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LECTURES ON ISLAM:

DELIVERED AT DIFFERENT
PLACES IN INDIA.

BY

MOHAMMAD ALEXANDER RUSSEL WEBB ESQ.,
LATE OF AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE.



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TO KNOW GOD

Is difficult, and to express Him impossible. For to signify that which is bodiless by means of the body is impossible, to apprehend the perfect by means of the imperfect is not possible. Nor is it easy to associate the unseen to that which is but of short duration. The one is for ever, the other passes away; the one is truth, the other is but shadowed by phantasy. The weaker differs as much from the stronger and the less from the more, as the mortal from the divine. The interval between these darkens our vision of the fair and good. By the eyes bodies are visible, and by the tongue things seen are said, but that which is bodiless, and inapparent, and most formless, and not composed of matter, cannot, possibly be, apprehended by our senses.

Praised be Allah who hath exalted Islam by his favor, hath cast down the many gods by his power, rules the world after His Will, divides benefits by the measure of our thanks, casts down the unbelieving by their craft, gives power to princes in His justice, promises the future life to them that fear Him. He commands and none gainsayeth. He fulfils His councils, and there is no delay! He is the only one God without associates, the eternal, who begetteth not nor was begotten.

Beware of evil passions, disobedience, and sloth, beware lest the devil and unbelief glide into your hearts.

MR. ABDULLAH QUILLIAM SAYS:—

We may not now have to fight a Jihád with sword and musket, but we have one to fight, and the weapons to be used by us must be those derived from education and intelligence.

Intemperance, immorality, gambling, avarice, ignorance, and bigotry have to be combatted with and conquered, and it requires the true believer to be prepared by the assistance of the most merciful God on every occasion not only to resist temptation himself, but also to denounce such practices in others.

We in England have a tough battle to fight; we are surrounded by religious bigots; every fresh convert we make becomes at once a marked man or woman, and in many instances on discovering that they had become Mohammadans their own relations have disowned them, or at least refused to speak to them. We have, however, counted the cost, and are prepared to make any sacrifice to maintain our principles—"And when one saith unto them, 'Believe ye as others believe'; they answer, 'Shall we believe as fools believe,'" (the Koran), and when we receive words of comfort from brethren in our foreign climes it strengthens us in our resolution.

"We believe that happier and brighter days are once more in store for Islam. It may possibly be that the all-wise God has been trying the faith of His people; but let us all with one accord resign ourselves to His Will and persevere manfully and earnestly on, in the right way, for we know that "God loveth those that persevere patiently." "Therefore in God let the faithful put their trust."

THE LECTURE DELIVERED IN BOMBAY.

“A VERY large and influential number of persons of all communities was present to hear the lecture of Mr. Mohammad Alexander Russel Webb on Islam, delivered at the Framji Cawasji Institute, on Thursday the 10th November 1892. Among those present were Kazi Mohammad Saleh, Abdul Latif Londay, His Excellency Kadri Beg, Messrs. Henry Ballantine, Husney Beg, Ahmedbhai Habibbhai, Musabhai Tharia Topan, Haji Suleman Abdul Wahid Ibrahim Rahimtula, Abdullabhai Lalji, Badrudin Abdulla Kur, Husen Meyan Chorgay, Karsondas Chhabildas, Barrister-at-Law, Sundernath Dinanath Khotay, Purshotumdas Vandrawandas, Ardeshir Framji Moos, Ranina, Moulvi Abdul Razzlak, Sayyad Fakhrudin Edroos, Munshi Shaik Ahmed, Mahmud Meyan Sharfuddin Khan, Hasan Meyan Sharfudin, Amiruddin Tyabji, Najinuddin Tyabji, Fateh Ali Shaik Ahmed, Ibrahim Ahmedi, Mohammad Usoof Khat Khatay, Moulvi Furahtulla, Munshi Bauker, Abdul Gani Muhimtulay, Haji Abdulla Arab, and about 500 others.

On the motion of Mr. Budrudin Abdulla Kur Kazi Mohammad Saleh Londay was voted to the Chair.”

