, rather than in the mosque ; it is more meritorious that she should say her prayers within the house, rather than in the courtyard ; and better still, in her closet, rather than in her house ; and all this with a view to conceal her from public view."

I hope that I have succeeded in presenting the correct teaching in accordance with the Islamic laws, in regard to the question of female seclusion.

It can be emphatically asserted, that Islam never favours woman's seclusion in any extravagant form. Seclusion or the Islamic veil system is defined as throwing a wrapper over the body from head to foot, and it is clear, that in this sense, it is not incompatible with a woman's stepping beyond the threshold of the house, particularly when occasion demands, and when she obtains the consent of her husband or guardian. Certain restrictions have, doubtless, been imposed on the freedom of her movements, as we have shown above. But this is due as much to moral considerations as to the fact, which has been so often ignored, that woman's proper sphere of action and influence is her own house. Man, to go abroad with a view to earn a living for himself, his wife, and children,—and woman, free from such cares, to remain at home, in order to watch over the trust committed to her, and to discharge her own responsibilities, as a mother and a wife,—such is the Islamic conception of the relation between the two sexes.

BOOK III

EXPOSITION OF THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

The word Islam which literally signifies 'resignation' (to God's will), is a comprehensive name commonly applied to the religion of the followers of the Prophet Mohammad. It embodies the various sections of the Mohammadan Law which God has established for the guidance of His people, both for the worship of their Lord, and for the duties of life.

These sections are five in number, namely :— Beliefs ; Practical Devotions ; Transactions ; Moralities ; and Punishments.

Section I

Beliefs

Beliefs embrace the six articles of the Mohammadan faith, namely ; Belief in (a) God ; (b) His angels ; (c) His books ; (d) His prophets ; (e) The day of Resurrection ; (f) Predestination.

Section II

Devotions

Devotions are sub-divided into five articles of practice : (a) Recital of the Creed ; (b) Prayer to God ; (c) Paying legal alms ; (d) Fasting the month of Ramadan ; (e) Pilgrimage to the Temple of Mecca once in a lifetime, if means allow it.

Devotions also embrace legal warfare for the defence of the religion of Islam.

Section III

Transactions

Transactions include such duties as are required between man and man, and may be divided into three sub-divisions, namely :— Contests ; Nuptials ; and Securities. Almost all the various sections of civil jurisprudence relating to barter, sale, agency, larceny, marriage, divorce, dower, partnership, claims etc., are embraced under those three heads.

Section IV

Moralities

Moralities embrace the consideration of all those moral excellences which are enjoined in the Koran and in the teachings of the Prophet, such as, Sincerity ; Confidence in God ; Humility ; Resignation ; Keeping worldly ambitions within bounds ; Giving good counsel and advice ; Contentment ; Liberality ; Love to God and man ; Patience ; Ethical instructions and rules of conduct relating to (1) salutations, (2) asking permission to enter a house, (3) shaking hands, and embracing, (4) rising up, (5) sitting, sleeping and walking, (6) sneezing and yawning, (7) laughing, (8) names, (9) poetry and eloquence, (10) backbiting and abuse, (11) promises, (12) joking, (13) boasting and party spirit.

Section V

Punishments

Punishments include (1) penalties exacted for manslaughter or serious bodily injuries, (2) punishment for theft by the loss of a hand, (3) punishment for fornication and adultery : stoning for a married person, and one hundred lashes for an unmarried person, (4) punishment for slander by eighty lashes, (5) punishment for apostasy by death, (6) punishment for inebriation by eighty lashes.

My object in writing this book, however, is quite limited. It is to deal with two important sections only of the religion of Islam, namely, Beliefs which embrace all matters of faith, and Devotions which include all matters of practice, as distinguished from articles of faith. Hence, I will confine the following pages to the two above mentioned comprehensive divisions of the Law. Meanwhile, I will give a brief summary of the more important articles embodied in the rest of the sections.

DIGEST OF THE MOHAMMADAN CREED

The creed of Mohammadans demands faith in the following :

(1) God ; (2) The Angels of God ; (3) The books of God ; (4) The Apostles of God ; (5) The day of Judgment or Resurrection ; (6) Predestination.

I will now deal with each of these articles separately :

1. Belief in God

Belief in God is best represented by the following formula which every sunni, or orthodox Mohammanadan must profess sincerely :

God is one and has no partner ; Singular, without any like Him ; Uniform, having no contrary ; Separate, having no equal ; Ancient, having no first ; Eternal, having no beginning ; Everlasting, having no end ; Ever-existing, without termination ; Perpetual and constant, with neither interruption nor termination ; Ever qualified with the attributes of supreme greatness ; nor is He bound to be determined by lapse of ages or times. But He is the Alpha and Omega (the First and the Last,) and the Evident ¹, and the Hidden ².

What God is not.

God is not a formed body ; nor a measurable substance ; neither does He resemble bodies, either in their being measurable or divisible. Neither is He a substance, nor do substances exist in Him ; neither is He an accidental form, nor do accidentals exist in Him.

He is not like anything that exists, neither does anything resemble Him. He is not determined by dimensions, nor contained within bounds ; nor is He surrounded by sides ; nor is He comprised within the heavens or earth. He sits upon the throne, after the manner which He Himself has described, and in that same sense which He Himself meant : it is a sitting, far removed from any notion of contact, or resting upon, or local situation ; but both the throne itself, and whatsoever supports it, are sustained by the goodness of His power, and are conquered by His will. He is above His throne and above all things, but so above, as at the same time not to be a whit nearer to the throne and the heaven, or farther from the earth.

God is exalted by infinite degrees above the throne, no less than He is exalted above the earth, and at the same time, He is near to everything that has being ; nay, he is nearer to men than their jugular veins, and is witness to everything : though His nearness is not like the nearness of bodies ; neither is His essence like the essence of bodies. He does not exist in anything, nor does anything exist in Him ; but He is too exalted, to be contained in any place, and too holy, to be determined by time ; for He

(1) As to His obvious existence.

(2) As to His reality.

existed before He created time and place ; and He is now as He always existed. He is also distinct from the creatures by His attributes, neither is there anything besides Himself in His essence, nor is His essence in any other besides Him.

He is too holy to be subject to change, or any local motion ; neither do any accidents dwell in Him, nor any contingencies befall Him ; but He abides through all generations with His glorious attributes, free from all dissolution. As to the attribute of perfection, He wants no addition of perfection. As to being, He is known to exist by the apprehension of the understanding, and seen as He is by the eyes, through a favour which will be vouchsafed out of His mercy and grace, to the holy in the eternal mansion, completing their joy by vision of His glorious presence.

God's Life and Power.

God is living, powerful, mighty, omnipotent, not liable to any defect or impotence, neither slumbering nor sleeping, nor being subject to decay or death. To Him belongs the Kingdom, the power and the might. His is the dominion and the excellence and the creation and the command. The heavens are folded in His hands, and all creatures are held within His grasp. He is the sole creator of beings and producer of things, and He is the communicator of existence, and from Him everything has its beginning. He created men and their works, and destined their maintenance, and determined their lives. Nothing that is possible, can escape His grasp, nor can the vicissitudes of things elude His power. The effects of His might are innumerable, and the objects of His knowledge infinite.

God's Knowledge.

God knows all things that can be known, and comprehends whatsoever comes to pass, from the extremities of the earth to the highest heavens : even the weight of an atom cannot escape His knowledge, either in earth or heaven. He knows all things hidden or manifest. He knows the number of leaves of the trees, of the grains of wheat and of sand. Events past and future are known to Him. He knows what enters into the heart of man, and what he utters with his mouth. He alone, except those to whom He has revealed them, knows the invisible things. He is free from forgetfulness, negligence and error. His knowledge is internal, it is not posterior to His essence.

God's Will.

God wills those things to be that exist, and disposes of all accidents. Nothing passes in the earth or in the heavens, neither little nor much, nor small nor great, nor good nor evil, nor profitable nor hurtful, nor faith nor infidelity, nor knowledge nor ignorance, nor prosperity nor adversity, nor increase nor decrease, nor obedience nor rebellion, but by His determinate counsel and decree, and His definite sentence and will. Nor does the wink of him that sees, nor the subtlety of him that thinks, exceed the bounds of His will; but it is He who gave all things their existence or being. He is the Creator and Restorer and the sole operator of what He pleases, there is no one to reverse His decree, or delay what He has determined, nor is there any refuge for man from rebellion against Him, but only His help and mercy; nor has any man any power to perform any duty towards Him, but through His love and will. Though men, genii, angels and devils should conspire together, either to put one single atom in motion, or cause it to cease its motion, without His will and approbation, they would not be able to do so. His will subsists in His essence, with the rest of His attributes, by which He willed from eternity the existence of those things that He decreed, which were produced in their proper seasons, according to His eternal will, without any Before or After, and with agreement both with His knowledge and will, and not by methodising of thoughts, nor waiting for a proper time, for which reason no one thing is in Him a hindrance from another.

God's Hearing and Sight.

God—praised be His name—is hearing and seeing, and hears and sees. No audible sound however still, escapes His hearing; nor is anything visible so small as to escape His sight; for distance is no hindrance to His hearing, nor darkness to His sight. He sees without pupil or eye-lid, and hears without any passage or ear, even as He knows without a brain, and performs His actions without the assistance of any corporeal limb, and creates without any instrument, for His attributes are not like those of men, any more than His essence is like theirs.

God's Word.

God commands, forbids, promises, threatens by an eternal word, subsisting in His essence. Neither is it like the word of the creatures, nor does it consist in a voice, arising from the commotion of the air and the

The author was mistaken in his saying that God sees without eyes, hears without ears, knows without brain and speaks without letters and voice. The Doctrine of Predecessors, (Salaf) that God sees with eye, hears with hearing, knows with knowledge and speaks with letters and voice, but with all mentioned he is not resembling his creatures neither in himself, in his characters and in his deeds.

collision of bodies ; nor in letters which are separated by the joining together of the lips, or the motion of the tongue. The Koran, the Law, the Gospel and the Psalter are books sent down by Him to His Apostles. The Koran, indeed, is read with tongues, written in books and kept in hearts : yet, as subsisting in the essence of God, it does not become liable to separation and division, when it is transferred into the hearts and the papers. Thus Moses also heard the word of God, without voice or letter, even as the saints behold the essence of God, without substance. And since these are His attributes, He lives and knows and wills and hears and sees and speaks, by life and knowledge and will and hearing and sight and word, not by His simple essence.

God's Works.

God—praised be His name—exists after such a manner, that nothing besides Him has any being, but what is produced by His operation, and flows from His justice, after the best, most excellent, most perfect and most just model. He is, moreover, wise in His works, and just in His decrees. But His justice is not to be compared with the justice of men. For a man may be held to act unjustly by invading the possessions of another ; but to God, inasmuch as there is nothing which may belong to any other besides Himself, no wrong is imputable, for He cannot be considered as meddling with things not appertaining to Him. All things, Himself only excepted, genii, men, devils, angels, heaven, earth, animals, plants, substance, and their attributes, all are His creation. He created them by His power out of nothingness, and brought them into existence, when as yet they were nothing at all, but He alone existing from eternity, neither was there any other with him. Now, He created all things from the beginning, for the manifestation of His power and His will, and for the confirmation of His word which was true from all eternity. Not that He stood in need of them, nor wanted them ; but He manifestly declared His glory in creating and producing and commanding, without being under any obligation, nor out of necessity. Loving, kindness, favour, and grace and beneficence, belong to Him ; whereas it is in His power to pour forth upon men a variety of torments, and to afflict them with various kinds of sorrows and diseases ; and should He do this, His justice would not be arraigned, nor would He be chargeable with injustice. Yet He rewards those who worship Him for their obedience, on account of His promise and beneficence, not for their merit or of necessity, since there is nothing which He is under an obligation to perform ; nor can any injustice be supposed in Him, nor can He be under any obligation to any person whatsoever. That His creatures, however, should be bound to serve Him, arises from His

having declared by the tongues of the Prophets, that it was due to Him by them. The worship of God is not simply the dictates of the understanding, but He sent messengers to carry to men His commands and promises and admonitions : the veracity of these messengers He proved by manifest miracles, whereby men are obliged to give credit to them in those things which they relate.

Mr. George Sale rightly comments on the Mohammadan notion of God as follows :

“That both Mohammed and those among his followers who are reckoned orthodox, had and continue to have, just and true notions of God and His attributes, appears plain from the Koran itself and all the Mohammedan divines, so that it would be loss of time, to refute those who suppose the God of Mohammed to be different from the true God, and only a fictitious deity or idol of his own creation¹.”

I will now give a translation of some quotations from the Koran, bearing on the essence of God ; this subject forming such an important feature of the teachings of the religion of Islam :—

The Unity of God : “Say : He is God, the Singular, God the Lord, He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, nor is anything equal unto Him.”

“Truly your God is but one, Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth, and of all that is between them, and Lord of the points (at which the sun rises and sets in the course of the year.) God, There is no deity but He, Most excellent are His attributes.”

Proofs of His existence : “The (God) bringeth forth the living out of the dead, and He bringeth forth the dead out of the living, and He quickeneth the earth after it hath been dead ; and in like manner shall ye be brought forth (from your graves.) Of His signs (one is,) that He hath created you of dust ; and behold, ye (are become) men, spread over the face of the earth. And of His signs (another is,) that He hath created for you, out of yourselves, wives, that ye may cohabit with them ; and hath put love and compassion between you : verily herein are signs unto people who consider. And of His signs (are also,) the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variety of your languages, and of your complexions ; verily herein are signs unto men of understanding. And of His signs (are,) your sleeping by night and by day, and your seeking (to provide for yourselves) of His abundance ; verily herein (are) signs unto people who hearken. Of His signs (others are) that He showeth you the lightning, to strike terror,

(1) Vide Sale's Prelim. Disc.

and to give hope (of rain,) and that He sendeth down water from heaven, and quickeneth thereby the earth, after it hath been dead : verily herein are signs unto people who understand. And of His signs (this also is one, namely) that the heavens and the earth stand firm at His command : hereafter, when He shall call ye out of the earth at one summons, behold, ye shall come forth....”

“When adversity befalleth man, they call upon their Lord, turning unto Him ; afterwards, when He hath caused them to taste of His mercy, behold, a part of them associate (other deities) with their Lord ; showing themselves ungrateful for the favours which We have bestowed on them....”

“When We cause men to taste mercy, they rejoice therein ; but if evil befalleth them, for that which their hands have before committed, behold, they despair. (It is) God Who Hath created you, and hath provided food for you : hereafter will He cause you to die ; and after that, will He raise you again to life.”

“(It is) God Who created you in weakness, and after weakness hath given (you) strength ; and after strength, he will (again) reduce (you) to weakness, and grey hairs : He createth that which He pleaseth ; and He (is) the Wise, the Powerful.”

God's Omnipresence asserted.

“There is no private discourse among three persons, but He is the fourth of them ; nor (among) five, but He is the sixth of them ; neither (among) a smaller number than this, nor a larger, but He is with them, wheresoever they be : and He will declare unto them that which they have done, on the day of resurrection ; for God knoweth all things.”

God's Omnipotence.

“God, There is no deity but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting : Neither slumber seizeth Him nor sleep ; His, whatsoever is in the heavens, and whatsoever is on the earth. Who is He that can intercede with Him, but by His permission ? He knoweth what hath been before them and what shall be after them ; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp, save what He willeth. His seat reaches over the heavens and the earth, and the upholding of both is no burden unto Him ; and He is the High and the Great¹.”

(1) The above lines contain a magnificent description of the divine majesty and providence, but it must not be supposed that the translation comes up to the dignity of the original. This passage is justly admired by the Mohammedans who recite it in their prayers, and some of them wear it about them. Vide G. Sale, Trans. of Koran.

Creator of all things.

“He causes the dawn to appear, and hath ordained the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for computing time. The ordinance of the Mighty, the Wise.”

“And it is He Who hath ordained the stars for you, that ye may be guided thereby in the darkness of the land and of the sea. Clear have We made Our signs to men of knowledge.”

“And it is He Who produced you from one man, and hath (provided for you) an abode and resting-place. Clear have We made our signs for men of insight.”

“And it is He Who sendeth rain from Heaven, and We bring forth by it the buds of all the plants, and from them bring We forth the green foliage, and the close growing grain, and palm trees with sheaths of clustering dates, and gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike. Look ye on their fruits, when they ripen and bear fruit. Truly herein are signs unto people who believe... This is God your Lord. There is no deity but He, the creator of all things, therefore worship Him alone; and He watcheth over all things...”

“We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness touched Us.”

Perfect in His Works.

“Blessed be He in Whose hand is the Kingdom; and over all things is He potent:

“Who hath created death and life, to prove who of you will be most righteous in deed; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving.”

“Who hath created seven heavens one above another. No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy; repeat the gaze: seest thou a single flaw?

Then twice more repeat the gaze; thy gaze shall return to thee dulled and weary.”

The Light of Heaven and Earth.

“God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp—the lamp encased in glass—the glass, as it were a glistening star. From a blessed tree it is lighted, the olive, neither

of the East nor of the West, whose oil shines out as it were, even though fire touched it not. It is light upon light. God guideth whom He will to His light, and God setteth forth parables to men, for God knoweth all things.”

Provides for All.

“Whoso chooseth this quickly passing life, quickly will We bestow thereon that which We please—even on him We choose; afterwards We will appoint hell for him, in which he shall burn—disgraced, outcast.

“But they who choose the life to come and strive after it, as it should be striven for, being also believers—as for these, their striving shall be grateful (to God).

“To all—both to these and those—will We prolong the gifts of (Us We) your Lord; for not to any shall the gifts of thy Lord be denied.

“See how We have caused some of them to excel others; but the next life shall be greater in its grades, and greater in excellence.

“Set not up another Lord with God, lest thou sit thee down disgraced, helpless.

Thy Lord ordained that ye worship none but Him”

His Words are Countless.

“Say: Should the sea become ink, to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely fail, ere the words of my Lord would fail, though we brought (other seas) like it in aid. . . .

“If all the trees that are upon earth were to become pens, and if God should after that swell the sea into seven seas (of ink) His words would not be exhausted; for God is Mighty and Wise.”

Has no Offspring.

“And they say, ‘God hath a son’: No; Praise be to Him. But—His is whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. All obey Him.

“Sole maker of the Heavens and of the Earth. And when He decreeth a thing, He only saith to it, ‘Be’ and it is. . . .

“Yet have they assigned the jins to God as His associates, though He created them; and in their ignorance they have falsely ascribed to Him sons and daughters. Glory to be Him, and high let Him be exalted above that which they attribute to Him.

“Sole maker of the Heavens and the Earth, how, when He hath no consort, should He have a son ? He Hath created every thing, and He knoweth every thing.

“This is God your Lord. There is no deity but He, the creator of all things ; therefore worship Him alone ; and He watches over all things. They say ; ‘The God of Mercy hath gotten offspring.’ Now have ye done a monstrous thing. Almost might the very Heavens be rent thereat, and the Earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in fragments, that they ascribe a son to the God of Mercy, when it beseemeth not the God of Mercy to beget a son....”

Created All Beings to Adore Him.

“I have not created Jins and men, but that they should worship Me.”

How He Speaketh with Man.

“It is not for man that God should speak with him, but by vision, or from behind a veil : Or, He sendeth a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He will : for He is exalted (and) wise.

“Thus have We sent the Spirit (Gabriel) to thee with a revelation, by our command ; Thou knewest not, ere this, what the ‘Book’ was, or what the (true) faith was. But We have ordained it for a light : by it will We guide whom We please of Our servants. And thou (O, Mohammad,) shalt guide their feet into the right way.”

God is Creator of Good and Evil Deeds, and Yet Good is from Him, but Evil from Man in Consequence of his Ignorance or Disobedience.

“By the sun and his noonday brightness ; By the moon when she followeth him ; By the day when it revealeth his glory ; By the night when it enshroudeth him ; By the earth and Him Who spread it forth ; By a soul and Him Who revealed to it the way of wickedness and the way of piety (to choose between them)—Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it.” “If good fortune betide them, they say, ‘this is from God’ and if evil betide them, they say ‘this is from thee (the Prophet). Say : All is from God : Whatever good betideth thee, is from God, and whatever betideth thee, of evil, is from thyself ; and We have sent thee to mankind as an apostle : God is thy sufficient witness”.

Omniscient and Omnipotent.

“And with Him are the keys of the secret things ; none knoweth them, but He : He knoweth whatever is on the land and in the sea ; and no leaf falleth but He knoweth it ; neither is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor a thing green or sere, but it is noted in a distinct writing ¹.”

All-Seeing but Unseen.

“Eyes do not reach Him, but He reaches the eyes : and He is the Subtile, the All-informed.”

“It is He Who in six days created the Heavens and the Earth, then ascended His throne. He knoweth that which entereth the earth, and that which goeth forth from it, and what cometh down from Heaven, and what mounteth up to it ; and wherever ye are, He is with you, and God beholdeth all your actions.

His is the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth : and to God shall all things return. He causeth the night to pass into the day, and He causeth the day to pass into the night ; and He knoweth the very secrets of the bosom.”

The Existence of God.

Of all the doctrines and beliefs that have been objected to in this age of materialism, the greatest is the belief in the existence of God. The first demand which an atheist makes is : “If you show God to me, I will believe in Him. How can I believe in Him without seeing Him ?” Western influences have gone a long way towards effacing from the hearts of many young men, the imprint of the Divine Being, and hundreds of college students and others, have begun to deny existence of God. There are thousands of persons who, though refraining from an open declaration of their views through fear of the community, have really no faith in Him ; therefore I submit the following suggestions on the subject, that haply some fortunate soul may be benefited thereby.

Man knows different things by means of different senses. Some things we know by means of seeing, some by tasting. A colour is known by seeing, not by smelling, touching or tasting. If anybody should say,

(1) On the preserved tablet, on which are written all the decrees of God.

that he will acknowledge a colour, only if he is made to hear the sound of it, would not such a proposition be considered unreasonable? Similarly, fragrance is known by means of smelling. Now, if anyone should say that he will consider a rose to be fragrant, only if he is made to taste its fragrance, would such a person be regarded as wise? On the other hand, if any body seeks to know, by smelling, things which can be known by tasting, such as sourness and sweetness, bitterness and saltiness, he will never be able to do so. Therefore it is not right, that we should accept those things only which we can behold with our eye, and disbelieve those things which are not recognizable by the eye. How absurd is, then, the demand that God must be shown to us before we believe in Him.

Moreover, there are certain things in man himself, the existence of which he recognises, without having seen them. We do not know all things merely by seeing, but they are known by means of five different senses. Now, there are many things which are not knowable, even by these gateways of knowledge, there being other ways of knowing them. For instance, reason, memory and intelligence are things which are not denied by any body; yet nobody has ever seen, heard, tasted, smelt or touched them. How did we, then, come to know that there were such things as reason, or memory, or intelligence? Again, has anybody ever seen, smelt, touched or tasted energy? Even the simplest man can see that we have not known these things by means of the five senses, but that there are other evidences that have led us to the knowledge of their existence. We see that when a man is confronted with a difficulty, he thinks for a while, and then devises a plan, by which he is able to solve his difficulty. When we see difficulties being removed in this way, we conclude that there is something in man which is of service to him on such occasions, and we call it reason. Thus, we do not become aware of the existence of reason directly through the five senses, but we obtain a knowledge of it by means of its wonderful manifestations. Similarly, when we see a man able to carry heavy loads, and some man, able to carry heavier weights than others, we infer that there is a capacity in man, which enables him to bear these burdens, and which some persons possess in a greater degree than others. This capacity we call strength. We have not seen strength, but we have seen the deeds that are done by strength, and from these we have concluded its existence.

Thus, we find that the more subtile a thing is, the more hidden it is from the human eye, and it is by actions, and not by the five senses, that we perceive the existence of such things.

But God is the subtlest of all. How unjust is it, then, to say that we cannot believe in the existence of God, unless He is shown to us. Has

anybody ever seen electricity ? But can we, then, deny the transmission of messages and signals to long distances, lighting and the working of machinery by means of electricity ? The discovery of ether has brought about a revolution in the world of physical science, but has any scientist been able to find it by means of his five senses ? But if we deny its existence, we find ourselves unable to explain, how the rays of the sun reach the earth, How unjust is, then, the demand that in order to be believed in, God must be visible to the eye, while there are so many things which are believed in, though they are not visible to the eye, or perceptible by any other of the five senses. God is visible, but only to the eyes that are capable of seeing Him. But if anybody is desirous of seeing Him, He is before the whole world through His powers, and in spite of His being hidden, He is the most apparent of all. This fact has been briefly, but very exquisitely mentioned in the Holy Koran in the following words :

“The eyes do not reach Him, but He reacheth the eyes : and He is the Subtile, the Knowing”.

In this verse, God draws the attention of man to the fact, that his eyes are not capable of seeing Him, for He is subtile, and subtile things cannot be perceived by the eyes. What, then, is the way of knowing God ? The Koran answers this question by saying : “And He reacheth the eyes” namely though the eyes of man are not capable of seeing Him, yet he reveals Himself to man by a display of His powers, and by a manifestation of His attributes. Manifold are the ways in which He reveals Himself to man. He displays His unlimited power sometimes by terror-striking signs, sometimes by signs of mercy, and at others, by accepting prayer. If God were to be believed in, only if He were perceptible by the eye, then we should have to deny the existence of about four-fifths of the things of the world, or the existence of all things, if we accept as true the view of certain philosophers who allege, that nobody can see the substance of anything in the world, and that it is only the form that we see.

We know very little of God, and yet we know that God exists ; that there is a Great Mysterious Power, at work behind the Universe.

In ancient times, Nature, or the forces of Nature, were deemed to be freakish, capricious powers, personified, to popular intelligence, as demons, and the like. Now we know that there is nothing freakish or capricious about Nature, that Nature works in accordance with a fixed law—the law of the Universe, the law laid and established by the Great Mysterious Power at work behind the Universe.

All we know of that Great Mysterious Power is compounded of all we know of the various laws—discovered from time to time—which govern the Universe.

There are three main laws in the Universe—the Law of Creation, the Law of Substance and the Law of Evolution ; so if we seek, as it were, to personify the Great Mysterious Power, and clothe Him with attributes that we mortal men can comprehend, we shall endeavour to visualise him as Creator, Sustainer and Evolver.

The Arabic language has one word which comprises all three ideas—*Rabb-ul-Aalameen* ; the word *Rabb* signifying Creator, Sustainer, and one who has endowed every object with the capacity of ultimate development,—thereby anticipating the doctrine of Evolution, many centuries before Darwin gave his theories to the world.

At every evolutionary stage of matter, however transient it be, we find a course prescribed, and an organisation pre-ordained—Nature everywhere obeying the Law.

As the Holy Koran says :“And to Allah does obeisance whatever is in heaven and earth—willingly or unwillingly.”

Over and over again, the Holy Koran lays down with great clarity, that a Reign of Law exists, dominating the whole material world ; and every day, fresh discoveries of science do but prove inspired accuracy of the Sacred Book. For after all, this is the sum-total of all scientific discovery,—that all growth and all development of every element in Nature, is under the Rule of the Law.

Is, therefore, this Reign of Law,—this mechanism, as it were, of rule and regulation,—intentional ? Or is it accidental ?

Call it mechanism if you will ; but can you dissociate mechanism, from mind ?

The machine itself cannot think ; but what of the mind that made it ? Mechanism cannot construct itself.

In all human mechanism, we believe in the priority of laws and principles, on which certain mechanism is working. We acknowledge the pre-existence of the mind that devised the machine, and set it working.

Why do we hesitate, when we come to the great mechanism of Nature ? I suppose, we are afraid lest, if we once make such an admission, we shall have to accept Law, as separate from Matter,—to admit that Mind has priority over Substance.

About seventy years ago, the Atomic theory was the popular craze. The Atom was our great God, our first cause and origin ; but later, we found this god itself a slave to Law. It was found to be, not an origin, but a product of some electronic specialization, which in its turn received its birth, not

as an accident, but under a Law—the Law of Condensation—from the collocation of ethereal specks. But this ether, as it is called, is, in its turn, a law-ridden entity.

Ernst Haeckel and others, refusing to admit the priority of Mind to Matter, sought a way out by regarding matter and energy as one and the same thing, with “law-abidingness” as a permanent characteristic, and calling it Law-Substance. Law-Substance, therefore, is a first cause, self-created, and the creator of other things,—self-existing, and the maintainer of subsequent growth, omnipresent, and all-pervading, indestructible and infinite; add to these the attributes of all-knowing and all-powerful, designer and regularizer, and, though you style yourself atheist or free-thinker, you believe in the God of Islam. As the Holy Koran says: “And to Him doth obey what is in the heavens and the earth. And a sign to them is the night; we draw forth from it the day, then lo, they are in the dark; and the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty and the knowing. And as for the moon, We have ordained for it stages, till it becomes again as an old dry palm-branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun, that he should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All float on in a sphere” (XXXIV: 37-40). Thus is the whole Solar System under Divine Ordinance.

What was that Law—the Law of Gravity,—“evolved from accident,” what made the earth stand on its orbit, with its axis inclined?

What a contradiction in terms—law and accident. To what lengths will we not go, to avoid belief in the Divine Ordinance.

Is the camera an accident? The lens, the sensitive paper. The light regulating contrivance, and so forth, all suggest design and mind; and yet the camera is but the crudest copy of an eye which is, presumably, a thing evolved at random. And what about the feeling that the image reflected produces? The lens of the camera reflects the image, but it does not see, it does not feel; whereas the eye sends a thrill into the very soul, when we see anything beautiful.

Can we give or receive a telephone message without an “exchange”? Some *design* to connect the giver and the receiver is indispensable.

The brain of an army—known in modern parlance as General Head Quarters—is preeminently the product of design. Is the brain of man just a haphazard contrivance, meaningless in its inception?

We assign a distinct design to every one of the hundred and one pipes fixed, in the machinery of an ordinary steam engine. Are the million and one nerves that work so miraculously in our own bodies, purposeless and without intent?

Yet, I could even worship this Fetish of Accident, if all these defined movements of our planet had failed to produce desirable results, making for our benefit. And this being so, I am compelled to believe in some Will, under whose control Nature works, not blindly. The alternation of day and night—which causes changes in the weather, affecting the atmosphere, changing the course of the winds, bringing the rainy seasons and the dry weather, in a desired order ; the withering of Nature, and its resuscitation ; these, and the life of man himself, depending on the peculiar bend of the earth sphere towards its orbit, are these all at random ?

You will not find a single thing in the realm of Nature which is unconnected with your own existence. As the Book says : “Those who remember Allah . . and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, (say) : Our Lord—Who looks to our sustenance and maintenance,—Thou hast not created all this in vain. Glory be to Thee.” (III : 190).

The unintelligible phenomena of yesterday are, today, instinct with a great and real purpose, And so it will be with the millions of things which still baffle us. Which being the case, I have every right to suppose that every object in Nature admits of my using it for my benefit—if only I know how,—and is subservient to me under the ordinance of some Mind, Which I call Allah ; for, did you ever think of a contrivance, or scheme out a design, in the working out of which you did not find the necessary aids already existing in Nature ?

But, you will say, things in themselves are not subject to design ; it is only man’s intelligent use of them that makes them useful.

We all know that light, and the colour known as green, strengthen the sight ; and green is the prevailing colour in Nature after light. But, it is said, the green colour was not made intentionally to strengthen sight ; rather the eye became accustomed to it, and so derived benefit from it.

But consider the case of the mole. The mole has eyes, but being generally away from the light, it is blind. It cannot make its surroundings subservient to its sight. Whence it may be seen, to what an extent the eye is indebted to light and green colour.

In support of his theory, that Nature is not with purpose intrinsically, but that its purpose is, as it were, of man’s contriving. Ernst Haeckel adduces the illustration of powder.

Powder was for ages lying useless and unused ;—by finding a use for it we have invested it with a purpose. But that is tantamount to asserting that inquiries have invested powder with its properties, or in other words that the purpose of the explosive was already in it, but in a dormant state ;

and that it is due to us, that it has become active. All of which tends rather to prove design, than otherwise. But there are other ways of looking at it.

If a mind works upon material, giving it shape to serve a certain purpose, it is impossible for another person, to use that material in a way other than that in which it was designed by its maker. If you deny the design of its maker, you are looking for trouble, and wasting your effort.

Here are pieces of iron and wood before me : I use them in making a machine, and any person desirous of using that machine, must do so in the way intended by me, and in that way only.

Can you use the things that God has made, otherwise than in the way intended by Him ?

Your body is a wonderful machine,—endowed with numerous faculties, to which are added Free-will, and the power of discretion. But can you use your nose for seeing ? Or can you eat through your ear ?

This machine of your body has been fashioned by an Intelligence and a Mind, and if you act contrary to its designs, your actions will not be acceptable in the realm of Nature. For thus says the Holy Koran : “Is it, then, other than Allah’s way that they seek to follow ; and to Him submits whoever is in the heaven or on the earth, willingly or unwillingly... And whoever desires a way other than submission (Islam) it shall not be accepted from him ; and in the end, he shall be the loser” (III. 82-84)

Again, if a particular form of matter involves, in its being, certain principles, the knowledge and application of which, alone make the realisation of that purpose possible ; then it is certain that a mind has pre-ordained it. If the small form of matter had existed independently of such principles, and if there had been no need of their knowledge, nor had any advantage accrued to us in our application of such knowledge, then one might, perhaps, deny the purpose behind it.

The Holy Koran tells us, that everything in Nature is for our benefit, and further apprises us of the principles which will enable us thoroughly to make use of them : “The Beneficent God taught the Koran. He created man, taught him the mode of expression The sun and the moon follow a *reckoning, and the herbs do obey (Him)*. And the heaven, He raised it on high ; and He made the *measure ; that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure ;* and keep up the *balance* with equity, and do not *make the measure* deficient. And the earth He has set it for living creatures ; therein are fruit and palms having sheathed clusters, and the grain with (its) husk and fragrance. Which then of the bounties of the Lord will you reject” ? (LV. 1-13).

Note the words in italics. The whole universe has been regulated with mathematical precision ; and that we may derive the best advantage from it, we must respect the *measure*,—find out these *reckonings* and *measures*, and not make them *deficient*.

Every created thing, from the stars of heaven to the smallest herbs that grow on the earth, observes rules laid down with mathematical reckoning, and observes measures, prescribed for its creation and development.

In short everything that is created in this universe, is based on mathematical principles ; and all our scientific researches owe their existence to this science of measure and reckoning,

I could agree with Ernst Haeckel, if man, in this search for purpose in Nature, could disregard these mathematical principles. In reality we did not create purpose for Nature ; we simply discovered those measures and rules which had been laid down for the working out of the purpose.

Can we, then, deny, behind the working of Nature, the existence of some Great Mind,—the Regularizer, the Reckoner and the Measurer ? Let us, in the words of the Holy Koran, “glorify the Name of Our Lord Most High, Who creates, then balances ; Who measures, then guides”.

Does evolution of matter really consist in the development of its potentialities ? Is not the human organism proved, by biological research, to be the final and best evolution of matter ?

The consciousness which is evolved out of animated matter, in the animal kingdom, in the form of impulses, evolves into natural passion in man. But this is not the final growth. In its turn, it must evolve ethics and high philosophy. Where, then, is the constructive ability, inherent in matter, which should now work all the more vigorously, to sublimate my consciousness into high moral and philosophic growth ? Do I possess a nature which automatically distinguishes between Right and Wrong ? Or must I cultivate such a nature, through guidance ? Do I, by nature, nauseate at wrong philosophy ? Do I, by instinct, spurn things injurious to my intellect ? Do I discern between wholesome and unwholesome food, without guidance ? Man, who represents the highest possible form of evolved matter, is hopelessly destitute of that constructive ability for the evolution of this intellect, which discriminates so unerringly in the physical building of organism. The very fact that, as far as the unconscious growth of matter goes, this constructive ability works so splendidly, but disappears on the rise of consciousness, proves conclusively, that it was not an inherent faculty in matter, but an external guidance, — guidance from the Source that has been called *Rabb*—Who is the God of Islam.

If, then, the scientific world agree, that Law predominates in matter, force and energy and if it also believes in Monism, it follows that it must believe in one design and in one mind. There may be a hundred and one laws at work in Nature, but they all converge on one purpose. In short, Law is, and must be obeyed, if the world is to go on at all. Law is the "Obeyed" Entity and in this connection, the reader may be interested to learn; that the word Allah, Who is the object of worship with Moslems, literally means "The Obeyed".

"God says", says Mohammad, "do not abuse the Universe, because *I am the Universe.*"— a great truth and undeniable reality. It means, that all the manifestations of Nature are the manifestations of the God-Mind, and that all the forces and laws of Nature are the features and characteristics of that Great Being.

To be in touch with Nature, is the secret of all success, of all felicity in life ; and if, in Islam, the dictum has been pronounced, [in a somewhat different language, "to imbue ourselves with Divine Attributes", it means the same thing. For the attributes of God, as mentioned in the Holy Koran, do perfectly and completely index the working of Nature ; and if, to believe in God, is to accept Him, as the Source of all Law, and to worship Him means simply to obey His Law, how can we disbelieve in the God of Islam ?

2. Belief in the Angels of God

The angels are created of light, and endowed with life, speech and reason. They are free from carnal desire and the disturbance of anger: they disobey not God in what He has commanded them, but do all that they are commanded. Their food is, to celebrate God's glory ; their drink, to proclaim His holiness ; their conversation, to commemorate God ; their pleasure, to worship Him. The angels are created in different forms and with different powers.

The number of angels is very great ; it can be known to no one except to God. Four of the angels are archangels, namely, Jibril (Gabriel), the angel of revelations ; Mikhail (Michael), the angel of rain ; Israfil, the angel who will announce the advent of Resurrection ; Azrail, the angel of death:

Every man is attended by two recording angels, called the "Kiram-ul-Katibeen," or the illustrious writers, one of whom records his good actions, and the other his evil actions. There are also two other kinds of angels, called 'Monkar' and 'Nakeer,' who examine the dead in the grave.

There are also two celebrated angels, 'Radwan' who is in charge of Paradise, and 'Malik' who is in charge of Hell.

The angels intercede for men, while they celebrate the praise of God; they implore forgiveness for the dwellers of earth. They also act as guardians for men. Each man has a succession of angels before and behind him, who watch over him by God's behest.

3. Belief in the Scriptures of God

The fundamental position, on which the superstructure of the Mohamadan Religion is erected, is that, from the beginning to the end of the world, there has been, and for ever will be, but one true orthodox religion. This true religion consists as to matter of faith, in the acknowledgement of the only true God, and in the belief in, and obedience to such messengers or prophets of God, as He has been pleased to send from time to time, with credentials, to reveal His will to mankind; and as to matter of practice, the religion of God consists in the observance of the immutable and eternal laws of right and wrong, together with such other precepts and ceremonies, as God ordained as fit, for the time being, according to the different dispensations in different ages. These precepts and ceremonies were in themselves non-essential, but they became strictly obligatory by God's positive command; and were, therefore, temporary and subject to alteration, according to His will and wisdom. Hence, the name 'Islam,' signifying absolute surrender to the will of God, is used commonly to denote the Mohammedan Religion. This name, however, also applies to God's religion, since the beginning of the World, inasmuch as all true religion is nothing, but absolute submission to God's will. As to scriptures, the Moslems are taught, that God, in divers ages of the world, gave revelations of His will in Books, to several prophets. The number of these sacred Books is said to be 104: ten Books were given to Adam, fifty to Seth, thirty to Idris (Enoch), ten to Abraham; and the other four, being the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospel and the Koran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus and Mohammad. No further revelation to mankind is to be expected. The Prophet Mohammad is, as taught by the Koran, the seal of God's messengers and prophets.

All of these divine Books, except the four last, are believed to be now entirely lost. As to the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Gospel, the Moslems give no credit to the present copies of these Books, which they

believe to have undergone many alterations and corruptions, though there might possibly be some part of the true word of God therein. Any passages in the present copies which in sense are not in harmony with the teachings of the Koran, as far as matters of faith are concerned, are held by Moslems to be no true revelation. Hence, such statements in the present copies of the Old and New Testaments, as attribute to God a son, or to the Divinity a plurality or a corporeal form, are dogmatically and emphatically condemned as schismatic.

On the other hand, if any precept, tenet, law or regulation, relating to mode of worship, or rules of right and wrong, found in the Koran, is in harmony with similar precepts, as taught by the Testaments, it is because such tenets are immutable and eternal, and relate to that part of God's one, true and orthodox religion which is subject to no change or alteration, inasmuch as such laws were saved from corruption.

Apparently it is due to the misunderstanding of this fundamental superstructure of the Mohammadan Religion (to wit : that from the beginning to the end of the world, there has been, and still for ever will be, but one true religion), that some of the prejudiced class of Western historians and commentators have been apt to wrongly describe such systems, rites or rules of the Religion of Islam, of which the like exist in the Jewish Scriptures, as 'borrowed' from these books. Such critics, if absolutely innocent, conscientious and well-informed, must needs admit, that these common precepts are but confirmed by the Koran as immutable in themselves.

It must be again and again re-iterated until the basis of the Religion of Islam is well understood, that this religion does not profess to be a new religion, formulated by the Prophet Mohammad, but a continuation of the true religious principles, established by God through His revelations to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and to other inspired Messengers of God. The revelations of God's prophets, prior to the advent of Mohammadanism, are held to have been partly corrupted by the hand of man, through the various renderings and divers versions of same. All portions of the Word of God that were by chance, or otherwise, saved from corruption,—such as relate to that part of God's religion which is eternal and immutable,—have been preserved and confirmed by the Koran, together with other corrected beliefs and dogmas of faith, and such additional rules of practical devotion, as God judged fit for the new and eternal dispensation. Hence, it is out of place and entirely misleading, that any critic should suggest, that Mohammadanism is 'indebted,' either to the Jewish or any other dispensation, for any elements in its system,

In brief, it is enjoined upon every Moslem, to believe in God's previous Books of revelations, from Adam to Jesus, in so far as the contents of any extant book of them are not contradicted by the Koran.

At the advent of Islam, the Word of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, was wrapped up in various superstitions, and was spoiled by an admixture of ungodly beliefs and imaginations. The Jews were openly charged, in the early chapters of the Koran, with having corrupted their Scriptures, with stifling passages. They obstinately and impiously denied the advent of Jesus. They believed that Christ was yet to come. They spoke ill, and most wrongly and indecently, of the acknowledged Jesus Christ and of his revered mother, the Virgin Mary. They attributed to God the adoption of a son in the person of Ezra.

With regard to Christianity, its real and pure doctrines were exceedingly and abominably corrupted¹. A sect substituted the Virgin Mary for God, or worshipped her as such. These were called the Mariamites².

Christians also believed in the divinity of Jesus. They worshipped him as God, called him the son of God, and even God Himself.

Dr. Hughes, commenting on the state of degradation, into which the Christian Church had fallen, at the advent of Islam, writes as follows :—

“The bitter dissensions of the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutechians and Monophysites, are matters of history, and must have held up the religion of Jesus to the ridicule of the heathen world. The controversies, regarding the nature and person of our Divine Lord, had begotten a sect of Tritheists . . .

“The worship of the Virgin Mary had also given rise to a religious controversy between the Antidus—Mariamites and the Collyridians ; the former holding that the Virgin Mary was not immaculate, and the latter, raising her to a position of a goddess. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that the Arabian reformer turned away from Christianity³.”

The Gospel of St. Barnabas commonly considered by Christian theologians as “apocryphal”,—is most in harmony, as to matters of faith, with the Koran. Jesus Christ is spoken of in that Gospel as the servant of God ; the word of God and a Spirit from God. His miraculous birth, being born without a father was even less supernatural than the creation of Adam who was created by God's power without father or mother.

(1) Vide G. Sale's Prelim. Discourse. (2) Vide Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam p. 53.
(3) See Hughes' Dictionary of Islam. p. 53.

The crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews is entirely refuted, according to St. Barnabas and the Koran. In that Gospel, it is asserted, that Judas, the traitor, was he who was crucified, in the place of the Lord Jesus. "Of this Gospel", writes Mr. Sale, "the Moriscoes in Africa have a translation in Spanish, and there is in the library of Prince Eugene of Savoy, a manuscript of some antiquity, containing an Italian translation of the same Gospel made, it is supposed, for the use of renegades.."