Mr. Webb addressed as follows:—

“I have been requested to tell you why I—an American born in a country which is nominally Christian, and reared under the drippings, or more properly perhaps the drivellings of an orthodox Presbyterian pulpit—came to adopt the faith of Islam as my guide in life. I might reply promptly and truthfully that I adopted this religion because I found, after protracted study, that it was the best and only system adopted to the spiritual needs of humanity; but this reply would be altogether too general to be satisfactory. Now instead of telling you in detail how and why I became a Mussulman, I will try to tell you what Mohammad really taught, and endeavour to show that his religious system has a much more valid claim to the careful, unprejudiced attention of the Western world than the average Christian is willing to concede. It is manifestly impossible in a single lecture to present a full and complete exposition of the Islamic system, one that will satisfy the enquiring mind. I will, therefore, be compelled to generalize to some extent. And here let me say that I was not born, as some boys seem to be, with a fervently religious strain in my character. I will not even assert that I was a *good* boy, such as mothers sometimes point out as shining examples for their own sons. I attended the Presbyterian Sunday School of my native town,

when I couldn't avoid it, and listened with weariness and impatience to the long, abstruse discourses of the minister while I longed to get out into the glad sunshine and hear the more satisfying sermons preached by God himself through the murmuring brooks, the gorgeous flowers, and the joyous birds. When I reached the age of 20, and became practically my own master, I was so tired of the restraint and dulness of the Church, that I wandered away from it and never returned to it. As a boy I found nothing in orthodox Christianity calculated to win me to it, and in later years I encountered convincing evidences of its grave errors and insufficiency as a means of securing salvation, or of elevating and purifying the human character. Fortunately I was of an enquiring turn of mind—I wanted a reason for everything, and I found that neither laymen nor clergy could give me any rational explanation of this faith, but either told me that such things were mysteries or that they were beyond my comprehension. After trying in vain to find something in the Christian system to satisfy the longings of my soul and meet the demands of reason, I drifted into materialism, and for several years had no religion at all. About eleven years ago I became interested in the study of the Oriental religions, beginning with Buddhism as students of the Eastern systems usually do. I will not weary you with details further than to say that at that time I had access to a most excellent library of about 13,000 volumes, from four to seven hours a day at my disposal, and that I was intensely in earnest in my efforts to solve the mysteries of life and death, and to know what relations the religious systems of the world bore to these mysteries. My mind was in a peculiarly receptive yet exacting and analytical condition, absolutely free from the prejudices of all creeds, and ready to absorb the truth, no matter where it might be found. Firmly materialistic, I looked at first to the advanced school of materialistic science and found that it was just as completely immersed in the darkness of ignorance as I was. It could tell me the name of every bone, muscle, nerve and organ of the human body, as well as its position and purpose or function. But it could *not* tell me the real difference between a live man and a dead one. It could tell me the name of every tree, plant, and flower, and designate the species to which each belonged, and what were its apparent properties and attributes, but it could not tell me how and why the tree grew and the flower bloomed. It was absolutely certain that man was born, lived a brief space, and died, but whence he came and whither he went were riddles which they confessed themselves utterly unable to solve. "Those matters belong to the Church," said a scientist to me. "But the church knows absolutely nothing of them," I replied. "Nor do I, nor does science," was the helpless, hopeless way in which he dismissed the question from the conversation.

I saw Mill and Locke, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Huxley, and many other more or less learned writers discoursing with a great show of wisdom concerning protoplasm and protogen and monads, and yet not one of them could tell me what the soul was or what became of it after death. "But no one can tell you that," I fancy I hear some one say. That is one of the greatest errors that poor blind humanity ever made; there are many people who have solved this mystery, but they are not the materialistic followers of any creed. I have spoken so much of myself in order to show you that my adoption of Islam was not the result of misguided sentiment, blind credulity, or sudden emotional impulse, but that it was born of earnest, honest, persistent, unprejudiced study and investigation, and an intense desire to know the truth. And now let us see what Islam really is, and you will readily understand, I think, why I have accepted it. If any one should ask me to reply at once to the question, "What do the Mohammadans believe?" I would be as completely unable to reply, without hesitation, as I would be if asked, "What do the Christians believe?" The disposition of the Christians of all ages, from the days of Constantine to the present, to amplify and adorn their religion with ideas of their own has been shared by many of the professed followers of the Arabian Prophet, and there are prevalent among the Moslems of our time many points of belief which were never taught by Mohammad and which are not entitled to a place in the true faith of Islam. The wonderful fecundity of the human mind is amply shown by the vast variety of conceptions or misconceptions which may be found among the religious doctrines of mankind, and which were never a part of the original fundamental principles, but are the results of the biased speculations and misconceptions of those who have assumed to be religious authorities. It is a well-known fact that every one of the fifty odd different Christian sects bases its system of doctrines upon the Bible, and that the followers of each sect appeals to that much-abused book for proof that their belief is right and reasonable and logical and that all the others are more or less erroneous. Wade through the tons of Mohammadan and Christian literature extant if you have the patience, and go among the followers of the various sects and listen to their arguments, if you desire to acquire a perfect realization of the fertility of the human intellect and the elastic possibilities of religious literature. If you do not speedily find yourselves in a condition of doubt and perplexity closely bordering upon despair, you will have failed to follow the intricacies of the arguments put before you. If, from the multitudinous and multifarious conceptions you will encounter you can form a positive and satisfying opinion as to what Mohammad and Jesus really did or did not teach, you do much better than anyone who has ever tried