In St. Barnabas' Gospel, the Prophet Mohammad is foretold by name, as the Periclyte, that is, the famous or illustrious, that being the signification of the name of Mohammad in Arabic ; thereby justifying the passage in the Koran (chap. 61) where Jesus is formally asserted to have foretold his coming, under his other name of Ahmad, which is derived from the same root as Mohammad and of the same import.

Mr. Sale states that he inspected a Spanish translation of the Italian copy of St. Barnabas' Gospel, of which he gives the following account :

"There is a preface prefixed to it, wherein the discoverer of the original MS., who was a Christian monk called Fra Marion, tells us that, having accidentally met with a writing of Irenaeus (among others), wherein he speaks against St. Paul, alleging for his authority the gospel of St. Barnabas, he became exceedingly desirous to find this gospel ; and that God, of His mercy, having made him very intimate with Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590) one day, as they were together in that Pope's library, His Holiness fell asleep and he, to employ himself, reached down a book to read, the first he laid hand on proved to be the very gospel he wanted ; overjoyed at the discovery, he scrupled not to hide his prize in his sleeve, and on the Pope's awaking, took leave of him, carrying with him that celestial treasure, by reading of which he became a convert to Mohammanism.

"This Gospel of Barnabas contains a complete history of Jesus Christ, from His birth to His ascension, and most of the circumstances of the four real . . gospels are to be found therein, but many of them turned, and some artfully enough, to favour the Mohammedan system The passages produced from the Italian MS. by M. de la Monnoye, are to be seen in this Spanish version almost word for word ¹."

But to return.

On the other hand, the practical side of both the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as concerning social matters and civil law, is most deficient ;

(1) Sale's preface to his translation of the Koran.

and that deficiency is made good by the Koran, it being the last divine word of God.

Let us now make a swift survey of the Koran, as far as our limited space in this work allows; for to describe it in detail would require unlimited time and space. For various reasons, all being much to the advantage of the non-Moslem reader,—I shall content myself with a number of quotations of what was written on the Koran by the pen of non Moslem critics, whose writings on the subject can be passed by a Moslem, as giving a sufficiently true picture of the Holy Koran. However, it must ever be remembered that, as a miraculously Divine Book, the Koran, when translated into a foreign language, necessarily loses a great deal of its supernatural elegance and purity of style.

Mr. Sale addresses the reader of his English version—praiseworthy as it is—in the following words :

“ though he (the reader) must not imagine the translation to come up to the original, notwithstanding my endeavours to do it justice.”

In another place, the same writer comments on the Koran as follows :

“The Koran is univesally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, in the dialect of the tribe of the Koreish, the most noble and polite of all the Arabians; but with some mixture, though very rarely, of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabian tongue and, as the more orthodox believe and are taught by the book itself, inimitable by any human pen, and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, greater than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its origin

“And to this miracle Mohammed himself chiefly appealed for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most eloquent men in Arabia which was at the same time stocked with thousands whose sole study and ambition it was, to excel in elegance of style and composition; to produce even a single chapter that might be compared with it I will mention but one instance out of several, to show that this book was really admired for the beauty of its composition by those who must be allowed to have been competent judges. A poem of Labid Ebn Rabia, in Mohammed's time, being affixed to the gate of the temple of Mecca, an honour allowed to none but the most esteemed performances, none of the other poets durst offer anything of their own in competition with it. But the second chapter of the Koran, being affixed near it soon after, Labid himself (then an idolater) on reading the first verses only, was struck with admiration, and immediately professed the religion taught therein, declaring that such words could proceed from an inspired person only. This Labid

was afterwards of great service to Mohammed, in writing answers to the satires and invectives that were made on him and his religion ¹.”

Von Gœthe renowned German author, speaking of the Koran in his West-Oestlicher Divan, states :

“However often we turn to it, (the Koran), at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds and, in the end, enforces our reverence. . . . Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim, is stern, grand, terrible, — ever and anon truly sublime. . . . Thus, this book will go on exercising, through all ages, a most potent influence ².”

Dr. Steingass, the learned compiler of an English-Arabic and Arabic-English Dictionary (W.H.Allen and Co,) has recorded his opinion on the Koran in Dr.Hughes' Dictionary of Islam. After alluding to the above words of Goethe Dr. Steingass writes : “These words seem to me so much the more weighty and worthy of attention, as they are uttered by one who, whatever his merits or demerits in other respects may be deemed to be, indisputably belongs to the greatest masters of language of all times, and stands foremost as a leader of modern thought and the intellectual culture of modern times”. (Here Dr. Steingass quotes the words of Goethe and then says) “A work, then which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions, even in the distant reader,—distant as to time, and still more so, as to mental development — a work which not only conquers repugnance with which he may begin its perusals, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration. such, a work must be a wonderful production of the human mind indeed, and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind. Much has been said, in the preceding pages, to acknowledge, to appreciate, and to explain the literary excellencies of the Koran, and a more or less distinct admission, that Buffon's much-quoted saying : “Le style est l'homme”, is here more justified than ever, underlies all these verdicts. We may well say, the Koran is one of the grandest books ever written, because it faithfully reflects the character and life of one of the greatest men that ever breathed. ‘Sincerity’ writes Carlyle, ‘sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Koran.’ This same sincerity, this ardour and earnestness in the search for truth, this never-flagging perseverance in trying to impress it, when partly found, again and again upon his unwilling hearers,

(1) See Sale's Prelim. Discourse.

(2) See Goethe's West-Oestlicher Divan. These words of Goethe were placed by Mr. Rodwell by way of motto on the reverse of the title page of his translation of the Koran.

appears to me as the real and undeniable 'seal of prophecy' in Mohammad¹"

But the approaches to truth are many, and he who devoted all his powers and energies, with untiring patience and self-denial, to the task of leading a whole nation by one of these approaches, from a coarse and effete idolatry, to the worship of the living God, has certainly a strong claim to our warmest sympathies, as a faithful servant and noble champion of truth.

It is, however, not my intention to dwell here any longer upon this side of the question. Praise has been bestowed in this work on the Koran and its author, without stint or grudge, and the unanimity of so many distinguished voices, in this respect, will no doubt impress the general reader in favour of the sacred book of the Mohammadans which until now he may have known only by name.

Dealing with the opinion, expressed on the Koran by some European authors who dwell upon the pretended inferiority of the later portions of the Koran in comparison with the earlier chapters, Dr. Steingass ably remarks as follows :

"Not being an Arabic scholar himself (Goethe), he knew the Koran only through the translations existing at the time which follow throughout the order of the received text. . . . Those critics, on the other hand, who view the Koran with regard to the chronological order of its constituents, follow the descending scale in their estimate. But if we consider the variety and heterogeneousness of the topics, on which the Koran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected ; on the contrary, it would appear to be strangely out of place. Let us not forget that in the book, as Mohammad's newest biographer, Ludolf Krehl (*Das Leben des Mohammed*, Leipzig 1884) expresses it, 'there is given a complete code of creed and morals, as well as of the law based thereupon. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive commonwealth, for instruction, for the administration of justice, for military organisation, for finance, for a most careful legislation for the poor : all built up on the belief in the one God Who holds man's destiny in His hand' Where so many important objects are concerned, the standard of excellence, by which we have to gauge the composition of the Koran as a whole, must needs vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case. Sublime, and chaste, where the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed ; appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a poetically-gifted people,

1. See Von Goethe's, *West-Oestlicher Divan*.

where the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it, are pictured ; touching in its simple, almost crude earnestness, when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messenger, and a solemn warning for those, to whom he has been sent, in the histories of the prophets of old : the language of the Koran adapts itself to the exigencies of everyday life, when this everyday life, in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in to harmony with the fundamental principles of the new dispensation.

"Here, therefore, its merits, as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Mohammad's contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers, as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organised body, animated by ideas, far beyond these which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilised nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.

"When a long period of conquests scattered the Arabs to the farthest East and to the farthest West, their spoken language might deviate from its pristine purity, slurring over unaccented syllables and dropping terminations. But the fine idiom of their forefathers, as deposited in the Koran, remained the language of their prayer and their pious meditation, and thus lived on with them, as a bond of unity, an object of national love and admiration, and a source of literary development, for all times ¹."

The Koran, therefore, is the last Scripture from God which has superseded by its new dispensation all preceding Scriptures, containing all comprehensible instructions and laws, all matters concerning the relation between the Creator and His creature, and between man and man. It is a miraculous book which is a poem, far beyond the power of poets to imitate, a code of laws bearing on every institution of an extensive commonwealth, on instruction, on the administration of justice, on military organisation, on finance, on a most careful legislation for the poor ; and a complete code of beliefs and morals : all built up on the perfected belief in the one God Who holds man's destiny in His Hand. It embodies a correct summary of the true religion which former prophets from the time of Adam had taught to their respective countries, and a solemn warning to all mankind, to whom the "Seal of Prophets" had been sent to reclaim and to reform. It exposes and refutes the pretensions and incorrect interpretations of rabbins and priests who had misled their people. These latter were often called upon,

(1) Vide Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam pp. 526-530.

in the Koran, to come to a reasoning with the followers of the new faith and, then, to judge for themselves, as to whether Mohammadanism was to be rejected by pure reason cleared of every grain of partiality. But the high voice from Heaven was not hearkened to and differences of a religious nature still continue between Moslems and non-Moslems.

The Koran is a Divine Book which from the day of its revelation through the message of the Arabian Prophet and Apostle of God, up to this moment, has undergone no alteration whatever¹. It is the Sacred Book that continues to reign over the hearts of its hearers, to convince them, through their own conscience and spiritual nature of its Divine origin. No human pen, however powerful, can venture to imitate it. The miraculous nature of the Koran has, long ago, been solemnly confirmed by those who were the most competent judges. The Arabians could boast of no other literature than witty poems of eloquence in their own language,—though as they paid due honour to any distinguished poem by their famous poets—were struck with infinite admiration, when they heard the Prophet of God rehearsing certain portions of God's new Gospel to them. Their own celebrated Rabiaa, whose poem was attached to the Sacred Pantheon of the Kaaba, could, without much trouble or hesitation, judge that the Koran of Mohammad was rightly a Divine Book, and that the illiterate orphan was the true messenger of God. From the perusal of the concise, but accurate history of the Prophet, in part II of this essay, it is clear enough, how the obstinate minded Arabs of the Desert received the Book with adoration and perfect reverence. Again, the contents of the Koran most readily answer all questions that may be raised on religious or civil matters. I will quote here some translated passages from that Holy Book, as specimens of the rest, and leave them to recommend themselves :

1. Calling the Jews and Christians to come to agreement² with the Moslems :

“Say. O ye who have received the Scripture (Jews and Christians) come to a just determination between us and you ; that we worship not any except God, and associate no creature with Him ; and that the one of us takes no other for lord,³ beside God. But if they turn back, say ; Bear witness that we are true believers.”

(1) See Sir Mait's Life of Mohammad ; Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam.

(2) That is to come to such terms of agreement as are indispensably consonant to the doctrine of all the prophets and scriptures, and therefore cannot be reasonably rejected.

(3) The Jews and Christians used to pay rather blind obedience to their priests and monks who took upon them to pronounce what things were lawful and what were unlawful, and to dispense with the laws of God. (Sale)

2. Ordering the Prophet to praise God :

“Say, O God, possessor of the Kingdom, Thou givest dominion, to whom Thou wilt, and Thou takest away Kingdom from whom Thou wilt : Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou humblest whom Thou wilt, in Thy hand is Good, and Thou art the Almighty : Thou causest the night to succeed the day, and Thou causest the day to succeed the night : Thou bringest forth the living out of the dead, and Thou bringest forth the dead out of the living, and Thou art the provider of substance, to whomsoever Thou wilt, without measure.”

3. Right and Wrong :

“Say, whether ye conceal that which is in your hearts, or whether ye show it God knoweth it : He knoweth whatever is in heaven and whatever is on earth : and He is the Almighty. On the Day of Judgment, every soul shall find present the good which it wrought. And the evil which it wrought, will cause it such a disgrace, that it shall wish that there was a vast distance between itself and that evil.”

4. Belief of the faithful :

“The Apostle (Mohammad) believeth in that which hath been sent down unto him from his Lord, as do the faithful (also). Every one (of them) believeth in God and His Angels, and His Scriptures, and His Apostles : We make no distinction between any of His Apostles. And they say ‘We have listened, and so we obey. Thy mercy, O Lord, for unto Thee (O Lord) must we return.’ God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it hath gained, and shall bear the evil which it hath wrought. O Lord, punish us not, if we forget or fall into sin ; O Lord, lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us, neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have no strength to bear ; but be favourable unto us, and spare us, and be merciful unto us. Thou art our patron, help us therefore against the unbelieving people.”

With regard to the New Testament, Moslems hold the belief that, although God revealed the Gospel to His Messenger Jesus Christ, the so-called gospels, ascribed to the four saints, do not represent the true word of God as revealed to the Teacher of Nazareth. With Moslems these books *are mere historical works, dealing with the history of Jesus*, and they contradict each other in certain statements. Three of the authors of the four gospels, did not see Jesus at all. (1) St. Mark did not see Jesus, until the year he was taken up to heaven. After the ascension of Jesus, St. Mark

wrote in the city of Alexandria, his gospel, in which he gave an account of the birth and life of the Master of Christianity, mentioning several events which are not to be traced in the other three gospels. (2) St. Luke also did not see Jesus, but he was converted to Christianity by St. Paul, the latter being an Israelite who himself had not seen Jesus, but was converted by St. Ananias. (3) St. Matthew also did not see Jesus, but was converted to the Christian faith by St. Peter, some time after the ascension of Jesus; he took his gospel from St. Peter in the city of Rome. St. Matthew's gospel contradicts several statements of the other three Gospels.

St. John was the nephew of Jesus. It was at the wedding of John, that Jesus converted water into wine. Witnessing this miracle, John immediately became a Christian proselyte, left his wife and followed Jesus. He was the author of the fourth gospel, called after him, written in the Greek language, in the city of Ephesus.

These are the four gospels of the Christian New Testament, although Moslems do not believe them to contain the uncorrupted word of God. They are nothing more than biographical works which are liable to defects and errors. There was but one Gospel, namely, the "Evangel" which God vouchsafed to give to Jesus, for him to preach to the Israelites. The Book containing the True Word of God must needs be free from all discrepancies; yet it is written in St. Mark's gospel, that in the book of the Prophet Isaiah it was said by God: 'I have sent an Angel before thy face,' namely, before the face of Jesus; whereas the words *are not* in the book of Isaiah, but in that of Malachi (see St. Mark R V.) Again it is related in St. Matthew's gospel (Matt. xii. 40) that Jesus said 'My body will remain in the belly, of the earth three days and three nights after my death, just as Jones was in the whale's belly,' and it is evident this was not true, for St. Matthew himself agrees with the three other writers of the gospels, that Jesus died at the sixth hour on Friday, and was buried at the first hour of the night and rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, so that he remained in the belly of the earth two nights only.

Islam and the Four Gospels

As already pointed out, Moslems do not admit the authenticity of the Gospels, or the creed contained therein, or the leading events in the life of the Holy Prophet Jesus, as depicted by these same Gospels. In this attitude Moslems are supported by the scholarly researches of devout Christians even.

It seems, however, that the laity in Christendom are generally as ignorant, with regard to these vital questions, as non-Christians, to whom Christian literature is inaccessible in the main. A brief account of these questions is, therefore, likely to be of interest and use.

According to the doctrines of Islam, the four Gospels are not revealed by God. Nor was it the Holy Ghost that moved the writers of the said Gospels to write them. But it was the example of other writers, that inspired them with the desire of compiling brief biographies of Jesus.

1. St. Luke's Gospel

St. Luke's own words to this effect are :

“For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth, in order, a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

“Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word ;

“It *seemed good to me also*, having had perfect understanding of all things, from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

“That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed” St. Luke : i-4.

St. Luke has very plainly set forth the grounds of his inspiration, namely : (1) the example of other writers of Jesus' life ; (2) his consciousness of possessing “perfect understanding of all things from the first”; and (3) to impart reliable information to Theophilus. Thus, St. Luke does not call his Gospel a divine revelation, but he claims for it (a) diligence in collecting all available material, (b) fullness, (c) careful investigation, (d) orderly arrangement and (e) accuracy.

The Rev. Grieve, M.A., D.D., Principal of the Congregational Hall, Edinburgh, and a joint Editor of Peake's famous Commentary, explains Luke's preface in the following words : I. 1-4. “The writer, *influenced by the attempts* of others, to record the primitive tradition of Christianity, as it was handed down by the first generation of disciples, essays the same task, and having taken pains to collect, examine, sift and arrange the contents of the *written oral tradition*, presents the result to Theophilus, a Roman official of some standing—a literary patron of the Evangelist's—who needed fuller acquaintance with the historic basis of the oral teaching about Christianity which he had received ¹.”

God reveals books for the guidance of a nation or nations, as the case

(1) Peake's Commentary, p. 725.

may be, but St. Luke dedicates his books to the "most excellent Theophilus".

The Encyclopædia Biblica throws further light on this dedication : "The dedication of Luke (i. 1-4) shows, that we have passed into a new literary province. The Muratorian fragment calls attention to the fact, that the author writes *in his own name*, a novelty among Evangelists. He also dedicates his work to someone who, if not an imaginary 'God beloved', would appear to be a patron, a man of rank. The apostles—the (1-2) 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word'—appear to have delivered their testimony by oral tradition, and to have passed away. To supply their places, (1-i) 'many' had attempted to draw up a formal narrative concerning the matters fully established in the Church. These writers had clearly not been eyewitnesses, nor were they, in Luke's judgment, so successful as to make unnecessary any further attempts. Apparently they had failed in the three points, in which he hopes to excel : (1) they had not traced everything up to the source, and this (2), as far as it went, not 'accurately' and (3) they had not written 'in order' ¹."

The same book further discusses the point whether or not the work of St. Luke's justifies the claims of that Apostle : "We are led to the conclusion that, though Luke attempted to write 'accurately', and in 'order', yet *he could not always succeed*. When deciding between an earlier and a later date, between this and that place and occasion, between metaphor and literalism, between what Jesus himself said and what he said through his disciples, he (Luke) had to be guided by evidence which sometimes led him aright, but not always. ² "

We further read in the same work : "Luke's absolute omission of genuine and valuable traditions—especially in connection with Christ's appearance to women after the Resurrection, and with Christ's promise to go to 'Galilee'—...seriously diminishes the value of his work. It is probably the best adapted for making converts. But if bold bare facts are in question, *it is probably the least authoritative of the Four* ³."

Luke's failure has evidently been ascribed to his attempts being human, and his sources mortal, which could 'not always' guide him aright. If his work had been revealed, he could not have been accused of having omitted some most important incidents, or of his book being "the least authoritative".

(1) Encyclopædia Biblica, p. 1790.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Encyclopædia Biblica, p. 1793.

The quotations cited above clearly buttress the Islamic belief, that the Christian gospels are but human attempts to draw up accounts of the life of Jesus, and as such are neither complete nor satisfactory. Revelation alone can make a recipient immune from error ; for it suspends, for the time being, all other mental activity of the person, upon whom the Word of God descends. His Word and Will were revealed to holy prophets, like Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. But the followers of Jesus were animated, or inspired, to compile what was already known to them. They had but to collect, sift and arrange the material which was in the possession of the people. As such the works of the Apostles are necessarily characterised by mortal shortcomings. Even the devout Christian scholar admits it, and is ready to bear testimony to the fact, that the record of the gospels is not altogether complete and reliable. We cannot do better than quote some of the most scholarly and popularly admitted opinions which carry weight and conviction in this connection.

The Rev. Dummelow, M.A., expresses his opinion as follows :

“Speaking broadly, the Christians mean by their inspiration an impulse from God, causing, certain persons to write, and directing them how to write, for the edification of others. Though it is closely connected with *revelation*, it is not identical with it. By *revelation*, God makes known to a soul truths which were unknown to it before. But it is not at all necessary, that an inspired writer should receive any new truths by way of revelation. Thus, St. Mark was inspired to write his Gospel, but he was inspired *to write down truths* which were already familiar to him and to others through the instruction given by St. Peter.”¹

2. The Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. Mark.

The foregoing also applies to both St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels. “St. Mark is the oldest of the Synoptists, and has been used by St. Matthew and St. Luke, who have incorporated the bulk of his Gospel into their own with comparatively few alterations ².”

It is thus plain, that Christian scholars of sacred literature do not claim divine origin for Christian Gospels. They, on the other hand, admit that the said books were compiled by mere men who were by no means experts. They were consequently liable to mistakes. I quote the Rev. Dummelow once more on the point : “We must not regard the Bible as an absolutely perfect book, in which God is Himself the author, using

(1) The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary, p. 71.

(2) Ibid p. 133.

human hands and brains only as a man may use a typewriter... Their inspiration did not involve a suspension of their natural faculties, nor abolish the differences of training and character ; it did not even make them perfectly free from earthly passion. Therefore, we find that their knowledge sometimes is no higher than their contemporaries, and their indignation against oppression and wrongdoing sometimes breaks out into desire of revenge. It surprises us in the Bible, because of our false preconception ; because of our false theory of Verbal Inspiration."

The same Commentary further throws light upon the insufficiency and incompleteness of these sacred records, and thus precludes any chance of their claiming divine origin. "To-day we realise, that the life of Jesus can never be written. The material is wanting. Neither in quality, nor in extent, do the Gospels satisfy the requirements of a modern biography. At best, they offer us certain memorabilia of the public ministry of Jesus, hardly adequate to construct the story of the year or years, during which he evangelised his people, and barely sufficing to mirror the chief features of his message. Where the modern mind is most curious, the Gospels seem to be least communicative. Men would fain trace the development of innermost convictions which condition his activity as a prophet. But the facts that the Gospels tell us little or nothing of the early life of Jesus, and that almost every story consists of a simple record of outward act and utterance, with few hints as to inward feeling or historical setting, seem at first sight to defeat the hopes of analysing motive, and tracing growth."

3. The four Gospels.

Dealing with the sources of the four Gospels of the Christian faith, the Encyclopædia Biblica comments as follows :

"These documents are of varying value from a historical point of view. Critical opinion is much divided as to the fourth, that which bears the name of John, the judgment of many critics being, that it is the *least trustworthy as a source, whether for words or for the acts of Jesus*. By comparison, the first three, from their resemblances called synoptical, are regarded by many as possessing a considerable measure of historical worth, but even these, from a critical point of view, are not of equal value, nor do the contents of any of them possess a uniform degree of historical probability. They present to the critic a curious, interesting, and perplexing problem, still far from final solution. By their resemblances and differences, agreements and disagreements, they raise many questions as to origin, relative dates, and literary connections, which have called forth a multitude of conflicting hypotheses and a most extensive critical literature."

In the opinion of the best English scholars of the New Testament, the Gospels are not to be looked upon as revealed books, the sole source of which should have been God and not man. But they are to be regarded, on the other hand, as inadequate attempts, made by pious but not talented followers of Christ, at the description of his life. It is a great pity, that the world never availed itself of the collection of those life inspiring words that were uttered by the Holy Prophet of Nazareth. However, piety and veneration, for a long time, assured the credulity of the early Christians, that the Gospels revealed the Word of God, and in consequence were infallible. There was a time, when every article of it was firmly and reverently believed to have directly proceeded from God¹. In short, what had been written by man, passed for the word of God. This is clear to those clergy who have undergone university training. But the pity of it is, that they have not the moral courage to enlighten their congregation on the subject. It would only seem, that pious anxiety dictates, that a character of infallibility should still be given to what has been written by human hands, and that crude attempts at the biography of the Holy Prophet of Nazareth, should continue to be believed to have been revealed by God Himself.

Anyhow, what scholarship and research have now brought to light, was revealed over thirteen centuries ago in the Koran :

“Do they not know, that God knows, what they keep secret, and what they make known ; and there are among them ignorant, who know not the Book, but only idle stories, and they do but conjecture ; woe, then, to those who write the book with their own hands, and then say. This is from God, so that they may obtain therewith a small gain ; therefore, woe to them, for what their hands have written, and woe to them, for what they have earned².”

Dr. Murray's illustrated “Bible Dictionary” which is a valuable commentary, enlightens us thus :

Gospels :—The first point which attracts our notice in reading the Gospels is, that the first three Gospels are distinct from the fourth. The first three Gospels confine themselves almost exclusively to the events which took place in Galilee, until Christ's last journey to Jerusalem, If we had three Gospels alone, we could not definitely say, that our Lord went to Jerusalem during his ministry, until he went there to die. The difference

(1) Dr. Ph. Schaff's Companion to the Greek Testaments and the English version pp. 88 & 89.

(2) Translation of the Holy Koran II. 72: 73 & 74.

in character is no less, than the difference in scene. Further, *the synoptists do not* claim to be eyewitnesses of our Lord's work ; the first three Gospels are usually called the synoptic Gospels... It is obvious, that not only all three synoptic Gospels differ from John, but they differ *widely* from each other. The account of the birth and infancy of Christ in Matthew differs widely from that in Luke. The incidents of the temptation of our Lord are recorded in a different order in Matthew and Luke, and the temptation is recorded without these incidents in Mark. All three Gospels give a slightly different account of the inscription on the cross, and the words spoken by the centurion at the death of Jesus, vary in Luke from the words in Matthew and Mark. Also the language differs and differs in a very singular manner.

From the above quotations it is very clear, that the material for Mark's Gospel was supplied by St. Peter's preaching, and that Mark was freely drawn upon by Matthew and Luke ; which establishes the fact, that the synoptic Gospels are no revelations at all, but are purely and simply human compilations. It remains to deal with St. John's Gospel.

The Twentieth Century New Testament makes the following observation on John :

"The writer apparently proposed to himself to illustrate the spirit of the 'Gospel of Love' by such incidents in the life of Jesus, as best suited his purpose. There is no attempt at a regular connected narrative ; and the writer allows himself such freedom, in commenting upon the teaching of Jesus, that it is not always easy to tell where that teaching ends and the writer's comments begin. It is to the great struggle between Light and Darkness, Death and Life,—words much in use and much debated in the current philosophy of Ephesus,—that the writer devotes his attention, rather than to the external incidents of a story which has already been told, and which is plainly viewed by him from a greater distance of time, than is the case with the compilers of the three other Gospels."

Another eminent authority, namely Dr. Weymouth, in his Introduction to John, observes :

"It must be owned that, although the fourth Gospel makes no assertion which contradicts the character of Teacher and Reformer attributed to Him by the synoptists, it presents to us a personage so enwrapped in mystery and dignity, as altogether to transcend ordinary human nature. This transcendent personality is, indeed, the avowed centre of the whole record, and his portrayal is its avowed purpose¹."

(1) Dr. Weymouth's Introduction to St. John's Gospel.

Now, these quotations point very clearly to the fact, that there is a general agreement, as to John having played the role of an interpreter or a commentator of the three other Gospels. There is not an allusion or a reference, made to John having received a revelation from Heaven, or having been inspired to furnish the world with an explanation of the doctrines of Christ. We learn on the other hand, that, while the authors of the three other Gospels compiled the incidents of the life of Jesus, John gave a mystical meaning to them. He himself does not lay claim to revelation, or to consequent perfection. He has, on the contrary, confessed the imperfection of his attempts, to depict the incidents of the life of Jesus. Likewise he admits, that he is but a recorder of incidents or signs. "There were also a great number of signs which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book ; but these have been recorded, in order that you may believe, that he is the Christ, the son of God, and that, through believing, you may have Life through his name ¹." This text, which reveals the object of the fourth Gospel, announces that this is a partial record of some of those signs which Jesus performed before his disciples. To record events or signs which are known to many, or all, of the disciples and others, does not require the aid of revelation which supplies information which is not already in the possession of human beings.

Some Important Discrepancies.

Jesus said to them (who took offence, at him and who were not prepared to recognise his claims simply because he was a carpenter's son and had other humble ties) : "A *prophet* is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark.) This statement was curtailed by Matthew, and still more by John. Luke ignored it altogether.

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii, 32.) This text embodies a confession by Jesus, eloquent of his limited knowledge and avowed ignorance ; while Luke and John, however make no mention of that humiliating reference.

The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary makes the following remark on "Neither the Son" : "This is the true reading not only here (in Mark) but in Matthew xxiv, 36, where it has been *altered* in many MSS., probably as

(1) John xx, 30.

being a difficulty to faith.” Peake’s Commentary offers the following note on it :

“Mark xiii. 32— This is one of ‘Schmiedel’s pillar-passages.’ A passage admitting a limit to Christ ; knowledge must be trustworthy history, according to Schmiedel. Certainly later commentators found the verse difficult.”

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ?” (Mark xv. 34) These words have been copied by Matthew only. They picture the inborn weakness of Jesus. This expression of his human nature was unworthy of record, in the opinion of Luke and John.

Interpolations.

Of many interpolations, mention will be made here of a few only :

(A) John vii. 53 and viii. 1-11, that is, the last verse of the seventh chapter, with its continuation in the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter, which relate the story of an adulteress, is an interpolation. This is admitted universally. The Rev. Dummelow’s Commentary has the following observations on it : “The woman taken in adultery.—All modern critics agree, that this section (vii. 53-viii. 1-11) is no original part of the fourth Gospel. It is not in the author’s style ; it breaks the sequence of our Lord’s discourses, and is omitted by most of the ancient authorities.”

Peake’s Commentary comments on the story at the end of John vii. 53-viii-1-11, *Jesus, and the woman accused of sin* : “The well known story of the woman taken in adultery has no claim to be regarded as part of the original text of this... It is supported by no early Patristic evidence. The evidence proves it to be an interpolation of a ‘western’ character.”

Dr. Weymouth’s ‘New Testament in modern English’ marks the section as an interpolation. ‘The Twentieth Century New Testament’ has excised it, and placed it in such a place as indicates clearly, that it has no connection with John. ‘The Complete Bible in Modern English’ writes in a footnote : “The narrative of the sinful woman (chap. vii. 53 to viii-1-11) is rejected by the most competent authorities as a spurious interpolation.”

(B) John xxi :—In the opinion of the Rev. Dummelow, the last two verses at least, 24 and 25—are really doubtful, and they “may have been added by the Ephesian elders, who first put the Gospel in circulation, after the death of the Apostle, and who wished to testify to its genuineness and trustworthiness.”

(C) Mark xvi. 9-20 is another interpolation. Dummelow’s Commentary observes that “Internal evidence points definitely to the conclusion, that

the last twelve verses are not by St. Mark." It further supplies the following information on the subject: "When at the close of the apostolic age, an attempt was made (probably in Rome) to collect the authentic memorials of the Apostles and their companions, a copy of the neglected second Gospel was not easily found. *The one that was actually discovered, and was used to multiply copies, had lost its last leaf, and so a fitting termination (the present appendix) was added by another hand.*"

The unanimous verdict given in the New Testaments of Dr. Weymouth, Dr. Moffat, Ferrar Fenton, and in the Twentieth Century New Testament, is that Mark xvi-9-20, is an addition.

(D) Luke xxiv. 51 is another interpolation, as is conceded on all hands. It elicits the following comment from the Rev. Dummelow: "A few ancient authorities omit these words. If they are omitted, *it is possible to regard this event, not as the ascension, but as a miraculous disappearance of Jesus at the end of the interview begun in verse 36.*"

Peake's Commentary makes similar remarks; "The words 'and was carried up into heaven' are omitted in some of the best MSS. and have probably crept in from Acts. i. 9 f."

The Twentieth Century New Testament and Dr Moffat's "New Testament" mark it as an interpolation."

Ascension.

Our co religionist, Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din, B.A., from whose interesting essay, "Are the Gospels inspired¹." I have chiefly reproduced the above chapter, makes the following conclusion to his work:

"If according to Christ and Mohammed (peace be upon them and all the other prophets,) the essence of religion lies in our perfect love of God, which can only be manifested in our willing obedience to His Divine will, we must be assured, as rational beings, of the genuineness and credibility of God's message, as much as of the soundness of the truth, that it reveals. It is this natural craving, that has led to what is known as the higher criticism of the Bible. A similar test has been applied to the Holy Koran as well, to which reference has been made previously. The result of the higher criticism of the four Gospels has partially been presented in this

(1) For a fuller treatment of the subject of the higher criticism of the New Testament see a very interesting treatise entitled 'Are the Gospels inspired?' by Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din, B.A., from whose work the foregoing passage has been chiefly reproduced.

treatise, with the object of making the laity and non-Christians in general acquainted with it. In doing so, I have purposely refrained from quoting the opinions expressed in the learned commentaries of the nonconformists, and in the books issued on the subject by the Rational Press. I have, on the contrary, restricted the treatment to the views expounded by the Clergy of the Church of England, in the main, and to the views of those who are rather conservative. I have also deliberately overlooked the question, whether we can ascribe with certainty the authorship of the Gospels to the Evangelists, whose names they bear now. All the commentaries are agreed upon the fact, that the original copies of the Gospel, were without indication as to the authors' names. It was guessed, later, who were the most probable writers of them. The probable conjecture has not yet reached certainty. The authenticity of the names, to which, the Gospels are attributed, is open to doubt, as can be seen by referring to any commentray."

What, we have learnt, with respect to the origin of the Christian Gospels, and the creed preached therein, can be recapitulated in a few words. Mark was the first Gospel, and not Matthew, as is generally indicated by the present arrangement of the four books. Mark, who was a convert and interpreter of St. Peter, penned at the instance of 'his hearers', what St. Peter had adopted and preached to his Roman audiences. Mark has been incorporated into Matthew and Luke. But Matthew has represented the words and works of Jesus as fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament. No less than sixty-five references have been made to Old Testament texts, to establish that the advent of the Messiah was in strict accordance with the Jewish ideals. This conception and purpose pervade the whole of Matthew, and distinguish it from the other three. Luke represents St. Paul's views, which are in conflict with St. Peter's. Thus we have in Luke an altogether different point of view. It opposes Matthew and Mark most boldly, and places its literal and Catholic description of Christianity in a striking contrast to Matthew and Mark, who confine God's blessings and ministrations to the elect alone. John strikes an entirely different note. It offers, to interpret Christianity for us. We may respect his opinion, as an individual one, and as different from the other three; but we cannot be assured, that his vague and mythical representation of Christianity is identical with the definite and plain teachings of the holy prophet Jesus. In a word, the Gospels are as divergent, in expressing the Christian doctrines, as their versions are discrepant, in the reproduction of the words and works of Jesus. They have not been safeguarded against mistakes and interpolations. On the contrary, they are replete with extraneous matter. Sometimes glosses and editorial notes have been absorbed in the body of the book, and sometimes irrelevant additions have been made. Matthew and Luke have either toned down or omitted what they deemed objectionable in Mark.

They do not teach that, because the deepening anxiety of Jesus, in alliance with a fear of treacherous betrayal on the part of some of his disciples, led to his sudden and skilfully planned disappearance; we should believe that he soared upwards to heaven. Their accounts of the incident of the crucifixion do not show that God saved Jesus from the cursed death on the cross. The plain and useful teachings of Jesus, as pronounced in the Gospels, however make the belief in the atoning and propitiating powers of the crucifixion unnecessary. His disciples also betray total ignorance of such a dogma as the vicarious atonement. Jesus himself believed in one God, worshipped Him, and prayed to Him, and laid all possible stress on good living and cherishing love for one's neighbour.

This brings the treatment to a close, with my sincerest hopes that it will be of some interest and benefit to God's people.

THE KORAN

As to the Koran, it consists exclusively of the revelation or commands which the Prophet professd, to have received from time to time, as a message direct from God; and which, under divine direction, the Prophet delivered to those about him.

Every syllable of the Koran is of divine origin, eternal and 'uncreated' as the Deity Himself. It is one of the Mohamman arguments against the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, that they are not exclusively oracles professing to proceed from the mouth of God.

The Prophet himself neither read nor wrote. His being an illiterate man, enhances the marvel of his revelation¹. 'Learning' says the Rev. Margoliouth, 'he had none, or next to none².'

At the moment of inspiration or shortly after, each passage was recited by the Prophet in the presence of friends or followers, and was generally committed to writing by someone amongst them, at the time or afterwards, upon palm-leaves, leather, stones, or such other rude materia as conveniently came to hand. These divine messages continued throughout the twenty-three years of his prophetic life, so that the last portion was not received till near the time of his death.

(1) Sir. W. Muir. Life of Mohammad.

(2) The Rev. Margoliouth's introduction to Rodwell's translation of the Koran.

The Koran, being the divine revelation and the corner-stone of Islam, the recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer, public and private ; and its perusal and repetition were considered to be a great privilege. The preservation of the various chapters during the life-time of the Prophet, was not altogether dependent on their being committed to writing. The Koran was committed to memory by almost every adherent of Islam, and the extent, to which it could be recited, was one of the chief sources of distinction, in the early stages of Islam. Amongst a crowd of warrior martyrs, he who had been the most versed in the Koran, was honoured with the first burial. The person who in any company could most faithfully repeat the Koran, was ipso facto entitled to conduct the public prayers, and in certain cases to pecuniary rewards.

The retentive faculty of the early Arabs favoured the task ; and it was applied, with all the ardour of an awakened spirit, to the Koran. Several of the Prophet's followers could, during his life-time, repeat with scrupulous accuracy, the whole as then in use. Four or five such persons are named ; and several others also who could very nearly repeat the whole, before the Prophet's death ¹.

“However retentive the Arab memory, remarks Sir William Muir, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source, But there is good reason for believing, that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Koran, or nearly the whole, were during his life-time made by the Prophet's followers.

“Such was the condition of the text during Mohammad's life-time, and such it remained for about a year after his death, imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary transcripts increasing daily ².”

Further the same writer states : “The contents and arrangement of the Koran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments have, with artless simplicity, been joined together.....

Even the frailties of the Prophet, as noticed by the Deity, have with evident faithfulness been entered in the Koran.....

In fine, we possess every internal guarantee of confidence (namely in the authenticity of the Koran, as it exists in the present copies.)

.... there is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mohammad himself gave forth and used.

(1) Sir. Muir's Life of Mohammad.

(2) Sir. Muir's Life of Mohammad.

So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved that there are no variations of importance — we might almost say no variations at all — to be found in the innumerable copies scattered throughout the vast bounds of the Empire of Islam.

Yet, but One Koran has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by all of the same Scripture, in every age to the present day, is an irrefragable proof, that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the unfortunate Caliph (Othman who was murdered some time after the compilation of the Koran.)

There is probably in the world no other work, which has remained twelve centuries (1861), with so pure a text¹. This is only because the various revelations in the Koran, regarding its divine nature, and its remaining for ever free from corruption or contradiction, are rightly confirmed. Here are a few verses bearing on this point.

“We have surely sent down the Koran; and we will certainly preserve the same from corruption.” (Chap. XV)

“This Koran could not have been composed by any, except God; but it is a confirmation of that which was revealed before it, and an explanation of the scriptures; there is no doubt thereof; sent down from the Lord of all creatures. Will they say, (Mohammad) hath forged it? Answer, Bring therefore a chapter like unto it; and call whom ye may (to your assistance,) besides God, if ye speak truth.” (Chap. X)

“Say, Verily if men and genii were purposely assembled, that they might produce (a book) like this Koran, they could not produce one like unto it, although they assisted each other. And we have variously propounded unto men in this Koran, every kind of figurative argument; but the greater part of men refuse to receive it, merely out of infidelity.” (Chap. XVII.)

The Rev. Rodwell states :

“It must be acknowledged too, that the Koran deserves the highest praise for its conception of the divine nature, in reference to the attributes of Power, Knowledge and universal Providence and Unity—that its belief and trust in the One God of Heaven and Earth, is deep and fervent.”

“It is due to the Koran, that the occupants, in the sixth century, of an arid peninsula, whose poverty was only equalled by their ignorance, become not only the fervent and sincere votaries of a new creed, but, like Amru and many more, its warlike propagators.”

(1) It is more than thirteen centuries already (1941). See Sir W. Muir's Life of Mohammad.

“The simple shepherds and wandering bedouins of Arabia, are transformed, as if by a magician’s wand, into the founders of empires, the builders of cities, the collectors of more libraries, than they at first destroyed, while cities like Fostat, Baghdad, Cordova and Delhi, attest the power, at which Christian Europe trembled. And thus, while the Koran, which underlies this vast energy and contains the principles which are its springs of action, reflects to a great extent the mixed character of its author, its merit as a code of laws, and as a system of religious teaching, must always be estimated by the changes which it introduced into the customs and beliefs of those who willingly or by compulsion, embraced it. In the suppression of their idolatries, in the substitution of the worship of Allah for that of the powers of nature and genii with Him, in the abolition of child murder, in the extinction of manifold superstitious usages, in the reduction of the number of wives to a fixed standard, it was to the Arabians an unquestionable blessing, and an accession, though not in the Christian sense a Revelation of Truth ; and while every Christian must deplore the overthrow of so many flourishing Eastern churches by the arms of the victorious Moslems, it must not be forgotten that Europe, in the middle ages, owed much of her knowledge of dialectic philosophy, of medicine and architecture to Arabian writers, and that Moslems formed the connecting link between the West and the East for the importation of numerous articles of luxury and use.”

“For if he (Mohammad) was indeed the illiterate person the Moslems represent him to have been, then it will be hard to escape their inference, that the Koran is, as they assert it to be, a standing miracle.”

The Koranic Conception of Man

The Holy Koran represents man as a free and responsible being, gifted with the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong. Then, according to the Koran, man is capable of obeying the law of God. He needs nobody to atone for his sins, but himself ; for the Lord is merciful and will forgive him his sins. The Holy Book of Islam mentions no original sin which we inherit at our birth. It does not represent man as coming into the world with a load of sin on his back. On the contrary, it represents him as an unconscious Moslem at the moment of creation. The Prophet of Islam says : “Every child is born with a Moslem heart”, and it is the external influences that makes it what it becomes afterwards in life. If bad influences happen to be at work, the child generally surrenders to such

influences, unless God Himself undertakes to nurture the little soul. When the child grows into manhood, he may use the God-gifted faculty of discrimination and may become what he chooses in life. Indeed, God gives him many a chance in life, that he may recover himself from sin and iniquity. He may make or mar his fortune, even in the spiritual sense. If in him, Faith asserts its power, if true repentance places him in the right attitude towards God, if the spirit of God impels him to do virtuous deeds, if he feels the hand of God working in the smallest concerns of his life, and, above all, if he accepts death with a smiling countenance, and loses himself to save himself, why this is sufficient atonement in the sight of the Lord, whose pre-eminent attribute is Mercy.

To understand the Koranic conception of man, a reference to the following verses is necessary : "Of goodliest fabric We created man, then brought him down to be the lowest of the low ; save who believe and do things that are right, for theirs shall be a reward that faileth not". These verses indicate that man, at the moment of his creation, is perfectly sinless. It is afterwards, that sin tries to assert itself and bring him down to the level of the brutes. But he has also the divine in him,—the power to offer, if he so wills, a stubborn resistance ; and by the help of this power, he may "grow up to a saint". Although his own force is feeble, there is the Spirit of God, which will cooperate with him in this work of self-regeneration, only if he shows genuine desire to turn to God, to believe, and to do things that are right. The Holy Koran is very clear on this point. It does not ask to believe in the doctrine of original sin ; and so atonement, in a Christian sense, has no place in the Islamic Scripture. What God wants of us, is this, that we for our part, should make the utmost endeavour to secure His pleasure and grace, while He for His part, undertakes to direct us into His ways. "And whoso maketh his utmost endeavour towards Us, We will surely direct him into Our ways," says the Koran. This utmost endeavour on our part, to reach God, involves the idea of personal atonement and sacrifice which the Moslem is required to offer. We find the same thought clearly expressed elsewhere in the Word of God : "They who set their face with resignation God-ward, and do what is right,—their reward is with their Lord ; no fear shall come on them, neither shall they be grieved." Turning his face towards God, gradually proceeding towards Him, till he realises himself in Him—herein lies the salvation of man, according to the Koran. The Moslem is taught the high truth, that "the good drives away the evil in man," and so he requires not anyone, to take the burden of his sin and to undergo punishment as his 'substitute.' He develops his faculties, and tries his very best, to make use of them in doing good deeds and working out the will of his Maker ; and hopes that his little will be accepted as much by the Most Merciful Lord.