the experiment before you. There are certain clearly defined dogmas which nearly, if not quite, all Moslems believe in the abstract, but, with the possible exception of the Sufis or esoteric Mohammadans, they are greatly divided in their conceptions of the Prophet's teachings.

Orthodox Mohammadanism may be divided into six heads. 1st—Faith in God, the one God, the Creator of all things, who always was and ever will be; the single, immutable, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-merciful, eternal God. 2nd—Faith in angels, ethereal beings perfect in form and radiant in beauty; without sex, free from all gross or sensual passion and the appetites and infirmities of frail humanity. 3rd—Belief in the Koran as a book of divine revelation given at various times to Mohammad by God or through the Angel Gabriel. 4th—Belief in God's prophets, the most pre-eminent of whom were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. 5th—Belief in the resurrection and final judgment when all mankind shall appear before God, who will reward or punish them according to the deeds they have done on earth. Opinions differ, of course, as to the nature of these rewards and punishments. 6th—Belief in Predestination, or the inability of man to avoid, by any act of his own, the destiny irrevocably predetermined by God and written down in the eternal book previous to the creation of the world. At the first glance this seem to deprive man of his character as a free agent, but a closer examination shows that it does not do so. It will be seen, therefore, that in its fundamentals, it closely resembles esoteric or so called Christianity when the latter is stripped of its objectionable dogmas. From these central points diverge numerous lines which form in the aggregate an elaborate system of faith and worship the effects of which vary greatly according to the character of its followers. The articles of religious practice are five in number, namely, Prayer, Ablution, Alms, Fasting and Pilgrimage. And now let us endeavour to ascertain from whence this system sprang, by considering who and what our Prophet was. And let me assure you that in seeking for the truths I have found had to overturn a vast deal of rubbish in the shape of false history, false opinions, and false reasoning, before I caught the faint gleam of that priceless jewel which has been preserved to man through all the ages, although the bigots and pharisees of orthodoxy have striven most earnestly to destroy it. In the light of reason and human testimony it has been quite conclusively shown that he was a pure and holy man who voluntarily gave up all that the world holds dear, in order to obtain a knowledge of the one great spiritual truth; that he suffered ridicule, obloquy, and persecution of the cruellest, most vindictive character in trying to teach this truth to the Arabs, and that he died in extreme squalor and poverty after hav-

ing fully accomplished his mission. These are facts which are generally admitted even by Christian writers, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to call Mohammadan witnesses. It is said that a young man once asked Jesus what he should do in order to inherit everlasting life. The reply was, "Sell all that thou hast, give to the poor, take up the cross and follow me." Now that is exactly what Mohammad did, except that he did not follow Jesus in the sense understood by the orthodox Christian. He sacrificed all he had in the world and bore the cross of trials and suffering faithfully and patiently until he had securely planted the true faith in the East. It has been plainly shown by every writer who has given us anything purporting to be a record of the life of our Prophet, that during his childhood he was remarkable for his quiet, gentle demeanour, his quick intelligence, and his modest retiring, thoughtful disposition. While he mingled freely with the boys of Mecca he did not acquire any of their coarse and vicious habits. As a youth he was distinguished by his affectionate ways, his frankness and truthfulness under all circumstances, and as a man he was upright, just and generous in his dealings, and was a merchant whose honesty and reliability were unimpeached. So generally was his character recognized that he was called by the people of Mecca "Al Amin, the Trusty." Does it seem possible that a man with such pronounced and well-grounded principles of morality and integrity followed until the age of 50 could suddenly change and become what many of the Christian writers have wickedly declared him to be? I don't believe it. All the prominent Christian authors have been forced to the confession, more or less plainly made, that after protracted study and research, they were utterly unable to form an adequate and satisfying conception of his character. The explanation of their failure is plain—they reasoned from the standpoints of their own materialistic creeds, and facts which would have solved the riddle for them, had they been able to break away from their false opinions and beliefs, were cast aside as valueless. Several of these sapient writers have said in substance: "Mohammad was not *our* kind of a Christian, and, therefore, he *must* have been an impostor. But it troubles us to find that such a truly pure and holy man was not a Christian." Had they understood the teachings of their own Prophet they would not have wondered at this seeming phenomenon. It has been admitted that Mohammad's material prospects were all that the most ambitious young man of his time could have desired, until he began to teach spiritual truth. His relatives were wealthy, and his uncle, Abu Taleb, who took him into his family and became a kind, affectionate and indulgent father to him after the death of his own parents, was one of the wealthiest and most prosperous merchants in Arabia. The guardianship of the Kaaba at Mecca, the incum-

bent of which office was also Governor of the city, was hereditarily fixed in his family line, and, had he been content to drift with the tide of life as he found it, it would certainly have fallen to him together with his uncle's great wealth. Had he been the crafty, ambitious, unprincipled man he is popularly believed by the Christians to have been, he would undoubtedly have waited patiently and kept in favour with his relatives until, in the natural course of events, he must have become one of the foremost men in Arabia, crowned with wealth and high honours, and surrounded by all the comforts, luxuries, and grandeur of a worldly life. But he chose the better way, although it led him through a path thickly strewn with sharp stones and cruel thorns, and, from a worldly point of view, filled his life with bitter disappointments, privations, sorrows, and sufferings of the most harrowing description. And herein is a lesson which should sink deeply into the hearts of those who have turned their backs upon the higher way, and are engaged in that mad chase after rupees and comfort which is so deeply engrossing the attention of the greater part of the world. You are probably all familiar with the history of our Prophet's separation from the affairs of the world. He passed long periods in prayer, fasting, and meditation and reduced his diet to dates and barley, his only drink being water. This abstemiousness was continued to the close of his life, and it is said that sometimes for a whole month he would eat nothing but dates, and those in very small quantities. His favourite place of retirement was a cave on Mount Hara, where he would spend several days at a time in meditation, and where he received his mission to shed the light of truth upon the world—to kindle that fire which in after years burned so brilliantly and filled the entire East with its glorious effulgence. He was often accompanied by his faithful wife, who was the first convert to his doctrines, and who seemed to share with her whole soul his zeal and devotion to his purpose. Whenever he emerged from his retirement and returned to his home in Mecca, he went about doing the good that came to his hands and assisting those who through sickness or misfortune, were unable to provide for themselves. In this way the greater portion of his own wealth, and that which he had acquired through his marriage with Khadijah melted away.

Now it is necessary to weigh carefully all these well known and universally admitted facts concerning our Prophet's life prior, and immediately subsequent to, his inspiration in order to arrive at a rational conclusion regarding his character, and to make those comparisons between him and other holy prophets which are inevitable. During the period we have now reached, he made no effort to teach publicly any of the truths which had been revealed to him, and his manner of life seems to have attracted very little attention

beyond the circle of his immediate relatives. At this time he was looked upon as a harmless fanatic, who had foolishly sacrificed his brilliant worldly prospects for some reason which was not quite clear to his friends, and in which they took no very great interest. Subsequently he publicly announced his mission, and called down upon himself that bitter, relentless, cruel persecution and storm of ridicule which has been more or less graphically described by the historians. Has there ever been a prophet who attempted to teach the world the one true way to eternal life whose path has been strewn with roses? Not one. The world hates the truth with fiendish malignancy, and calls madly for the blood of him who attempts to teach it. The claim made by Mohammad that aroused the fury and contempt of the Meccans was substantially the same as that made by Jesus of Nazareth, who received similar treatment at the hands of the enraged Jews. He said that he was a Prophet and Apostle of God, inspired by the Supreme Being to point out to the Arabs the true way to salvation and to redeem them from idolatry and the vices which they had acquired indirectly from following a thoroughly materialistic religion. He repeatedly told his hearers that he was not a supernatural being but a man, like unto them, with the same physical structure, the same mental endowments, and the same natural inclinations and proclivities; that from the Supreme spirit he had learned the solution of the mystery of life and death and the true way to eternal life; that he had given up the world that he might teach them this way—had crucified himself that they might live—and this is the only way in which Jesus was ever crucified all the sophistical arguments and quotations from false history to the contrary notwithstanding. Mohammad claimed to be a Prophet sent from God in the same sense that Moses, Abraham, Elias, Jesus and every other truly inspired prophet claimed to have been sent. He taught no new religious system, but sought to revive that one eternal truth which has been preserved to man from the beginning of the world, and will continue to be preserved as long as the world shall stand. His claim was no more nor less than that made by Jesus, who never claimed to be God nor the son of God in the sense in which some misguided people believe he did. In the 58th verse of the 8th chapter of the Gospel of St. John is a statement attributed to Jesus which has sorely puzzled Bible readers and commentators, but which is a plain unequivocal statement of all that Jesus claimed to be, when it is properly translated from the original Greek. It reads thus: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was I am." As the verse stands, it is an ungrammatical absurdity and means nothing. The correct translation into English would make it read thus: "Verily, verily I say unto you, I am what Abraham was before me." That is to say, an inspired