Everywhere, in the Holy Koran, man is represented as the crown and glory of creation. He is the central figure of this beautiful universe. In Adam, he is God's viceregent on earth. Out of love, God hath created man. And He hath created for him the heavens and the earth, and sendeth down water from the heaven, and so bringeth forth the fruits for his food. And to him He hath subjected the ships, so that by His command they pass through the sea ; and to him He hath subjected the sun and the moon in their constant courses ; and to him He hath subjected the day and the night ; of everything which he may ask Him, giveth He to him ; and if he would reckon up the favours of God, he can never count them.

“And the cattle. For you He created them ; from them ye have warm garments, and they are useful in many ways ; and of them ye eat ; and they obey you well when ye fetch them home and when ye drive them forth to pasture : and they carry your burdens to lands which ye could not else reach, but with travail of soul : truly, your Lord is full of goodness, and merciful : And He hath given you horses, mules and asses, that ye may ride them, and for your pleasure : And things, of which ye have no knowledge, hath He created. Of God it is, to point out the way. Some (of you) turn aside from it ; but had He pleased, He had guided you all aright¹.”

According to the Koran, God hath endowed us with the power of self-government which is an almost incredible trust. By this power, God not only trusts our destinies to ourselves, but He actually trusts, or seems to trust, the whole final outcome of His creative work to our treatment of it. This earth, at least, is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and of ourselves, its inhabitants. It is stored with all possible helps to us, in natural forces and materials ; we are given intelligence, to find them out and to use them for the enrichment and beautifying of our lives ; we are given the understanding of a Rule of Right in our conduct towards each other, that will keep us in perfect harmony and happiness together, for the common good ; we are given a complete code of regulations, to guide us as to what is right and what is wrong ; we are drawn towards well-doing, in accord with the Rule of Right, by a feeling created in us, which will not let us forget it or violate it, without wilful intent ; but (and here lies the grandeur of the part, man performs in creation) we are trusted with the freedom, to do with all this what we will. The outcome, good or evil, is what we and our fellows of the human race, past and future, are helping, or have helped, or will help, to make it. The glory of triumph or the shame of failure, in the creation of mankind, is to belong to the race itself.

(1) Koran, xvi, 5-9.

The Frailties of Human Nature

The Koran also dwells on the weaknesses, to which the flesh is heir, and constantly reminds man of his inconstancy, injustice and ingratitude. "Man is created weak." "Surely man is unjust and ungrateful." "Man is hasty." "Man is covetous." "Verily, man is created extremely impatient." "Verily, man is ungrateful unto his Lord." It must, however, not be inferred from verses like these, that man stands condemned before his Creator, as deserving only death and perdition. These verses rather breathe a noble sympathy for the weakness of man and the infirmities of the flesh. They contain in them promises of God's grace and forgiveness. In reminding man of the infirmities of his nature, God desires, that he should realise his weakness and powerlessness, bow down his head before the Lord, turn to Him for strength and assistance, and pray constantly, that He may guide him into the right, straight path. Indeed, the Moslem is enjoined to throw himself in this attitude towards his Maker, and to offer such prayers repeatedly through the day and night. He is taught to say: "Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds; the Compassionate, the Merciful, King of the day of Reckoning. Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us in the right path, the path of those, unto whom Thou hast been gracious;—and not of those, with whom Thou art angry, and neither of those, who go astray¹."

As will be seen, this human prayer is full of sympathy towards the weakness of man. In it the Lord teaches His servants, to beg of Him spiritual blessings. In it He indirectly asks them not to sink in despair, and indirectly promises, to guide them into the path of holiness and to give them strength, to bear the yoke of His law. What an uplifting hope is breathed into our hearts, when He tells us, that He was gracious in the past, unto those who sought Him, and even so to-day He is ready, to be gracious unto us, if we only turn to Him and look up to His Grace, as our true Saviour.

But, as Shakespeare said: "The course of true love never did run smooth". With equal truth it may be said of divine love, that its course never runs smooth. Trials and tribulations are bound to come. Many a trial the seeker after God has to undergo, before he can expect to receive the grace of God. "Think ye", says the Lord, "to enter Paradise, when no such things have come upon you, as on those who flourished before you?"

(1) This is the prayer, with which the Holy Book of Islam opens.

Ills and troubles tried them ; and so tossed were they by trials, that the Apostle and they who shared his faith, said, 'When will the help of God come ?'—Is not the help of God nigh ?¹." Even the Patriarch Abraham, was tried by God, when He commanded him to leave his home and country, and to offer his beloved son as a sacrifice.

No doubt, it is rather a difficult task, to secure the blessings of God, and to perform the divine laws. But, let not man stagger under the difficulty of the task that lies before him. Let him take courage, and, with a firm trust in God and a cheerful heart, undertake the performance ; and above all fear the Lord ; for it is God's promise, that "He will make His command easy to him who feareth Him". The God of Islam, it should always be remembered, is not a niggardly, exacting God, but "He is gracious unto His servants". Elsewhere, we read a surpassingly comforting verse, which comes as a message of hope to each and all of us. "God desireth, to be gracious unto you... God desireth, to make your burden light : for man hath been created weak."² Again we read ; "God wisheth you ease and never wisheth you discomfort." A world of mercy and forgiveness is surely concealed behind, and breathed out by these verses. God is offering His grace ; we have only to throw ourselves in the right attitude of Faith, and give ourselves up to God, and His Hand will lead us to His blessings. We have but to confess our weakness and ask from our Lord power and strength, and His spirit will descend upon us.

There is another remarkable passage in the Holy Koran which presents to us a just, but at the same time a merciful God, and then gives a most beautiful prayer, so comforting to the helpless man who, toiling up the spiritual heights, sits down totally unnerved, looking up to God for strength and support. "God will not burden any soul beyond its power," so run the words of God, "It shall enjoy the good which it hath acquired, and shall bear the evil, for the acquirement of which it laboured. Our Lord, punish us not if we forget, or fall into sin ; Our Lord, lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us ; neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have not the strength to bear ; but blot out our sins, and forgive us, and have pity on us. Thou art our Patron ; help us, therefore, against those who do not believe³."

(1) Koran, ii : 210.

(2) Koran, iv : 28.

(3) Koran : last verses of Chap. ii.,

The Koran and the Doctrine of Personal Holiness

Islam has taken due cognisance of the frailties of human nature, and this constitutes its chief excellence as a system of religion. Thus the laws of Islam exhibit an elasticity which is a proof of their beneficence and usefulness. Though Islam, no doubt, points to a lofty idealism, it is, at the same time, thoroughly practical. The merit of Islam, as a religion, consists in a happy harmonious blending of the ideal and the practical. It favours no form of asceticism, and never asks any man, to do what he has not the power to do. There is, however, one thing, on which it lays the greatest emphasis. It is personal holiness, and purity of heart. It is the grand purpose, for which the Prophet was sent down, as it appears from the prayer of Abraham : "Our Lord, raise up among them an apostle who may rehearse Thy signs unto them, and teach them the Book, and Wisdom, and purify them ¹." The reader will observe, that the verse gradually ascends to a climax. Purification of men being put last, as the most important part of the functions of the Prophet of Islam. "He who is purified, hath obtained felicity," says the Koran elsewhere ². Again, after mentioning the blessings of heavenly life, the Holy Book adds : "And this shall be the reward of him who shall be pure ³." That a very important place is given to purity of mind and personal holiness, will be seen from another verse, where sinners are threatened with the punishment, that God shall neither speak unto them nor shall He purify them." "Moreover, they who conceal any part of the scripture which God hath sent down unto them.... God shall not speak unto them, on the day of resurrection, neither shall He purify them, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment ⁴." It is clear, then, that communion with the Deity and personal holiness are the keynote of Islam.

But even here, man is not held responsible for the evil thoughts that in spite of himself, pass through his mind, like flashes of lightning. To render man responsible for such passing fancies, over which he has little control, would be sheer injustice. Commission of a wrong act, without previous intention and deliberation, does not make one guilty, far less a passing thought that rises like a bubble only to die and disappear the next moment. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit and thereby committed a mistake, as all men are liable to commit mistakes ; but he was never guilty of committing sin, and the Holy Koran clears him of the false accusation, just as

(1) Koran, chap. ii : 123.

(2) Koran, lxxxv11 : 14.

(3) Koran, xx : 78.

(4) Koran, ii : 175.

it has cleared other prophets, like Moses and Jesus, of similar charges. For it says : "We heretofore gave a command to Adam, and he forgot it, and We found no intention in him (to disobey our command) ¹."

This is, indeed, an important principle, and it has important bearings on the doctrine of sin, as presented by the Holy Koran. For, elsewhere we read : "God will not punish you for an inconsiderate word in your oaths ; but He will punish you for that which your hearts have assented unto ²." This verse clearly lays down, that a wrong act, or an evil thought, is a sin, if it is deliberate. Shorn of intention and deliberation, a wrong act or an impure thought is a mere accident which, however deplorable, cannot prove the doer a guilty sinner in the sight of God.

But, if the element of intention is present, even the faintest thought is enough, to render a man guilty before his Maker, not to speak of a deed which is manifestly wrong. God forbids both kinds of sin—open and secret—equally in the same verse : "Draw not near unto sin ; neither open nor secret ³." "Leave both—the outside of iniquity and the inside thereof ⁴." Again : "Say, verily, my Lord hath forbidden sins, whether open or secret, and iniquity and unjust violence ⁵."

These verses sufficiently establish the doctrine of personal holiness in Islam ; but to crush the objection of the critics absolutely, we give one more verse which shows, that not only the eyes and the ears, but also the heart, will be required, to give evidence on the Day of Judgment, if any sin has been committed through them. And the verse is this : "And follow not that, whereof thou hast no knowledge ; for the hearing and the sight and the heart—each of these shall be examined ⁶."

Personal holiness, it must be remembered, depends largely on a thorough belief in the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God. And nothing is more striking to the reader of the Holy Koran, than the force, with which it impresses upon us these two attributes of the Deity. The belief, that the Supreme Being sees our actions and knows even the innermost secrets of our hearts, is a most powerful check upon the tendency to commit sin. So long as a man realises, that he works and moves under the great Task-master's eyes, he keeps himself from vice : but whenever this consciousness in him grows dim, and he thinks he is not watched by God, he exposes himself to constant danger.

(1) Koran, xx : 114. It is interesting to note, that the word . . . ('Azma) in the verse quoted, has been taken, both by Rodwell and Sale to mean 'firmness of purpose' and not 'intention.' Hence, Mr. Wherry says in his commentary : "This verse is fatal to the Moslem theory of the sinlessness of prophets."

(2) Koran, II : 225.

(3) Koran, VI : 151.

(4) Koran, XVI : 38.

(5) Koran VII : 34.

(6) Koran XVII : 38.

4. Belief in the Apostles of God

The fourth article of the Mohammedan creed is faith in all the Apostles of God. A Moslem must believe, that the Merciful Creator sent in divers ages certain messengers or apostles, to reclaim mankind from infidelity and superstition, and to teach them the religion and laws of God, and to give them good tidings and admonitions. The number of these apostles is given as 313. Twenty five of them must be remembered, since their names are distinctly given in the Koran ; but it is not necessary to learn them by heart. The following are the names, according to chronological order :—

Adam, Noah, Houd (Heber), Saleh (Methuselah), Lot, Abraham, Ishmail, Isaac, Jacob, Shu'aib (Jethro), Haroun (Aaron), Moses, David, Solomon, Ayoub (Job), Zulkifl (Isaiah), Younis (Jonah), Ilias, Alyas'aa (Elisha), Zacharias, Yahia (John the Baptist), Jesus and Mohammad.

If a Moslem is asked about anyone of these men, he must confess his belief, that he was an apostle of God.

Moslems must also believe, that the apostles of God were truthful, faithful and intelligent, and that they delivered in full God's message to their respective people. A moslem must further believe, that all apostles of God were, by their prophetic characteristics, free from (1) telling lies, (2) committing unlawful deeds, (3) stupidity, laziness or cowardice, (4) concealing any part of the message they were ordered to deliver.

The apostles of God were subject to the same human wants as the rest of mankind, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, marrying, etc., They were also liable to ordinary but not disgusting maladies etc.

Since the nature, as well as the story, of Jesus Christ were matters of dispute between Christians and Mohammadans, I must give a summary of the Moslems' belief in this respect, according to the teachings of the Koran and the interpretations of the Prophet.

Moslems hold, that Jesus Christ was the blessed Apostle of God who was sent to reclaim the people of Israel. He was a spirit from God, His messenger, His servant and prophet, illustrious in this world and in the next. He was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary. The Jews having spoken ill of Mary, and charged her with unchastity, Jesus Christ, speaking in the cradle, vindicated his mother's honour. Jesus performed miracles by God's power ; giving life to a clay figure of a bird, healing the blind, curing

the leper, quickening the dead, and causing a table of food to be brought down from Heaven. He was sent by God, to confirm the law of Moses, and to preach the Gospel to the people of Israel. He proclaimed his mission by many manifest signs, being confirmed by the Holy Spirit. He foretold the advent of another apostle to succeed him, named Periclete or Ahmad. The Jews intended to crucify Jesus, but God saved him from the plot, took him up to Heaven, and stamped his likeness on a treacherous Jew who was apprehended and crucified in his stead. It is the constant doctrine of the Moslems, that it was not Jesus who underwent crucifixion, but someone else, resembling him in shape, namely, Judas, who agreed with the Jews, to betray Jesus for some pieces of silver, and led those who were sent to take him. After the crucifixion of the wicked Judas, and the taking up of Jesus into Heaven, Christ, the Apostle of God, was sent down again to the earth, to comfort his mother and devoted disciples, and to tell them, how the Jews were deceived ; and he was taken up a second time to Heaven.

“It is supported by several”, writes Mr. G. Sale “that this story was an original invention of Mohammad’s ; but they are certainly mistaken ; for several sectaries held the same opinion, long before his time. The Basilidians, in the very beginning of Christianity, denied, that Christ himself suffered, but that Simon the Cyrenean was crucified in his place. The Cerinthians, before them, and the Carpocratians next, (to name no more of those who affirmed Jesus to have been a mere man) did believe the same thing ; that it was not himself, but one of his followers very like him, that was crucified. Photius tells us, that he read a book entitled ‘The Journey of The Apostles’, relating the acts of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas and Paul ; and among other things contained therein, this was one, that Christ was not crucified, but another in his stead, and that therefore, he laughed at his crucifiers, or those who thought they had crucified him¹.”

St. Barnabas relates this part of Jesus Christ’s history with circumstances approximating to the Mohammadan view. “In that Gospel it is related, that the moment the Jews were going to apprehend Jesus in the garden, he was lifted up to heaven, by the ministry of four angels ; that he will not die, till the end of the world, and that it was Judas who was crucified in his stead ; God having permitted that traitor, to appear so like his master, in the eyes of the Jews, that they took and delivered him to Pilate. That this resemblance was so great, that it deceived the Virgin Mary and the disciples themselves ; but that Jesus Christ afterwards obtained leave of God, to go and comfort them. That Barnabas having then asked him, why

(1) See G. Sale’s, Translation of the Koran, chap. III, p. 38 (F. Warne & Co, London).

the divine goodness had suffered the mother and disciples of so holy a prophet, to believe, even for one moment, that he had died in so ignominious a manner. Jesus returned the following answer. "O Barnabas, believe me, that every sin, however small, is punished by God with great torment, because God is offended by sin. My mother, therefore, and faithful disciples, having loved me with a mixture of earthly love, the Just God has been pleased, to punish this love with their present grief, that they might not be punished for it hereafter in the flames of hell. And as for me, though I have myself been blameless in the world, yet other men having called me God and the son of God; therefore God, that I might not be mocked by the devils on the Day of Judgment, has been pleased, that in this world I should be mocked by men with the death of Judas, making every body believe, that I died upon the cross. And hence it is, that this mocking is to continue till the coming of Ahmed, the messenger of God; who, coming into the world, will undeceive everyone who shall believe in the law of God, from this error¹."

The Moslems are also taught, that after Jesus had left this earth, his disciples disputed among themselves concerning his nature, some calling him God and others the son of God. They believe, that he will come again into the world, will slay Antichrist, and will reign as a just king for many years, marry and have children and die.

The following are a variety of translated passages of the Koran bearing on the story of Jesus Christ, and the disputed nature and life of the Great Teacher of Christianity :

(1) Promised to Mary.

(a) "And when the angels said : O Mary, verily, God hath chosen thee and hath purified thee, and hath raised thee above all other women of the world : O Mary, be, therefore, devout towards thy Lord, and prostrate thyself and bow down in worship with those devotees who bow down to Him."

(b) "And when the angels said : O Mary, verily, God sendeth thee good tidings ; thou shalt bear a word from Him, whose name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, and who will be illustrious in this world and in the next, and one of those men who are honoured with approach to the presence of God ; and he shall speak to men alike when in the cradle and when he is grown up ; and he shall be one of the most righteous : she said, How, O my Lord, shall I have a son, since a man hath not touched me ? The angel said : Thus God will create what He will ; when He

(1) See G. Sale's Prelim. Discourse.

decreeth a thing. He only saith 'Be,' and 'it is.' He (God) shall teach him the scripture and wisdom and the law and the Gospel ; and He shall appoint him an apostle to the children of Israel, and he shall say to them : Verily, I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, for I will make before you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird ; then I will breathe into it, and it shall become an animated bird, by the will of God ; and I will heal the blind and the leper, by the will of God, and I will raise the dead, by the will of God ; and I will tell you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Verily, this will be a sign to you, if ye believe. And I will come to confirm the law which was revealed before me, and to allow unto you as lawful, part of what hath been forbidden you ; therefore, fear God and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord ; therefore serve Him. This is the right way. But Jesus perceiving their unbelief, said : who of you will assist towards the way to God ? The disciples said : We are your helpers towards the way to God : we do believe in God, and do thou bear witness, we are true believers. O Lord, we believe in what Thou hast sent down, and have followed Thy apostle ; write us down, then, with those who bear witness (of his message.)

(2) Birth of Jesus.

(a) "And make mention in the 'Word', of Mary ; when she retired from her family eastward, and drew a veil upon her to conceal herself from them ; and We sent our spirit (Gabriel) to her, and he appeared to her in the form of a perfect man. She said : 'I fly for refuge from thee to the Most Merciful. If thou fearest Him'. He said : 'I am the messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a purified son'. She said 'How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me, and I was never unchaste ?'. He said : 'So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said, it is a simple thing with Him, and that He will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Him : This is a thing already decreed'. Wherefore she conceived him ; and she retired aside with him (in her womb) to a distant place, and the throes came upon her near the trunk of a palm-tree. (She said) 'Would to God, I had died before this, and had become as one lost in oblivion.' And he who was below her (namely the newly born babe) came to her, saying, 'Be not grieved. Thy Lord hath provided for thee a rivulet at thy feet ; and do thou shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards thee : it will drop fresh ripe dates to eat. Therefore, eat and drink and cheer thyself ; and shouldst thou see any human being, say, Verily, I have vowed a fast to the Most Merciful ; wherefore I will by no means speak to a human being this day. So she came with the babe to her people. And they said to her, O Mary, thou

hast committed a grave thing. O sister of Aaron,¹ thy father was not a bad man, nor was thy mother unchasted. And she made a sign to him (the infant). They said : 'how shall we speak to him who is an infant in the cradel ?' He said : 'Verily, I am the servant of God : He hath given me the Book (the Gospel), and He hath appointed me a prophet. And He hath made me blessed, wheresoever I may be and hath commanded me, to pray to him and to give alms, as long as I live ; and hath made me dutiful towards my mother ; and He hath not made me cruel or wicked. The peace of God was on me the day I was born, and it will be on me the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised again to life'. This was Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth, concerning whom they dispute.

(b) "Verily, the case of Jesus with God is the same as that of Adam. He created him (Adam) out of the dust, and then said to him 'Be', and he was. This is the truth from thy Lord ; be not, therefore, one of those who dispute."

One of the Miracles of Jesus.

Remember when the disciples said. 'O Jesus, son of Mary, is thy Lord able to send down to us a table of provisions from heaven ?' He said : 'Fear God, if ye be true believers'. They said : 'We desire to eat therefrom, and to have our hearts assured, and to know that thou hast indeed spoken truth to us, and to be witnesses thereof' Jesus, the son of Mary, said : 'O God, our Lord, send down a table to us from heaven, that the day of its descent become a recurring festival to us, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee ; and do Thou provide food for us, for Thou art the best provider'. God said : 'Verily, I will cause it to descend unto you ; but whosoever among you shall disbelieve hereafter, I will surely punish him with more severe a punishment than I will punish any other of my creatures.

(1) Mr. Sale rightly comments this phrase, "O sister of Aaron" as follows :

Several Christian writers think, the Koran stands convicted of a manifest falsehood in this particular, but I am afraid, the Mohammadans may avoid the charge, as they do, by several answers. Some say, the virgin Mary had really a brother named Aaron, who had the same father, but a different mother ; other suppose Aaron, the brother of Moses, is here meant, but say, Mary is called his sister, either because she was of the Levitical race (as by her being related to Elizabeth, it should seem she was) or by way of comparison ; others say, that it was a different person of that name who was contemporary with her, and conspicuous for his good or bad qualities, and that they likened her to him, either by way of condemnation or reproach.

See Sale's Translation of the Koran.

The Mission of Jesus.

(a) "We formerly sent our apostles with evident signs and miracles, and We sent down with them the Scriptures and the balance, that men might observe justice."

"And We caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to succeed them, and We gave him the Gospel : and We put in the ears of those who followed him, compassion and mercy : but as to the monastic life, they invented it themselves : We did not prescribe it to them ; they did it out of design to please God, yet this they did not Properly observe. And We gave to such of them as believed, their reward : but many of them were evil doers."

(b) "We also caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow the footsteps of the Prophets, to confirm the Law which was sent down before him ; and We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the preceding word and a direction and admonition unto those who fear God : so that they who have received the Gospel might judge, according to what God hath revealed therein. And whose will not judge, according to what God hath revealed, they are certainly transgressors."