Prophet like Abraham. Jesus admitted that there were other true prophets before him, and some of the Mohammadan doctors insist, and their arguments and evidence are by no means unworthy of consideration, that he plainly prophesied the coming of Mohammad, declaring that the latter would lead his followers into the truth. And I assure you that our Prophet never taught anything that was at all at variance with the true teachings of Jesus; on the contrary, a careful comparison of the true tenets of the faith of Islam with those taught to his disciples by the Prophet of Nazareth cannot fail to show that in their tone and tendency they are identical. Mohammad frequently referred to the Nazarene as "Jesus, the inspired son of Mary," the Holy Prophet sent by God to the Jews, and paid to him the loftiest tributes of love, reverence, and esteem; but for the absurd dogmas, misconceptions, and superstitions of the system erroneously called Christianity he had nothing but the strongest condemnation. He taught that at certain periods in the development of humanity a prophet arose from among the people to raise them from the degrading materialism of dogmatic creeds, the unhealthy growths of ambition, selfishness and worldliness, and to guide them into the true path from which the desires of the flesh had led them to stray; that this was God's method of holding humanity in its upward course toward spiritual perfection. He declared that he was the last of a long line of prophets, and that he taught nothing different from the teachings of his predecessors, that his purpose was to renew the one supreme truth in the hearts of his fellow Arabs. The validity of this declaration is apparent when one has some knowledge of the philosophy of Islam. "What!" exclaims the Christian, "And does Islam really contain a philosophy?" Yes, my misguided brother, it is a philosophy as well as a religion, and a pure, perfect holy philosophy too. Look about you and see the beauties and wonders of nature, the growth and decay of the trees and flowers, the movements of the planets, the changes of the tides and seasons—all the grand manifestations of nature moving on with steady, majestic regularity under the guidance of an unseen power, which is a dense mystery to materialistic science. The unvarying order which pervades the whole system indicates the power of a masterhand. We do not find grapes growing upon cocoanut trees nor figs upon thistles, but each fruit appears and matures upon its own tree; and decays and passes into nothing, if not used for human food. We see the flash of the lightning and hear the roll of the thunder and the shrill shriek of the cyclone, but the average man knows nothing of the irresistible force behind all these manifestations. Science has tried to explain the phenomena, and has failed utterly, although it has discovered that there are certain fixed laws and conditions which govern them and make it possible to foretell their coming. Like Jesus and

every other prophet who has taught the true doctrine of salvation, Mohammad found it necessary to present his teachings in two aspects, or rather to divide them into two parts—one for the very few who could comprehend or assimilate the higher truths, and the other for the masses who were so blinded by worldliness and the bonds of the flesh that they could grasp only the materialistic ideas of forms and ceremonies. The Koran and the traditions are full of suggestions of this idea. Jesus said to his disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but unto those who are without, all things are done in parables." If Jesus and Mohammad were inspired by God, it is only reasonable to conclude that the mysteries of what we call "Nature" were unfolded to them, and they were able to teach a higher philosophy than that known to the materialist of to-day. And I tell you frankly, that it was through this exalted philosophy that I was brought to Islam. Every Mussulman who reads his Koran and has any conception whatever of the doctrines of his religion freely concedes that Jesus was an inspired prophet; but he also knows that the system known to-day as Christianity and taught from the pulpits of the so-called Christian churches is no more like the system taught by the Nazarene than is the African Vaoodoo system or the absurd antics and notions of the Salvation Army. When I talk to a Christian about Islam he promptly declares that it is opposed to civilization, endorses polygamy, has a horribly bloody record, and that its followers are fanatical and intolerant; all this in his estimation is true and ought to condemn any religion. The average ignorant Christian in America—and I suspect he is the same in England—fully believes that every Mohammadan has a harem full of wives where he spends the greater portion of his time when he is not prowling about with sword in hand seeking to kill a Christian. A fairly intelligent Christian once told me that every Mohammadan believed that he could not get a really good place in paradise until he had killed and eaten a Christian. "But," said a Parsee to me in Rangoon, "you cannot deny that our present advanced civilization is due to Christianity." "Well I *do* deny it," I said, and then I referred him to the New Testament and to the sermon on the Mount, and asked him to try to harmonize those principles with what is called Christian civilization. It cannot be done. The cold truth is that this Western civilization has nothing of the true spirit of Christianity in it, but is the legitimate offspring of ambition and selfishness. It is also a well-known fact that the course of Western progress and advancement has always been obstructed by the Christian Church, ever since that church has had an existence. It has always stood in front of the procession and shouted with uplifted hands: "You mustn't go any further, or you will weaken and degrade me." And then when it has been

pushed aside and the irresistible tide has swept past it, it has tried in every way to impede and harass the moving column. And now with marvellous assurance and impudence it says: "See what *we* have done. Look at our glorious Christian civilization and then fall down and worship us." The truth is, and every man can ascertain it for himself, that what is called Christian civilization was born in the 8th century among the Moslems of Spain, while the Christian world was plunged in the depths of ignorance and barbarism. Professor Draper says, "I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Mohammadans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated for ever. . . . The Arab has left his intellectual impress on Europe, as, before long, Christendom will have to confess; he has indelibly written it on the heavens, as anyone may see who reads the names of the stars on a common celestial globe." Everyone who believes that ours is a Christian civilization, born of Christianity, should read Professor Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe," or any other honest historical work treating of the subject. Stanley Lane-Poole in his "Moors in Spain" shows that Europe acquired her first knowledge of the arts and sciences from the Moslems, and while showing the degraded condition of the rest of Europe, says: "Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain." I earnestly hope that the Christians will soon learn to be rational and honest and that we shall hear no more of this senseless twaddle about "Christian" civilization.

And now let us glance briefly at that great bugbear, polygamy. Almost the first question a Christian asks me is: "Do you believe in polygamy?" "Yes," I reply, "under certain conditions." And last week an educated Mussulman said to me: "Surely you do not believe in polygamy—you would not advocate its introduction in America?" He was clearly surprised when I said that I not only believed in polygamy but would advocate its introduction into the American social system as soon as America had become sufficiently moral and refined to adopt it decently and respectably. Let us look at this question rationally. When our Prophet taught on earth unlimited polygamy was sanctioned by the laws and social customs of Arabia. He modified the practice by allowing his followers to marry only four wives, telling them plainly that they should not marry any more women than they could treat with equal love and justice. He subsequently declared that no man could love two wives equally, and this declaration practically annulled the privilege of marrying four. It is quite clear that his purpose was to purify the existing social conditions.

and elevate the domestic relations to a higher moral standard. While polygamy is looked upon in the West as vicious and criminal and subversive of morality and justice, in the East it has quite a different aspect, owing to social traditions and customs, and is considered quite in harmony with the most exalted ideas of propriety. Now there are many sides to this question, and to discuss it fully would require more time than is at my disposal this evening. I freely admit the fact that the introduction of polygamy at once into our American social system certainly prove most pernicious; but when the system and its purposes and tendencies are properly understood, and the beneficent moral influences of Islam have produced the effects which they must inevitably produce among an educated and enlightened people, it can and should be advocated. It is absolutely the only remedy for the curses of prostitution and marital infidelity with which America and Europe are most grievously afflicted, and it will elevate our womanhood to that exalted and admirable position which it is fitted by nature to occupy. While Mohamman law permits polygamy, it does not present it as an article of faith, and no good Mussulman would think of marrying more than one wife unless the conditions existing in his home imperatively demanded such a course, and he could conform to the spirit of the Islamic requirements. One is allowed to marry four wives if in so doing he does not violate the laws of the land in which he lives, but he may have one wife or none at all without sacrificing any of his religious rights or privileges. One can be just as good a Mussulman, as a monogamist or a bachelor, as he can as a polygamist, and will stand just as well in the estimation of his neighbours. Go with me into any large American or European city and see the evidences of that resistless torrent of vice and crime that rushes and seethes through the social fabric; go with me to a fashionable ball reception or dinner party and see the position in which noble woman, one of the grandest works of God, has been placed by the usages and customs of this 19th century civilization; see the honored wives of wealthy educated Christians and their virtuous daughters, exposing to the view of men whose blood and passions are fired by the fumes of alcohol, personal charms which should be seen only in the privacy and purity of the home; take up the newspapers and see the records of divorces, social scandals, and marital woes that fill us with shame and disgust, and then tell me that these so-called Christian laws and Christian customs are good things. And where is the remedy for all this? In Mohamman laws and customs—in Islamic principles. Christian laws and customs have been tried for many centuries and have failed utterly. Now give Islam a trial.