(c) "Some of the apostles We have endowed more than others. Those, to whom God hath spoken, He hath raised to the loftiest position. And to Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave manifest signs, and We strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. And if God had pleased, they who come after them, would not have wrangled, after the clear signs had reached them. But into disputes they fell : some of them believed, and some were infidels : yet, if God had pleased, they would not have wrangled : but God doth what He will."

(d) "And Jesus, the son of Mary, said : 'O children of Israel. Verily, I am God's apostle to you who came to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle who shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad. But when he (Ahmad) presented himself with clear signs of his mission, they said : 'This is manifest sorcery.' Jesus said to them : 'I come to attest the law which was revealed before me, and to allow you part of that which had been forbidden you ; and I come to you with a sign from your Lord : therefore, fear God and obey me ; verily, God is my Lord and your Lord ; therefore, worship Him : this is the right way.'"

Jesus not Crucified.

(a) "The Jews were cursed for their unbelief. and for their having spoken a grievous calumny against Mary and for their saying : 'Verily, we

have slain Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God'; yet they slew him not, and crucified him not, but he was represented to them by one in his likeness, and verily, they who disputed about him, were in doubt, concerning this matter: they had no sure knowledge thereof, but followed only an uncertain opinion¹. They (the Jews) did not really kill him; but God took him up to Himself and God is Mighty and Wise."

Jesus and the Divinity.

(a) "He (Jesus) is no other than a servant of God whom We favoured, and set forth as an instance (of divine power) to the children of Israel; and if We pleased, verily, We could have even produced angels from yourselves, to succeed you on earth."

(b) "And when Jesus came with manifest signs, he said: 'Now I am come to you with wisdom, and to explain to you part of those things, about which you disagree; therefore fear God, and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord; wherefore worship ye Him: this is the right path.' But the different parties fell into disputes among themselves², but woe to those who thus transgressed, because of the punishment of a grievous day."

(c) "The Jews say: 'Ezra is the son of God'; and the Christians say, 'Christ is the son of God.' This is their saying with their mouths, following the example of those who misbelieved before them. May God resist them. How are they infatuated! They take their priests and their monks for their Lord, besides God, and (take) Christ, the son of Mary, (for their lord besides God,) although they are commanded to worship one Deity only; There is no Deity but He (the true God); far be those from Him whom they associate (with God.)"

The Trinity condemned.

(a) "They are surely infidels who say, 'Verily, God is Christ the son of Mary; since Christ said, O ye children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and

(1) For some maintained, that he was justly and really crucified; some insisted, that it was not Jesus who suffered, but another who resembled him in the face... some said, he was taken up to heaven, and others, that his manhood only suffered, and that his godhead ascended into heaven.

(2) Either referring to the Jews in the time of Jesus who opposed his doctrine, or to the Christians since, who have fallen into various opinions concerning him; some making him to be God, others the son of God, and others one of the persons of the trinity etc.

your Lord'; whoever, shall associate aught with Him, God shall forbid him paradise, and his habitation shall be hell fire ; and the ungodly shall have none to help them. They are certainly infidels who say, God is the third of three, for there is no Deity, but God alone. And if they do not desist from what they say, a painful torment shall surely be inflicted upon those who misbelieved among them. Will they not turn unto God, and ask His pardon ? since God is Gracious and Merciful. Christ, the son of Mary, is no more than apostle : Other apostles preceded him, and his mother was a true believer ; they both used to eat food (as all other creatures of God). Behold, how we declare unto them the signs (of God's unity) ; and then behold, how they turn aside (from the right path). Say, (O Mohammad, unto them) will ye worship, besides God, that which can cause you neither harm nor profit ? God heareth (every thing) and seeth (every thing) Say. O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just bounds in your religion, by speaking beside the truth, neither follow the desires of people who have heretofore erred, and who have seduced many, and have gone astray from the right path."

(b) "O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just bounds in your religion, neither say of God otherwise than the truth. Verily, Christ, the son of Mary, was the apostle, and His Word which He conveyed to Mary, and a Spirit coming from Him. Believe, therefore, in God and His apostles, and say not : 'There are three (Deities)' desist : it will be better for you. God is the only Deity. Far be it from Him, that He should have a son ; unto Him belongeth whatever is in heaven and on earth ; and God is the best Protector. Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant to God."

(c) "It beseemeth not a man, that God should give the Scripture and the wisdom and the gift of prophecy to him, and that then he should say to the people 'Be ye worshippers of me, as well as of God', but rather, 'Be ye perfect in things pertaining to God, since ye know the Scriptures, and have studied deeply.'"

(d) "And when God shall say (namely unto Jesus on the Day of Judgment,) O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said unto the people, 'Take me and my mother for two deities, beside God ?' He shall answer, 'Glory be to Thee, it is not for me, to say that which I ought not in truth ; if I had said it, Thou wouldst surely have known it : Thou knowest what is in me, but I know not what is in Thee ; for Thou art the knower of all secrets. I have not spoken to them otherwise, than Thou didst command me. I said to them : Worship God, my Lord and your Lord ; and I was a witness against them as long as I stayed amongst them ; but when Thou causest

me to die. Thou hast been the Watcher over them, as Thou art the Watcher over all things. If Thou punish them, they are surely Thy servants, and if Thou forgive them, Thou art the Almighty and the All-wise."

Contradictory Teachings of Christianity From Moslems' Point of View

The following would illustrate certain contradictions in the fundamental principles of Christianity, as viewed by Moslems :

The first and the foremost Christian principle is Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. This, in itself, is but a clear illustration of the principle of compromise, of which a divine religion should be free. The Romans believed in three gods, whilst the Jews believed in one. When the Romans showed their readiness to adopt Christianity, a compromise was, it seems, at once arrived at. Apparently for the sake of the Romans, the Unity of God, as believed by the Jews, underwent a change ; it was assimilated to the tri-headed Godhood, and so the two creeds became merged into one. No Moslem person can think of reconciling such contradictions.

The second instance of contradictory principles is, that Jesus has been called a man and God, at the same time ; while the fact is, that the Creator and the created cannot be one and the same. Therefore, Jesus cannot be God and man, at the same time.

The third principle, where contradictions have been brought together, is that, on the one hand, Jesus declares in the Gospels, that violation of even the least commandment of the law dooms a man to eternal perdition, while it is taught by Paul, that the Law was a curse.

The fourth example of contradictory principles, is the Christian doctrine, that God cannot forgive sins, hence the necessity 'of the crucifixion of His only begotten son for the redemption of the sins of mankind', while maintaing, at the same time, that God would forgive us our trespasses, only when we forgive those that trespass, against us. A Moslem cannot understand, how God both can and cannot forgive trespasses. If He cannot forgive, then vain is our forgiving or condemning ; for that is of no avail. If He can, then a Moslem does not see that there is any need of Atonement.

The fifth contradictory principle is the teaching, that Jesus has taken away all our sins by suffering crucifixion for mankind at large, impressing

upon us, at the same time, the necessity of doing good. If Jesus by his unnatural death has atoned for our sins, then there should be no need for us to trouble ourselves about good or bad deeds any more. It matters little whether we do good or evil. We are quite at liberty, to revel and carouse at will. On the one hand, Christianity teaches us the doctrine of Atonement, thus making us independent of all good deeds, while on the other hand, it imposes upon us the obligation to perform good deeds.

The sixth contradictory principle that Christianity offers the world is, that it holds Christ as accursed, dying (as he is believed by Christians) an accursed death on the Cross ; yet it holds him up as the very paragon of excellence, the son of God — His dearest one. It is impossible for a Moslem, to comprehend how an accursed man can be the son of God. Curse betokens divine vengeance, a great gulf between Him and the person accursed. To reconcile these two contradictions passes the wit of a Moslem.

The seventh contradiction is that Jesus is called the son of God, as well as the son of David. How can a man possibly, be the son of two distinct personalities ? He must be either of one or of the other, but not of both at the same time.

The Godhead of Jesus Condemned by Islam

The above has been the doctrine of the Mohammadan Religion with regard to the personality of Jesus Christ. After thirteen centuries the same doctrine is now adopted by some Christian Churches, namely, the Unitarian. Probably it will not be out of place to quote here a few statements from a lecture, delivered before the Cooper Literary Institute, Philadelphia, on March 4th, 1913, by Dr. A. Geo. Naker, late President of the Institute :

“We have now arrived at a time when the literature of all nations, and their history, are being carefully studied by those who are fitted for the task. The many frauds which the Christian churches have practised in the past, are all being exposed now, and the result is that many of the wisest and best men have forsaken the orthodox doctrines of the Christian churches. We have here in the United States, a large and intelligent body of believers who are called Unitarians, i.e. believers in one God, and who object to the old doctrine of a trinity of person in the Godhead, and reject the same. They look upon Christ as a great prophet and a good man, but still only a man, Our ex-President Taft belongs to this Unitarian church. In taking

his farewell from the Unitarian congregation in Washington, he said in his last speech to them: 'It has always been a wonder to me, why all the world is not Unitarian.' The President, of course, meant by 'all the world' all the Protestant world of the United States, because the Catholic church is under the power of the Pope, and admits of no change of creed or dogma.

"The Unitarians consider Christ as a mere man, inspired as other great men are, though in a greater degree; they reject the doctrine of original sin, the belief in miracles, and generally the whole supernatural elements of Christianity. There are many of the so-called liberals in the churches who hold Unitarian doctrines, but do not separate from their old connections. President Taft is, therefore, entirely justified in asserting that the trouble we suffer from—if it be trouble—is, that there are so many Unitarians in other churches who do not sit in the pews of our church. But that means ultimately that they are coming to us. There seems to be every prospect that President Taft's prophecy may be fulfilled in regard to the Protestant world.

"Charles Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University, made a similar prophecy in a pamphlet called 'The Religion of the Future' Printed by the American Unitarian Association. Mr. Eliot says: 'The religion of the future will not be based on authority, either spiritual or temporal', (namely on neither Pope nor King). 'It is hardly necessary to say that in the future religion there will be no personification of the forces of nature. There will be in the religion of the future, no identification of any human being, however majestic in character, with the Eternal Deity.'

"The ordinary consolations of constitutional Christianity no longer satisfy intelligent people whose lives are broken by the sickness or premature death of those they love...."

The lecturer quoted above goes on to say: "Jesus Christ prayed (John xvii, 3) 'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent' (namely, Thine apostle). There are many other places to prove, that Christ did not claim to be God. But Christians cannot see it in that light, because they want three Gods instead of one...."

"Of course, there are points, at which all religions touch each other, but the Christian fails to see this. The Moslem believes in one God, and also in Christ as one of God's great prophets. The Christian says, he also believes in one God, but He has a trinity of persons. This is evidently derived from the Hindu religion, from Bram, Vishnu and Siva. The Jewish religion knew of no trinity in the Old Testament, and yet the Christian pretends, that his religion is founded on the Jewish religion. The Jewish

religion knew of no Saviour, besides the one God. He was their Saviour and Redeemer. See Isaiah, 43 : 3, 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour' and Isaiah 42, v.8, 'I am the Lord that is my name ; and my glory will I, not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,' and again Is. 43 : 11. 'I, even I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour', and Is. 44 : 6. 'Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts. I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God'. There are many other passages in Isaiah, and other Old Testament books which insist that there is no God, but the one God, and He is the Saviour and Redeemer, and there is none beside Him. The Christians who take Christ for their Saviour and Redeemer are, therefore, outside of the promise of the Scriptures which they themselves acknowledge to be the word of God. But all this with the many passages in the New Testament, where Christ distinctly says that he is not God, does not convince them."

What Jesus Says About Himself in Relation to his Alleged Divinity.

According to the Koran, ¹ Jesus, on the day of Judgment, will be asked by God, whether he told his people to consider him and his mother² as two Gods, besides God Himself. Whereupon, Jesus not only disavows his claim of divinity, but also asserts he never preached such a doctrine to

(1) Chap. VII ; 116-118.

(2) From the Koranic description of Mary being taken for a God by the Christians, some Christian critics of the Koran conclude that the doctrine of the Trinity, according to the Koran, consists of three persons-God, Jesus and Mary. But this is an unwarranted conclusion. Mary is spoken of as being taken for an object of worship by the Christians ; but the doctrine of the Trinity is not mentioned, here, while the Divinity of Mary is not mentioned, where the Trinity is spoken of. Had Mary not been worshipped by the Christians as the 'Mother of God,' the conclusion would have been safe, that the Koran mistook Mary for the third person of the Trinity. But the doctrine and practice of Mariolatry, as it is called by Protestant controversialists, is too well known. In the catechism of the Roman Church, the following doctrines are to be found : 'That she is truly the mother of God, and the second Eve, by whose means we have received blessing and life ; that she is the mother of Pity and, very specially, our advocate ; that her images are of the utmost utility (Encyc. Brit. 11th ed. vol. 17. 813.) It is also stated that her intercessions are directly appealed to in the Litany. And further, that there were certain women in Thrace, Scythia, and Arabia who were in the habit of worshiping the Virgin as a goddess, the offer of a cake being one of the features of their worship etc.

his disciples, when he was with them. Fortunately the narrative of the Teacher of Nazareth as reported in the four gospels, though in the consideration of Islamic judgment not genuine in its entirety, still contains sufficient evidence to corroborate the statement of the Koran. The [following are the sayings of Christ about himself as reported by the Evangelists :

“I do nothing of myself” (John viii. 28).

“My Father is greater than I” (John xiv. 2).

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3).

“The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark xvii. 29).

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve”. (Matt. iv. 10).

“Why callest thou me good ? None is good save one, that is God”

“I am not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God”.

“I by the finger of God cast out devils” (Luke x1. 20.)

“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that Thou hearest me always ; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me” (John x1. 41, 42.)

“The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John v. 36.)

“If anyman hear my words and believe not, I judge him not ; for I came not to judge the world” (John X11. 47.)

“(Jesus then went a little further, fell on his face, and prayed, saying.)

“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” Matt. XXVI : 38, 39.)

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani—My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me.” (Matt. xxvii. 46)

“Father, into my hands I commend my spirit,” (Luke xxiii. 46)

These expressions confirm to a great extent the Islamic notion of the Holy Jesus Christ, namely, that he was a true servant and a messenger of God, and one of His humble creatures, and never a god. Jesus admits his limited knowledge and power. He looks to God even for his daily sustenance. He expresses his complete submission to the divine will. He disavows all goodness for himself, when speaking of God. A messenger, no doubt, he was of God. He spoke to the children of Israel what he heard from God. He has been reported to perform certain miracles, but these he performed by the help of God. He is said to have raised Lazarus

to life, but he has to pray to God, and thank Him on being heard. When he was asked, he admitted that such miracles could be done only through fasting and prayer to God.

Speaking of himself, Jesus also is reported to have said :

“Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”

In another instance he is reported to have said :

“Of myself I can do nothing; of that day and that hour knoweth no man neither the son.”

Moslems fail to understand, how, in the presence of these admissions on the part of Jesus, divinity can still be attributed to him. This is a problem which can only be solved by the words said of Jesus :

“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast kept these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Priestcraft and Islam

Islam is the Faith of works, of approach to God through self-endeavour, and not through any intermediary. In Islam there is no such teaching as that of “The Holy Spirit descending in the greatest degree to the elected Pope, and in lesser degrees to bishops, deans and clergy.” That every soul must labour for its own salvation, is the keystone of Islamic teaching. Islam has no monasticism, no apostolic succession, no body of men whose very livelihood depends upon their claim that, after their ordination as priests, they have the Spirit of God in them, and that, as Jesus was the chief intercessor between God and man, so the priest is the intercessor between the people and Jesus and the saints. While other religions believe, that man cannot approach God, and he cannot even confess his sins to Him, but that he must confess to a priest, who having the “Spirit of God, has the power to assure him that he is forgiven.” Islam teaches that “He who is best among men is he who does most good works.” In such a religion the priest is not needed. Truly, mosques require attendants, and some men love to devote their lives to religion; but the doctrine of priesthood itself is not, and never has been found, in the religion of Islam. With Islam, a man may attain to spiritual closeness to God, not through his having been ordained a priest, but by living a life of religion, piety and good works.

The simple worship of the One True God Who rules over all, Who

hears the prayers, both of the most cultured and the most ignorant, requiring nothing but a pure heart and sincere motive, is the chief characteristic of the religion of Islam. The absence of the priest in the religion of Islam is one of the reasons which helped Moslems to be better acquainted with their religion.

Supposed Divinity of Jesus

Modern Christian Divines agree with Islamic views, as to the supposed Divinity of Jesus.

The following extract is taken from 'The Graphic' of August 20th, 1920 :

"During the last few days orthodox Christianity has received the greatest blow it has suffered for many years. Outside the Church, scores of people, learned and skilled in the ways of theology, have been attempting to prove, that the basis of Christianity was all wrong, and that modern science had destroyed its very foundation. This time, though, a blow has come from the inside itself ; and three highly-placed theologians, all avowed members of the Church of England, in which they live, preach and have their being, have united, to use words which lay men take to mean, that Christ was not the son of God, but a Palestine Jew

"Now, what Renan argued in 'The Life of Jesus,' what all scientists outside the faith have expressed in learned terms, has been suddenly put into a bomb which, thrown at the Modern Churchmen's Congress at Cambridge not a week ago, has staggered the Anglican Church so much, that the reverberations of the shock will be felt for years . . . Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Bethune-Baker, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, the Rev. R. G. Parsons of Rusholme, have stood up at an Anglican Conference, and—if their words have been reported rightly—denied the Godhead

"'Christ was not divine but human,' said Dr. Rashdall. 'I do not for a moment suppose, that Christ ever thought of himself as God', said Dr. Bethune-Baker. 'Jesus was a man, genuinely, utterly, completely, unreservedly human,' said the Rev. R. G. Parsons—'A Palestine Jew who expressed himself through the conditions and limitations of life, and though peculiar to his own time.'"

These three men are not people whose opinions can be disregarded, even by the most orthodox of all Christians. They are men of the highest

intellectual attainments, men of brilliant achievements in the world of theology ; all of them men who, as lecturers and fellows and professors, have instructed scores of Anglican divines before their ordination and since."

Canon Barnes on the Old Testament

In its issue of January 6th, 1922, the Daily Graphic has dealt with a speech delivered by the Canon of Westminster at the Association of University Women Teachers. The following is an extract of the speech as inserted in the above issue :

"In this connection it was most important, that the true nature and value of the Old Testament should be explained to children. It was Jewish literature ; and was valuable for us, mainly, because it showed how the Jewish prophets were led to the idea of God, which Jesus accepted and emphasised, and because, in its vague expectations of a Messiah, foreshadowed the advent of Christ. But in the Old Testament were also *to be found folk-lore, defective history, half-savage morality, obsolete forms of worship based upon primitive and erroneous ideas of the nature of God*, and crude science. The whole, however, was valuable, as showing the growth of a pure monotheism among the Jews—a religious phenomenon, as remarkable and inexplicable as the great intellectual development of the Golden Age of Greece. It was very difficult, to convey truths, like this, to children, and so it seemed to him better, to postpone the Old Testament part of religious teaching, to the later stages ; otherwise, children would learn stories, like that, with which the Book of Genesis opened, which they would afterwards discover to be untrue."

The same paper goes on to say :

"He Canon Barnes had come reluctantly to the conclusion, that it was highly dangerous, to use for didactic purposes such allegories, as the creation of woman, the Daniel stories and Jonah ; it encouraged the prevalent belief, that religious people had a low standard of truth."

Thus, the Reverenced Doctor condemns the Old Testament, and desires to eliminate it from the course of studies. He considers that, among other stories, that of Jonah is dangerous to teach to human intellect, while in its infancy and growth. He acknowledges, that to accept stories, like that of Jonah and Daniel, as genuine pieces of history, would betray a low standard of truth in the believers of Christianity.

Was Christ Divine ?

Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, recently delivered a remarkable speech at the Modern Churchman's Congress on 'Jesus as the Son of God,' and in the course of his address, he said :

"There is a growing demand, that liberal theologians should speak in quite definite language about the divinity of Christ. The following are some of the things that we do not and cannot mean, by ascribing divinity to Christ :

1. *Jesus did not claim divinity for himself.*

He may have allowed himself to be called Messiah, but never in any critically well attested sayings, is there anything which suggests, that his conscious relation to God is other than that of *a man towards God*. The speeches of the fourth Gospel, where they go beyond the synoptic conception, cannot be regarded as history.

2. It follows from this admission that *Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, and that he had not merely a human body, but also a human soul, intellect and will.*

3. It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine, unless we say that all human souls exist before their birth into the world, but that is not the usually accepted catholic position.

4. The divinity of Christ does not necessarily imply virgin birth, or any other miracle. The virgin birth, if it could be historically proved, would be no demonstration of Christ's divinity, nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt on that doctrine.

5. The divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. There is no more reason for supposing, that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, than that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny, that he entertained some expectation about the future which history has not verified."

The Rev.H.D.A.Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, who opened the discussion was as outspoken as the Dean.

“It should be clearly realised,” said the Rev. Major, “that Jesus did not claim in the Gospels to be the Son of God in a physical sense, such as the *narratives* of the virgin birth suggest, nor did he claim to be the Son of God in a metaphysical sense, such as was required by the Nicene theology. He claimed to be God’s son in a moral sense, in the sense, in which all human beings are sons of God, as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God, and capable of acting on those moral principles, on which God acts.”

The Dean of Carlisle, who is recognised as one of the most fearless and outspoken of Modern Churchmen, had a distinguished university career. He was a theological tutor at Balliol, and preacher at Lincoln’s Inn, for five years. He was Dean of Hereford, before his transfer to Carlisle, in 1917¹.

The glory of Jesus naturally does not lie in being a God, because he cannot be a God, but his whole triumph lies in being a man, a perfect man, a holy man, and in the words of the Holy Koran, a Model for the people to whom he was sent.

Biblical Prophecies as referring to the Advent of The Prophet—Mohammed

Although Moslems hold, that the original Old and New Testaments have largely been corrupted by the interference of prejudiced men, or otherwise, as has already been pointed out elsewhere in this book, they still believe, that the existing Scriptures contain, to such an extent as they are confirmed and supported by the Holy Koran, the True Word of God.