And now let us touch briefly upon the bloody record of

Mohammadanism and the Propaganda of the sword. So far as blood-stains are concerned I hardly believe that Mohammadanism has any reason to blush when she compares her garments with those of Christianity. Have you ever read the history of the Inquisition and Crusades? When the Khalif Omar took Jerusalem in 637 he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him on its antiquities. Not a drop of blood was shed. But when the Christian Crusaders entered it the brains of young children were dashed against the walls, infants were thrown over the battlements, every woman that could be seized was violated, men were roasted on fires; some were ripped open to see if they had swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their synagogues and there burned. About 70,000 people, men, women, and children, were cruelly butchered. And this is the testimony of Christian historians not Mohammadan. It has been clearly shown that our Prophet, as well as the first Caliph, Abu Beker, repeatedly and emphatically directed the Moslem generals to refrain from killing or injuring women, children, and old men, not to destroy the fields of grain or date trees, and to sheath the sword at once upon the surrender of a city. Humanity, mercy, and kindness were insisted upon.

When the Prophet entered Mecca upon its surrender to him, not a man, woman, or child was killed or ill-treated, and not a single house was plundered, although this was the city in which he had been so shamefully abused and persecuted, and its inhabitants were those who had cruelly wronged him. Why did he not take revenge when the opportunity offered itself? There was not a single sentiment of revenge or malice in his whole being; he was a Prophet of the God of love, truth, justice, and mercy. Both records are sad enough and bloody enough, Heaven knows, but I am firmly convinced that there is far less fiendishness and blood-thirstiness, and bestiality to be answered for by the Moslems than by the Christians. Did the Christians have a valid warrant in the teaching or conduct of the meek and lowly Jesus, giving them authority to go about murdering, in cold blood, those who did not believe as they did? But of course, they don't do it any more; not because some of them wouldn't like to, but public opinion has changed. It isn't safe to be too enthusiastic and conscienceless and brutal now in making proselytes to one's religion no matter how confidently one may believe in it himself. And when I say to you that Mohammad *never advocated, taught, nor consented* to the propagation of Islam by means of the sword, and that he severely condemned violence and taking of life in any form, I tell you truths which can readily be verified by any honest, unprejudiced person who will take the trouble to investigate the matter impartially. A learned Moslem writer says:—"The remark that

the sword is the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam is one of the gravest of the false charges imputed to this faith by the professors of other religions and arises from the utter ignorance of those who make the accusation. Islam inculcates and demands a hearty and sincere belief in all that it teaches, and that genuine faith which proceeds from a person's heart cannot be obtained by force or violence." The Holy Koran says:—"Let there be no forcing in religion; the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one." If the Lord had pleased, all who are on the earth would have believed together; and wilt thou force men to be believers? Our Prophet himself was as thoroughly unaggressive, non-combative and peace-loving as the typical Shaker, and, while he realised the fact that a policy of perfect non-resistance would speedily have resulted in the murder of himself and every Moslem in Arabia, he urged his followers to avoid, as far as possible, violent collisions with the unbelievers and not to fight unless it was necessary in order to protect their lives. There are a number of accusations made against Mohammadanism, which, even if true, cannot, justly be said to have even the remotest relation to the doctrines of Islam; there are zealots and fanatics in all religious bodies, and it is due to their weaknesses that discredit falls upon the faith they profess to follow. It would be useless to attempt, in a single lecture, to reply to all the false charges made against Mohammadanism by ignorant and prejudiced writers; but at the risk of exhausting your patience, I will refer to one more. It has been said that toleration is unknown among the Moslems. A Christian writer in "Chambers" Encyclopedia says:—"One remarkable feature of the Moslem rule in Spain deserves mention, as it contrasts them so favourably with the contemporary and subsequent rulers of that country even to the present time, and that is their universal toleration in religious matter." Being a Christian this writer can hardly be accused of partiality to Islam. Godfrey Higgins, another writer who can safely be called a 19th century Christian at least, says:—"Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of Mohammad for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy! Who was it that expelled the Moriscoes from Spain because they would not turn Christians? Who was it that murdered the millions of Mexico and Peru and gave them all away as slaves because they were not Christians? What a contrast have the Mohammadans exhibited in Greece! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs, and churches; and the war between the Greeks and Turks was no more waged on account of religion than was the war between the negroes in Demarara and the English, Wher-