The following are therefore, a few extracts of the safe contents of the Bible which Mohammadans take to refer directly to the Holy Prophet Mohammad :

“The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them ; He shined forth from Paran and He came with ten thousands of saints ; from His right hand went a fiery law for them.” (Deut. xxxiii-2)

“God came from Teman, and the Holy one from Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.” (Hab iii. 3.)

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto

(1) The Islamic Review, August 1921.

thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 18).

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John xvi. 12—13).

While Moses promises to the children of Israel the coming Epiphany of God in the person of a "Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee". Jesus characterises the promised one as the Spirit of truth, who will guide them into all truth. The description of the Holy One in the words of Moses and Jesus, however, is strikingly similar: "I will put words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 18.) "He shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." (John xvi. 13). These words make the promised one a messenger from God, and a Prophet rather than one abstract and impersonal Divine Epiphany, and if "The Lord came from Sinai" in His revelation to Moses, and "He rose up from Seir" according to His message from the Nazarene, should we not look for some other son of man "from Paran", to stand for the shining forth of God from the same? — especially when the Prophet Habakkuk calls him 'The Holy One from Paran' (Hab. iii. 3). The Prophet spoken of by Moses, has however, wrongly been confused with Jesus, in later Christian theology. The house of Jacob always distinguished Christ from the Prophet spoken of in Deut. xviii. 18, as it appears from the following we read about John the Baptist. "What then, art thou Elias?" and He said: "Art thou that Prophet?" And He answered, "No." And they asked him, "Why baptised thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?" (John i. 21—25). These words speak distinctly of three different personalities, namely Christ, Elias and that Prophet. Jesus himself did not claim to be "that Prophet". If Jesus was the Christ and John the Baptist Elias, as Jesus himself makes him to be, we are quite justified in concluding that the appearance of Jesus was the promised Prophet. Even the first followers of Jesus were of the same opinion. "And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Acts. iii. 20—22). Though the writer of these words looks to the second advent of Jesus for the fulfilment of the Mosaic prophecies, so far it is undisputed that the first advent of Jesus is not the advent of the "Prophet like unto

me." The second advent of Christ as well cannot be the fulfilment of the words in Deuteronomy. Jesus, as it is believed by the Church has to appear for the judgment and not for giving the law, while the Prophet like unto Moses, has to come with a fiery law in his right hand. Like Moses, he will bring the law; besides, the Promised Prophet was to be raised not from amongst the Israelites, but from amongst the brethren of the Israelites, namely the Ishmaelites.

In ascertaining the personality of the promised Prophet, the other prophecy of Moses is, however, helpful, in which he speaks of the shining forth of God from Paran. In Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, the Lord has been compared with the sun. He comes from Sinai, he rises from Seir, but he shines in his full glory from Paran, where he had to appear with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. None of the Israelites, including Jesus, had anything to do with Paran. Hagar, with her son Ishmael, wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, who afterwards dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. (Gen. xxi. 21.) He married an Egyptian woman, and through his first born, Kedar, gave descent to the Arabs who, from that time till now, are the dwellers of the wilderness of Paran. Admittedly on all hands, the descent of the Holy Mohammad, is traced to Ishmael through Kedar, he appeared as a Prophet in the wilderness of Paran, and re-entered Mecca with ten thousand saints, and gave a fiery law to the people, so that the prophecy has been fulfilled to its very letter. The words of the prophecy in Habakkuk are especially noteworthy. His—the Holy One from Paran's glory covered the heaven and the earth with full praise. The word 'praise' is very significant as the very name 'Mohammad,' as already stated elsewhere in this book, means 'the highly praised.' Again the inhabitants of the wilderness of Paran had been promised a Revelation: "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: He shall cry, yea, roar, He shall prevail against His enemies." (Isa. xlii. 11. 12. 13¹.)

Moreover we read in Isaiah two other prophecies worthy of note, where references have been made to Kedar. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.... The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephak; all they from Sheba shall come.... All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered

(1) Reference to the Life of the Prophet in part II of this Book shows how distinctly this prophecy has been fulfilled.

together unto thee, the rams of Nebaiath shall minister unto thee : they shall come up with acceptance on Mine Altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory." (Isaiah lx. 1-7.) The other prophecy runs thus : "The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread *Him that fled*. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail." (Isaiah xxi. 13-16.)

The above two revelations read in the light of the one in Deuteronomy, will make the meaning quite clear : It is acknowledged, that Ishmael inhabited the wilderness of Paran, where he gave birth to Kedar, who is the ancestor of the Arabs. The sons of Kedar had to receive revelation from God. The flocks of Kedar had to come up with acceptance to a divine altar, to glorify "the house of my glory", where the darkness had to cover the earth for centuries, and then that very land had to receive light from God. All the glory of Kedar had to fail, and the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, had to diminish within a year after they fled from the swords and from the bent bows. Therefore, the Holy one from Paran (Hab. iii. 3) should be no one else than the Prophet Mohammad. He is the holy offspring of Ishmael through Kedar, who settled in the wilderness of Paran,¹ the Prophet Mohammad is the only Prophet, through whom the Arabs received revelation at the time when the darkness had covered the earth and gross darkness the people.² Through him God shone from Paran, and Mecca is the only place, where the house of God is glorified by the flocks of Kedar who come up with acceptance on its altar. The Prophet Mohammad was persecuted by his people and had to leave Mecca. He was thirsty and fled from the drawn swords and the bent bows ; within a year after his flight, the descendants of Kedar met him at Badr, the field of the first battle between the Meccans and the Prophet.³ There the children of Kedar and their number of archers diminished, and all the glory of Kedar failed. Besides, the house of 'my glory', referred to in Isaiah lx, is the house of God at Mecca, and not the Church of Christ, as thought by Christian commentators. The flocks of Kedar, as mentioned in verse 7, have never come to the Church of Christ. It is a fact, that the villages of Kedar, and their inhabitants are the only people in the whole world who have remained impenetrable to any influence of the Church of

(1) See The History of the Arabs, in this book or anywhere else.

(2) George Sale : Prelim. Discourse.

(3) See Sir William Muir's 'The Life of Mohammad'.

Christ¹. Again, the mention of ten thousand saints, in Deuteronomy xxxiii, is very significant. . . . "he shined forth from Paran and he came with ten thousand of saints." The whole history of the wilderness of Paran shows that there was no other event, but when Mecca was conquered by the Prophet. He came with ten thousand followers from Medina and re-entered the "house of my glory." He gave a fiery law to the world which has superseded and cancelled all other laws. The comforter—the Spirit of Truth — spoken of by Jesus was no other than the Prophet Mohammad himself. It cannot be taken to be the Holy Ghost, as the Church theology says. "It is expedient for you that I go away," says Jesus, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The way, in which Jesus describes the Comforter, makes him to be a human being, and not a ghost. "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak." The words of Jesus clearly refer to some messenger from God. He calls him the Spirit of Truth, and so the Koran speaks of the Prophet Mohammad. "Nay he has come with the Truth and verified the apostles."

The above prophecy of Jesus has also been reported in the Koran in the following words : "Jesus, the son of Mary, said : O children of Israel, surely I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah, and giving the good news of an apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad." The word 'Ahmad' which is another name of the Prophet Mohammad, is derived from the same root, namely 'Hamd' which signifies praising, and it means a person whose personal qualities are such as to be worthy of praise. It should not be supposed, that Jesus uttered the very words which are reported in the Holy Koran, for he spoke in Hebrew, and not in Arabic. The actual words of Jesus not being preserved, we should depend on a Greek version, in which we find the word paraclete, which is translated in English as comforter. It is a well known fact, that translations are sometimes misleading, and therefore the use of the word paraclete in the Greek version, or that of comforter in the English, does not positively show, what the textual word spoken by Jesus was. Anyhow the qualifications which are reported in John xiv. 16 and xvi. 7, are met with in the person of the Holy Prophet Mohammad. He is stated to be one who shall abide for ever, and it is the Prophet's law, for after him comes no prophet, to promulgate a new law. He is to teach all things, and it was with a perfect law, that the Holy Prophet came. The prophecy in John xvi. 12 — 14, about the Spirit of Truth² which is the

(1) See George Sale's Prelim. Discourse.

(2) It is to be noted, that the Holy Prophet Mohammad is frequently called "The Truth" in the Holy Koran, as in 17-81 : "And say, The Truth has come, and the falsehood has vanished."

same as the comforter, mentioned in John xiv. 17, clearly establishes the following points: (1) Jesus could not guide into all truth, because his teaching was confined to reform the Israelites, and he denounced only their crying evils; but the teaching of the Comforter would be a perfect law, guiding men to all truth; and the Holy Koran is the only book which claims to be a perfect Book of Divine Laws. (2) That the Comforter would not speak a word of himself, but that which he shall hear, he shall speak, a qualification which is met with only in the person of the Prophet Mohammad. (3) That he will glorify Jesus, and the Holy Prophet did glorify Jesus by denouncing as utterly false all these calumnies which the Israelites indulgently attributed to Jesus and his mother.

5. The Belief in the Day of Resurrection

The fifth pillar of the Mohammadan creed is belief in the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning or Judgment, which day shall be the beginning of an eternal life after death. The dead shall rise from their graves, restored to life. Every human being shall have to render an account of his or her actions on earth. The happiness or misery of individuals will depend upon the manner, in which they have performed the commandments of God.

The Arabian Prophet, being the seal of God's Messengers to mankind, has given several prophecies in detail, with respect to the state of being from the time a man is dead, until the resurrection, and also an account of the eternal destiny of mankind, beginning from that day. Faith in all such prophecies is essential to complete the creed of a perfect Moslem. Before entering into the main subject under discussion, it is desirable to make a few preliminary remarks.

Some people are apt to think that prophecies relating to matters connected with the after-life must be examined by pure reason before they can be adopted. There, however, should be no excuse for rejecting any prophecy on the mere assumption that it is difficult for human reason to comprehend it. Human power of discernment, penetration or discrimination on all questions raised by prophets must be restricted merely to deciding whether the information obtained through such an agency is or is not an impossibility. By impossibility is meant those things which human beings cannot be expected to believe, such as a camel passing through a needle's eye. But once it is no longer a question of impossibility, and the prophetic commission is rightly established there should be no excuse for human reason to reject any prophetic statement.

The Mohammadan School avails itself of the following suggestion with regard to the nature of prophecy and the obligation of mankind thereto.

The mind of a newly born infant is so undeveloped, that he has no knowledge of the wondrous world around him. As he grows he gradually acquires knowledge of things through the various channels of comprehension. The first sense created in him is that of feeling by which he can comprehend certain species of things such as heat and coldness, dampness and dryness, softness and coarseness etc. But colours or sounds do not come in the domain of the sense of feeling. Sight is the next to come into operation by which one can comprehend colours and forms and it is the most comprehensive of all the senses. Then hearing is open by which one can distinguish different voices. The child then acquires the power of discriminating different tastes. When a human being approaches his or her seventh year his or her intellect is further awakened. Through this new agency, one acquires knowledge of things, beyond those dependent exclusively on the senses, and of which nothing exists in the world of sense. The child then developed into a still higher state of being, namely the state of reasoning by which necessities, possibilities, impossibilities and other things which the senses cannot teach by themselves are comprehended. Beyond reason, there is still another independent faculty, by which a new agency is given, to see the unseen and things of the future, and other things, from which reason is absolutely a different thing, inasmuch as understanding is different from those things belonging to reason, and as the power of reasoning is from things known only through the senses. A man born blind may well ignore the existence of anything like colours, and a man born deaf may ignore things like voices, merely on account of the lack of the particular senses capable of comprehending them. Inasmuch as it is unreasonable for a man born blind, to deny the existence of colours, or for a man born deaf, to deny the existence of voices, so too it is illogical for a man, to deny the prophetic gift, simply because he himself is lacking in spiritual gifts. God has made it easy for his creatures, to have some idea of the prophetic nature, by giving them a picture or type thereof, namely, sleep. When asleep, a man sometimes foresees things, either directly or symbolically. In the former, the meaning is clear; in the latter, it may be found by interpretation. This is a wonderful state of comprehension which, if not personally experienced by any particular person, but told to this person by another man, who, falling asleep, like the dead, could comprehend unseen things, would certainly be rejected by this person who would set forth proofs against the possibility of the information. It would be asserted that, as the sensitive faculties are the only source of comprehension and that even with their presence, a man can not acquire any knowledge of unseen things, he would all the more and most assuredly be incapable of knowing such things, in the absence of his senses. This is a reasoning by analogy which is however contradicted by actuality and practice. Even as

reason is a state of human being, by which an insight is created in man, enabling him to know species of reasonable things, the comprehension of which lie beyond the power of the senses, so prophecy is another state of being by which a still further source of knowledge is created, a peculiar light, capable of making visible unseen things, incomprehensible by reason.

The doubt in prophecy may be connected either with its possibility, its existence and occurrence, or with its occurrence to a certain person. The proof of its possibility is its existence. And the proof of its existence is the existence of branches of knowledge in the world that cannot be acquired by mere reason as for instance, the science of medicine or astrology. Deep study of these sciences is sufficient to tell us of the impossibility of their being acquired, except by divine inspiration and guidance from God, and never by mere experience and practice. There are certain astronomic phenomena which do not take place but once every thousand years; but these have been accurately foretold. How then can such be got by practice? The same argument applies to medicine. Hence it is clear, that there is some supernatural power, by which we acquire the knowledge of things, which cannot be comprehended by mere reason. In this way prophecy can be illustrated. But prophecy does not consist only in these things. The comprehension of certain things, beyond the limits of reason, is but one of the various faculties of prophecy, and represents but a drop in the ocean of the prophetic nature. All men have in themselves a natural example of the prophetic faculty, namely what they foresee of future events while asleep. The two sciences of medicine and astronomy are also examples of the prophetic faculty. Prophecies are the miracles of prophets, which ordinary men can by no means attain by human reason. The nature of prophecy cannot be comprehended, except through a course of Sufism, that is Mohammadan mysticism. By taking a course of Sufism a man, in the early stages of the course, acquires a clear notion of the nature of prophecy. This prepares his mind for a better appreciation of this wonderful subject.

If one doubts a particular person being a person, one cannot be convinced that he is so, except by knowing his character, either by personal observation or by hearing of it repeatedly. If a man has knowledge of medicine or law, he can easily distinguish between physicians and lawyers by seeing their respective qualifications proved, or by hearing their statements. A man cannot fail to know that Galens was a physician, or that Shakespeare was a poet—a knowledge based on experience, and not on hearsay—if he is acquainted with medicine or poetry. By reading their books and words he can, then have a full knowledge of the subjects they treat. The same thing applies to prophecy. If a man carefully goes through the Koran, and closely studies the sayings of the Arabian Prophet, he will surely acquire a

true knowledge of his character, and will necessarily admit, that he must have enjoyed the highest degree of prophecy. The above knowlege may still be confirmed, by testing what the Prophet said concerning the magical effect of carrying out the practical religious obligations of cleansing and purifying the heart. He will thereby know, how true the Prophet was, when he said: "To him who shall put into practice what he has been taught, God shall give knowledge of what he does not know;" and how truly he said: "Him who, when getting up, forgets all his cares, except the care of God's duties, God shall relieve from the cares of this life and the next." If a man has tested the truth of the above promises, and of thousands and thousands of others, he will surely have a perfect knowledge of the character of the prophet who foretold them. This is the way to attain conviction of the reality of prophecy, and not by seeking to see a rod turned into a serpent, or the moon divided into parts: because, by confining his researches to such wonderful acts alone, without their being corroborated by numerous other evidences, a man might mistake mere acts of sorcery and imposture for prophetic miracles.

Now it is time, to resume the statements of what, a Moslem should believe, will take place after death, according to the teachings of Islam. The Prophet of Islam prophecied that, when a man is put into the grave, he shall encounter two angels who adopt so fearful a form, that he will be greatly frightened. They shall cause the dead man, by divine power to sit upright, and examine him concerning his faith in the unity of God and the mission of the Prophet Mohammad. These angels are called the 'tempters of the grave,' as they appear to require the man examined, to give a wrong reply. If he answers rightly, he will rest in peace, until the resurrection. If not, he will remain suffering to that day. It is also to be believed, that some of the dead who were sinners during their life, are liable, in their sepulchre, to some torment in the shape of pressure on their bodies. Only the righteous are saved from the torment of the grave. Some people would object to the above prophecy, that the answers of the dead, under such examination, have never been heard; or ask, how those can undergo it, whose bodies are burnt or devoured by beasts or birds, or otherwise consumed without burial. The answer is that it is possible notwithstanding, since men are not able to perceive what takes place in the next world unless they have been told of it by prophecy; and God, the all-powerful who created man from dust, and dust from nothing, is able to restore life to the dead so that he may understand any question put to him.

As to the resurrection, Moslems believe, that both body and soul will be raised. The time of resurrection is a profound secret to all, but God alone. However, the Prophet has foretold some signs of its approach. These signs are:

- (1) The decay of faith among men ;
- (2) The advancing of the meanest persons to positions of dignity ;
- (3) Miskat-el-Massabih, by which is probably meant, that towards the end of the world, men shall be much given to sensuality ;
- (4) Tumults and seditions ;
- (5) A war with the Romans ;
- (6) Great distress in the world, so that a man, when he passes by another's grave, shall say : "Would to God, I were in his place."
- (7) The appearance of an extraordinary beast which shall be able, by God's power, to speak to men. This sign of the approach of the resurrection is mentioned in the 84th chapter of the Koran.
- (8) The buildings of Yathrib (Medina) shall reach Mecca etc.

These are the lesser signs, the greater signs being :—

- (1) The sun's rising in the west.
- (2) The advent of Antichrist or the false Christ by whom people shall be tempted. He will do many apparent wonders and perform false miracles, sufficient to make people mistake him for the true Christ and, consequently they shall perish through their mistake.
- (3) The descent of Jesus on earth. He shall kill Antichrist, and there shall be under him great security and plenty in the world.
- (4) The appearance of Gog and Magog. These barbarians will come to Jerusalem and there, greatly distress Jesus and his companions, till at the request of Jesus, God will destroy them.
- (5) The advent of Al Mahdi. The Prophet said : "The world should not have an end, till one of his family should govern the Arabians, whose name should be the same as his own name and whose father's name, should be also the same as his own father's name ; and who should fill the world with righteousness."

These are some of the greater signs which, according to the prophecies of the Apostle of God, are to precede the Day of Resurrection ; but the exact time of it is a perfect secret to all, but God. The immediate sign of the coming of the Resurrection will be the first blast of a trumpet which will be sounded three times : (1) the blast of consternation ; (2) that of examination ; (3) the blast of Resurrection. At the first blast, all creatures in heaven and earth shall be struck with terror, except those whom God shall please to exempt from it. The earth will be shaken, all buildings and mountains levelled. Women who give suck shall abandon the care of their infants.

At the second blast, all creatures in heaven and earth shall die, or be annihilated, except those whom God shall please to exempt from that common fate. The last to die will be the angel of death. Forty years of rain will follow, when the third blast is sounded, and all dead bodies shall be raised for judgment. The resurrection will be general, and extend to all creatures, angels, genii, men and animals¹.

Mankind shall then be assembled for reckoning. The ungodly and the wicked will appear, on that day, with certain distinguishing marks fixed on them. These will come under ten headings namely (a) the backbiters, (b) they who have been greedy of filthy lucre, and who have enriched themselves by public oppression (c) the usurers (d) unjust judges (e) they who exult in their own works (f) the learned men or preachers whose actions contradicted their sayings (g) they who have injured their neighbours (h) the false accusers and informers (i) they who have indulged their passions and voluptuous appetites (j) the proud and the arrogant people.

The first men to be sentenced to hell fire, will be the hypocrites who deceived people, by pretending to do good works for the sake of God, though they did them only in order, that their fellow-men might extol their actions.

As already stated, the object of Resurrection is, that they who are so raised, may give an account of their actions, and receive the reward thereof. It is to be believed, that not only mankind, but the genii and irrational animals also, will be judged on the last day: the unarmed cattle shall take vengeance on the horned, till entire satisfaction be given to the injured.

As to mankind, they are all assembled together. They will not be immediately brought to judgment. They have to wait for that purpose a long time. During this period of waiting, the resuscitated shall suffer greatly, both the just and unjust; but the sufferings of the former shall be light in comparison. Men shall resort to their respective prophets for intercession, that they may be redeemed from that painful situation, and be called upon for trial. Eventually the Prophet Mohammad shall accept the office of intercession, after it has been declined by Adam, Noah, Abraham and Jesus, who shall beg deliverance only for their own souls. Belief in the Prophet's intercession is enjoined upon Moslems, as part of the fifth article of faith.

The above intercession accepted, men shall be ordered, to appear for judgment. On this occasion, the books, wherein the actions of every person have been recorded by their guardian angels, will be distributed to

(1) Koran, Ch. lxxxii.

their respective owners. God will command the various Apostles, to bear witness against those, to whom they have been respectively sent. Then every person will be examined concerning his actions in this life ; not, as if God needed any information in this respect, but to oblige the person, to make public confession and acknowledgement of God's justice.

The next event to take place after the resurrection is over, is the ordeal of the resurrection balance, wherein the weights of all men's actions shall be weighed. According as the good or evil actions shall preponderate, sentence will be given ; those whose balances are laden with good works, will be saved ; but those whose balances are light, will be condemned. Belief in this balance also forms an essential part of the fifth article of Faith¹.

The above examination being past, and every one's actions weighed in a just balance, mutual retaliation will follow, according to which all persons will have satisfaction for the injuries they suffered. The manner of giving this satisfaction, will be by taking away a proportionate part of the good works of him who did the injury, and adding it to those of him who suffered. If, after this is done, there remains of a person's good works as much as equals the weight of an ant, God will, of His mercy, cause it to be doubled to him, that he may be admitted to Paradise. But if, on the contrary, a person's good works be exhausted, and there remain evil works only, and there be any who have not yet received satisfaction from him, God will, of his justice, order, that an equal weight of their sins be added to his, that he may be punished for them in their stead, and be sent to hell, laden with both. This will be the method of dealing with mankind.

As to brutes, after they have been punished for the injuries which they caused each other, God will command them, to be turned into dust. Wicked men, being reserved for more grievous punishment in hell, they shall cry out, on hearing this sentence pronounced on the brutes": Would to God, that we were dust also."

After the trial is over, those who are to be admitted into paradise, as well as those destined to hell, shall have to pass to their respective abodes, over a bridge, laid over the midst of hell. This bridge is so wonderfully fashioned, that the good shall cross with ease and swiftness to paradise, while the infidels and the wicked shall miss their footing, and fall down headlong into hell.

(1) "The old Jewish writers make mention as well of the books to be produced at the last day, wherein men's actions are registered, as of the balance, wherein they shall be weighed ; and the Scriptures themselves seem to have given the first notion of both."

G. Sale. Prelim. Disc

Belief in this bridge is essential, to complete the article of creed of the Day of Resurrection.

The infidels alone shall be doomed to eternal damnation. Those who have embraced the true religion of God, even if they have been guilty of atrocious crimes, shall be delivred from hell, after they have expiated their sins by their sufferings. The orthodox doctrine of the Moslem Relieigion is, that no infidel who denied the existence of God, or anyone who did not believe in the unity of God, shall ever be redeemed; but no person who has believed in the existence and unity of God, shall be condemned to eternal punishment.

As to whether paradise and hell are already existent, or are to be created hereafter, the orthodox doctrine of Islam is, that they were created even before the world.

The felicity of the righteous in paradise, and the pains of the wicked in hell, will vary in degree, according to their merits or demerits, respectively. The happiness and felicity of the dwellers of paradise, on the one hand, and the anguish and pains of the inhabitants of hell, on the other, are according to the orthodox doctrine, sensuous and material, both body and soul being entitled or subject to them, respectively. But, the most happy will find the joy of joys, to consist in the beatific visions of the soul in the presence of God. The Prophet said : "The most favoured of God will be he who shall see the face (the glory) of his Lord, night and morning, a felicity which will surpass all the pleasures of the body, as the ocean surpasses a drop of sweat." The reward of virtue will not be confined to an exact measure of man's good works ; it will far exceed his deserts. But the recompense of evil will be strictly proportioned to what a man has done "They who do right, shall receive a most excellenct reward, and a superabundant addition ; neither darkness nor shame shall cover their faces : these shall be the inhabitants of paradise ; they shall continue therein for ever. But they who commit evil, shall receive the reward of evil, equal thereunto, and they shall be covered with shame, as though their faces were veiled with pieces of nights of profound darkness¹."

The foregoing is all that is incumbent upon a true Moslem to believe, concerning the Day of Resurrection.

Finally I must, before quitting this chapter, refute a falsehood of vulgar imputation on Mohammadans who are reported, by some Christian writers, to believe, that women have no souls, or, if they have, that they

(1) Koran, ch. x.

will perish, like those of brutes, and will not be rewarded in the next life. Commenting on this false charge, Mr.G.Sale made the following pertinent observation :

“...it is certain that Mohammad had too great a respect for the fair sex, to teach such a doctrine ; and there are several passages in the Koran 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 sexes ¹.”

6. Predestination

The sixth pillar of the Mohammadan faith is the belief in predestination. Whatever has, or shall, come to pass in this world, whether it be good or evil, proceeds entirely from the divine Will, and has been irrevocably created after a fixed decree. The Koran distinctly states :

“All things have been created after a fixed decree.” (ch.IV : 49)

“No one can die, except by God’s purpose, according to the book that fixeth the term of life.” (ch. III : 139)

“The Lord hath created and balanced all things, and hath fixed their destinies and guided them.” (ch. XXXV ii : 2)

“Say : By no means can aught befall us, but what God hath predestined for us.” (ch. IX : 51)

“God creates what He will.” (ch. XXIV : 44)

“...nor is there any thing not provided beforehand by Us, or which We send down, otherwise than according to a foreknown decree” (ch. XXII : 40).

“...and Who created all things, and determined respecting the same, with absolute determination.” (ch. XXV ; 2)

The following are also a few sayings of the Holy Prophet, bearing on God’s predetermination :—

“...and God said to Adam : ‘I have created this family for paradise, and their actions will be like unto those of the people of paradise’ and God said to him : ‘I have created this family for hell and their actions will be like

(1) G. Sale : Prelim. Disc.

unto those of the people of hell.' "Hearing the above teaching of the Prophet, a man said to him : "Of what use will deeds of any kind be ?" The Prophet said : "When God createth His servant for Paradise, his actions will be deserving of it, until he die, when he will enter therein ; and when God createth one for the fire, his actions will be like those of the people of hell, till he die, when he will enter therein."

The Prophet of God also said to his companions :

"There is no one amongst you whose place is not predestined by God, whether in hell or in paradise." The companions said, 'O Prophet of God, since God hath pre-appointed our places, may we confide in this belief, and abandon our religious and moral duties ?' He said : 'No, because the righteous will do good works (and be obedient to God), and the wicked will do bad works' : after which the Prophet recited the following verses of the Koran : "To him who giveth alms, and feareth God, and yields assent to the excellent creed, to him will we make easy the path to happiness. But to him who is worldly, and is indifferent, and who does not believe in the excellent creed, to him we will make easy the path to misery."

The Prophet of God also said : "The first thing which God created, was a (divine) pen, and He said to it, 'Write', it said, 'What shall I write ?' And God said 'Write down the fate of every individual thing to be created,' and accordingly the Pen wrote all that was, and that will be, to eternity."

The Prophet also said : "God hath predestined five things to his servants ; their duration of life, their actions, their dwelling places, their travels and their portions."

It happened, that one of the companions said to the Prophet : "O Prophet of God, inform me respecting the medicines which I swallow, and the shields which I make use of for protection, whether they can resist any of the decrees of God ?" The Prophet answered : "These also are by the decree of God."

The Prophet of God once came out of his house, when the companions were debating about fate, and he was angry, and became red in the face. And he said, "Hath God ordered you to debate of fate ? Was I sent to you for this ? Your forefathers were undone through debating about fate and destiny. I conjure you not to argue on those points."

The doctrine of predestination, as forming an essential part of the Mohammadan orthodox faith, may be summarised in the following terms :

"A Moslem should believe in his heart, and confess with his tongue, that the most exalted God hath decreed all things ; so that nothing can

happen in the world, whether it respects the conditions and operations of things, or good or evil, or obedience or disobedience, or sickness or health, or riches or poverty, or life or death, which is not contained in the written tablet of the decrees of God. But God hath so decreed, good works, obedience, and faith, that He ordains and wills them, that they may be under His decree, His salutary direction, His good pleasure and command. On the other hand, God hath decreed and does ordain and determine evil, disobedience and infidelity ; yet without His salutary direction, good pleasure and command ; but only by way of temptation and trial. Whosoever shall say, that God hath not indignation against evil and unbelief, he is certainly an infidel.”

The doctrine of predestination, or the absolute decree. of event, both good and evil, is a recognised element in many creeds.¹ This doctrine has given rise to as much controversy among the Moslems, as it did among Christians ; but the former, generally, believe in predestination, as being in some respects, conditional².

Five points, however, arise from the doctrine of predestination, as given in detail in the following formula :

(1) If the destiny of man is determined by the divine purpose, how can we explain man's freedom of choice. Man is absolutely conscious of personal freedom of action, which it is impossible to deny.

(2) If man is affected, in all his actions, by eternal predestination, what then is the meaning of human conduct, and the individual accountability which is the mainspring of moral life ?

(3) If what is to be, must be, with the overruling and irrevocable Decree of God, what is the use of divine commands and prohibitions ; rewards and punishments ; promises and threats ; and after all, what is the use of Prophets, Books etc.

(4) Some acts of man are bad, such as tyranny, polytheism, robbery, etc. If these are predestined and predetermined by God, it follows, that to

(1) We read the following statement in Chamber's Cyclopædia :—

“The doctrine of predestination is explicitly enunciated in Rom. 8 : 29f, 10, 11, and Eph. 1 : 4f, 11, and it is a recognised element in many creeds (e.g. Conf. of Faith, III : Church of England Articles, XVII.) We further read in the work : The Apostle Paul was doubtless aware of inconsistency for it was a crux of Jewish theology (see Ederstein's Jesus the Messiah, 1 : 316 ff) ; but the Apostle was accustomed, to isolate any particular doctrine, as occasion required, without being careful, to reconcile it with the real or apparent antithesis. (See Chamber's Cyc. Art. Predestination.)

(2) See. “The manners and customs of the Modern Egyptians,” by Ed. Lane p. 69.

tyrannise, to ascribe plurality to God, or to rob is to render obedience to Him, which obviously enough, is not the case.

(5) If infidelity and sin are decreed by God, it follows that God is in favour of sin and infidelity, but to speak thus of God is blasphemy.

I will answer these questions as briefly as possible, not from a philosophical point of view, but from a strictly religious aspect, this book being devoted exclusively to matters of purely religious nature.

The apparent contradiction involved in the doctrine of predestination, may be reasonably solved by considering, that man is not acquainted, in this life with anything of what has been predestined for him by the Almighty God. Therefore, it cannot be suggested, that under the doctrine of predestination, man's personal freedom of choice and action is affected in any way. Man is so created by All Powerful God, that he is sensible of a personal free will, choice and action, so that belief in predestination by no means interferes with his moral freedom. To speak of man as a free agent, we mean that he is not withheld from action by any external cause, that, morally, he is neither a prisoner, nor a slave, nor paralysed, nor otherwise disabled. Next, we may apply the term "free" to the eternal or psychological decision ; which he is externally free to carry out. In this sense, the freedom of an action evidently consists in the fact, that the action proceeds from the intelligent choice of the agent, and such choice is plainly and strongly contrasted with the mechanical determination which exists in the physical world.

As God's predestination is altogether a secret to man, human beings are in all ages, made acquainted, through God's prophets, with what duties they should perform, and what prohibitions they must respect, so that no act of disobedience, on the part of man, can be justified on the plea of ignorance of what he ought or ought not to do, or on the plea, that man was actuated to disobey or to sin, by divine decree. Man is not cognisant of anything he was predestined to do, whether it be good or bad, until he has committed it, by his own choice and own freedom of will, of which he was quite conscious. It is then, and only then, that a man realises, that his act was predestined. On the other hand, God's predestination has ever been associated with divine foreknowledge of all human character and conditions. As the Almighty God predestined a man to sin, He, at the same time, foreknew that that man would commit the sinful deed, while acting by his own free and intelligent choice. A sinful man can on no account shun the moral responsibility for his deeds, on the plea of having acted upon irrevocable divine predestination, of which he was totally ignorant. Being absolutely conscious of a personal freedom of will and action, an evil doer cannot reasonably justify his action by referring to

predestination. In fact, belief and faith in divine predestination can neither necessitate denial of human consciousness of freedom of will, nor eliminate the factor of individual responsibility from human conduct. So long as man is conscious of personal freedom of will, choice and action within himself, the sense of individual accountability which is the mainspring of moral life, always remains untouched. The said belief, therefore, should neither interfere with man's enthusiasm for progress, nor deprive him from freedom of will, which faculty he is, undoubtedly, conscious of enjoying.

To believe in heart, as an orthodox Jew, Christian or Moslem is bound to, that whatsoever one had to do, right or wrong, whatsoever has befallen one, the minutest movement of man, and the meanest event of his life, has been irrevocably predestined by God from eternity ; and that no amount of effort to the contrary can alter the course of events, predestined by the absolute divine authority. Such a purely religious dogma can, on no account, interfere with any amount of human morality. The doctrine of predestination does not imply denial of man's freedom of will and action. Each component part of man is bound by religion, to fulfil some function : the heart and conscience, to believe in God, His attributes and His predestination ; the other external members of man, to work, each according to its respective faculty and aptitude, as recommended by the law. Now, if the heart fulfils its proper function, namely : to believe that nothing whatsoever that has happened, or will happen, in the universe, is contrary to the will of God, the function of no other member is necessarily offended or retarded, as it cannot be suggested, that, under such a religious belief in God and His divine attributes, the eyes shall be prevented from seeing, the ears from hearing, the feet from walking, the tongue from speaking, or any other part of man, from the proper discharge of its respective duty.

Therefore, it is quite unfair and illogic for anyone to claim, that faith in predestination, as required by orthodox religion, tends to damp all enthusiasm for progress. Such a claim might be reasonably admitted, only if a man were given accurate foreknowledge of his fate and destiny. If he knew, for instance, from the beginning, that he was doomed to perdition, he might, very naturally, make no effort to resist his destiny, and no attempt at progress : or seeing that he was predestined to salvation, he might make no effort to deserve it. Man, having no foreknowledge whatsoever of his own destiny, his duty lies absolutely in adherence to the law. As far as man's intelligent free action is concerned, he has nothing more to do with the eternal decrees of God, than to have perfect faith in them.

Reason and logic, both dictate to man the belief in God, the One, the sole Creator, the absolute Disposer. In like manner, as a cultivator cannot rightly claim to be the creator of his own harvest, so it is the case with man : he cannot rightly claim to be independently the originator of his own

actions. The Islamic doctrine of predestination may be reduced to two distinct beliefs :

(1) that God has determined the destiny of man, not only according to the foreknown character of those whose fate is so determined, but also according to God's own will. There is no dispute on this point between divines of all creeds. Judaism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam, all not only agree and acquiesce in this, but they unreservedly admit it, and emphatically declare any possible notion to the contrary to be blasphemy.¹

(2) that man is directly responsible for his own actions, so long as he is master of his free choice. As man is certainly sensible, that he is morally a free agent, he is accountable for all actions affected by his volitional power. In the Koran we read, that God does not saddle a man with responsibility beyond his capacity to bear it. There is a vast sphere of human activity, where man's apparent will enjoys freedom of control and direction. Consequently, a man is held responsible, by religion, for the right or wrong exercise of his faculties. It is, therefore, a matter of the deepest concern to man, to ascertain the rules and regulations which should guide his conduct in that connection. To supply this need, the All Merciful God has endowed man with intellect, and revelation. By the help of intellect man endeavours to work out his moral and spiritual evolution in all his dealings with his Creator and his fellow creatures. But man's obligation towards God and man, surely involve complications, too delicate for unaided human reason. The result of an intellectual error might be the violation of human or divine laws. Hence, the absolute necessity of direct guidance and laws from God to make up for the frailties of reason, and to enlighten man, as to how he ought to regulate his relations with his Maker, as well as with his fellowmen. In obedience to these laws, man can carry out his duties, and attain what is best in life. Laws relating to human life, have been summed up in the following verse of the Holy Koran : "Surely God orders justice and good works (to all), and (orders) kindness to relation, and He condemns indecency, illicit deeds, and all wrong. He admonishes you, that you may be mindful."

With regard to man's guidance as to his relation to God, the Holy Koran tells us : "Say : my prayers, my sacrifice my life, my death, is for God, the Lord of the worlds Who has no partner with Him. This I have been ordered, and am the first to submit." In carrying out his duties in life, man must not lose sight of God's ordinances, and of what He desires of him, so that he should in no way satisfy himself or his fellow creatures, by disobeying the Universal Cherisher of all, the Creator of all.

Through his faith in predestination, man can behave faithfully and righteously, since he is confident, that all power, help and sustenance lie

(1) See Molesworth's and Chamber's Cyclopædias, Art. Predestination.

only with Him, Man's duty is, to spare no effort in observing the injunctions of his Maker, and then he is quite safe.

Prosperity and plenty often tempt man, to turn away from God. Touching this point, the Holy Koran says : "O believers, let not your children make you forget your God." Man makes use frequently of these blessings of God, as a means to encroach upon the rights of others, or as an encouragement to neglect his devotional duties towards God. Therefore the Holy Book wishes it to be remembered, that temptation lies hidden under the enjoyment of wealth and offspring.

Even as man is liable to temptation by abundant prosperity, so is he apt to be retarded from the fulfilment of his duties by misfortunes. However, having perfect faith in predestination, a true believer will not forget, that what happens, good or bad, has been predetermined and decreed by God, and that the inevitable must come to pass, in spite of human efforts to the contrary. Therefore he is bound to submit himself cheerfully and resignedly to all trials. Referring to this, the Holy Koran says : "And We will most certainly try you with fear and hunger, and loss of property and life and blessings ; (therefore, O Prophet) give good tidings to the patient who, when misfortune befalls them, say : Verily, we belong to God, and to Him we shall verily return. Those (the patient) are they, on whom blessings and mercy from their Lord (will descend), and those are the followers of the right course." Thus Islam teaches, that misfortunes serve as good tidings, and as fore-runners of heavenly blessings. And with a heart full of faith in predestination, a true believer cheerfully submits to hardships and trials. Those having a submissive frame of mind under adverse circumstances, "On them," says the Holy Koran, "descend the blessings of God." With Islam, a calamity is a mercy in disguise. Alive to the purpose of divine will, a believing Moslem resigns himself with a cheerful heart to his fate. It is God who alone governs the universe and disposes thereof, according to His eternal and irrevocable Will. One of the comfort-giving verses of the Koran read as follows : "Say : O God, Who art the Owner or the Kingdom : Thou givest authority, to whom Thou wilt ; and Thou takest away authority, from whom Thou wilt ; Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou humblest whom Thou wilt : in Thy hand is all the good, and Thou art Omnipotent. Thou makest the night to enter into the day, and Thou makest the day to enter into the night. (Thou) bringest forth the living out of the dead, and (Thou) bringest forth the dead out of the living, and (Thou) providest sustenance, to whom Thou wilt, and even so without limit." Thus, under conditions of hardship and misfortune, a true believer will not neglect his duties towards God. With the utterance of his noted formula, "To God we belong, and to Him shall we return," he submits to adversity, and goes on with his duties uninterrupted. On the other hand, if good

fortune and prosperity be his luck, he is not to put distrust in abundance and plenty, and so forget his duties towards his Maker, Sustainer and Nourisher. He is warned by revelation, not to make these very blessings of God a pretext for encroachment upon the rights of others, and thus change them into a curse for himself.

With regard to freedom of human will, the Holy Prophet of Islam has positively declared man's undisputed right, to make a choice between good and evil. Again and again, in the Holy Koran, this point has been emphasized, lest man should forget his own responsibility for his conduct. Indeed, the whole trend of Koranic ethics points in this direction. "Say, the Truth is from your Lord, whosoever may wish, he may believe ; and whosoever may wish, he may disbelieve," says the Holy Koran. God has moreover pointed out to man the right path, and ordered him to follow it, and the wrong one and warned him against taking it. In this respect the Koran says : "Verily, we have shown to man the right path ; he may be grateful or ungrateful," meaning there is no compulsion, on the part of God, felt by man to bear upon him to adopt this course or that. Again we read : "Verily this is a reminder to all people; for those of you who wish to take the right course." Here too, man has been let alone in the matter of selection. Further on : "It is for God only, to furnish strong proof, and if He so pleased (to influence man) He would have guided you all." This means, that Almighty God has chosen to let each man feel, that he is a free agent who acts under an intelligent free will. Denial of interference cannot be made in clearer terms. If God were so pleased, as to enforce His own desire upon man, by depriving him of his personal moral freedom, He would not have let a single man go astray. "If God were pleased, He would have brought together the whole of humanity into one and the same path," namely, the path of righteousness. But He has so ordained that He made man to feel that there is no compulsion brought to bear upon him, to incline him this way or that. Man is absolutely conscious of being master of himself and the organiser of his own career. He is given power, by which he can accomplish his own desires, in virtue of the moral freedom which he enjoys. However, according to Islam, the power of self-government, with which we are endowed, is a trust, and not a free gift. It not only entrusts our own destiny to ourselves, but it actually trusts, or seems to trust, the whole final outcome of God's creative work to our treatment of it. This earth, at least, is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and of ourselves, its inhabitants, To this effect, the Holy Koran says : "We have proposed the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they refused to undertake the same, and were afraid to undertake it ; but man undertook it, (yet) he is verily unjust and ignorant." This means, that of all God's creations man alone accepted the trust of moral freedom which makes

him master of himself, and dignifies and exalts him among the creatures of God. Gifts of all other sorts are nothing, to compare with it. If we had not the power to rule our own actions by our own will, we should be infinitely poorer in moral worth than we are now. Therefore man should be anxious to be dignified in this respect, but the Holy Koran, in the above verse, asserts, that man is unjust and ignorant in this connection. He is unjust, in that he abuses his moral freedom, in choosing to do wrongful deeds, instead of righteous ones. And he is ignorant, in that he gives no heed to the consequences of his choice, because doing what we know that we ought to do, is not only for the good of the world, but likewise, and far more, for the good of ourselves. We derive infinitely more benefit from our own performance of an act of uprightness; and infinitely more harm from an act of wrong, than the good we bestow, or the harm we inflict. The good or ill we do, goes deeply into our nature—refines or coarses it, lifts or lowers it, and is either inspiring or deadening to all that is best in soul and mind. Few men reach old age without saying sadly, "Oh, that I could live my life again," because, time has shown them their youth for a different development of themselves and a different shaping of their lives. In this connection the Holy Koran says :

"Say, O, my worshippers, who have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God : seeing that God forgiveth all sins : for He is Gracious and Merciful. And be turned unto your Lord, and resign yourselves unto Him, before the punishment comes suddenly upon you, and ye perceive not (the approach thereof) ; when a soul shall say, 'Alas, for that I have been negligent in my duty towards God ; verily, I have been one of the scorers ;' or say : 'If God had directed me, verily, I had been one of the pious' ; or say, when it seeth the prepared punishment : '*If I could return once more into the world, I would become one of the righteous.*' But God shall answer : '*My signs came unto thee heretofore, and thou didst charge them with falsehood, and wast puffed up with pride ; and thou becamest one of the unbelievers.*'" (Koran, ch. XXXIX.)

Conclusion :

In brief, it is reasonable, as well as it is universally religious, to believe, that nothing whatsoever, be it a circumstance, an action or a thought, can take place against the will of God. Again, nothing can happen in the world, either as proceeding from a human being, an animal or a thing, which God had not, from eternity, known and willed it to be. By "will" is here meant the proper acceptation of the Word, namely, the decree, the determination, and not the desire or inclination.

There is nothing contradictory, in holding the belief in absolute predestination and the belief in self responsibility.

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4271

4271