ever the Caliphs conquered, if the inhabitants turned Mohammedans, they were instantly on a footing of perfect equality with the conquerors." An ingenious and learned dissenter, speaking of the Saracens says :—"They persecuted nobody ; Jews and Christians all lived happy among them." Higgins also says :—"In all the history of the Caliphs there cannot be shown anything half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burnt for his religious opinion ; nor, do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply embracing Islam. "But," says the Christian, "all that was characteristic of the centuries long past—Christians are not so bigoted and intolerant to-day. Aren't they? Go to the Philippine Islands, a country with a population of over seven millions of souls, which is and has been under the rule of Christian Spain for 300 years. Try to teach any religious system but the Roman Catholic and see what will happen to you. There is no Mohammedan country on the earth that refuses to admit Christian missionaries, and that does not give them ample protection. Three years ago two representatives of the British and foreign Bible Society of London went to Manila, the capital city of the Philippine Islands, to sell Bibles. One of them died within three weeks after his arrival, and there were people wicked enough to say that he was poisoned at the instigation of some of the Catholic priests. The other was arrested, and thrown into jail on a charge of teaching contrary to the State religion, but was afterwards sent to Singapore by order of the Spanish Government. That was only about three years ago. A few months later seven Buddhist priests from Foo Chow, China, who were induced by their fellow-countrymen in Manila to go there believing that they would be allowed to celebrate a Buddhist ceremony there, were arrested, fined, and sent back to China. A vast volume of evidence might be adduced to show the utter groundlessness of the charge of intolerance. As a matter of fact intolerance is entirely foreign to the principles of Islam, and no intelligent Moslem would be guilty of, or consent to it.

The essence of the true faith of Islam is resignation to the will of God and its corner-stone is prayer. It teaches universal fraternity, universal love, and universal benevolence, and requires purity of mind, purity of action, purity of speech and perfect physical cleanliness. It is the simplest and most elevating form of religion known to man. It has no paid priesthood, nor elaborate ceremonial, admits no vicarious atonement nor relieves its followers of any of the responsibility for their sins. It recognizes but one God, the Father of all things, the divine spirit that dwells in all the manifestations of nature, the one omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, ruler of the universe, to whom its followers devoutly pray and before whom all stand upon a platform of perfect equali-

ty and fraternity. The devout Mussulman, one who has arrived at an intelligent comprehension of the true teachings of Our Holy Prophet, lives, in his religion and makes it the paramount principle of his existence. It is with him in all his goings and comings during the day, and he is never so occupied with his business or worldly affairs that he cannot turn his back upon them, when the stated hour of prayer arrives, and present his soul to God. His loves, his sorrows, his hopes, his fears are all immersed in it; it is his last thought when he lies down to sleep at night and the first to enter his mind at dawn when the voice of the Muezzin rings out loudly and clearly from the minaret of the mosque, waking the soft echoes of the morn with its thrilling solemn, majestic monotonous: "Come to Prayer! Come to Prayer! Prayer is better than sleep! Prayer is better than sleep!!"

After the usual votes of thanks accorded to the Chairman and the lecturer Mr. Buddrudin Abdulla Kur promised, that the whole lecture would be printed in a pamphlet form both in English and Urdu.

The following three letters are printed with this lecture to remove any misunderstanding that may exist from the minds of Mussulman brethren about Mr. Webb's visit to India.

BUDRUDIN ABDULLA KUR.

MOHAMMADAN PROPAGANDA IN AMERICA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "BOMBAY GAZETTE."

SIR,—For the last two years I have been in correspondence with Mr. Alexander Webb, the United States Consul at Manila. Mr. Webb has fully studied the religious systems of the East, and being convinced of the truth of Islam he has embraced this faith. By his last letter and a telegram he informs me that he has resigned the post of Consul General at Manilla, and has started for America *viâ* Burma and India, to establish a mission at New York for the propagation of the Islamic faith on the American Continent.

As the subject has attracted a great deal of attention in this country, I think, Sir, that the scheme of American propaganda, framed by Mr. Webb, as well as his last letter to me, may be fitly placed before the public at this juncture. More than seven thousand rupees have been already collected at Hyderabad, Deccan, and it is evident that in this epoch-making last decade of the nineteenth century the Islamic world is fully prepared to push its

* This lecture is almost the same delivered in Lahore.

triumphs in the Western world through the refined instruments of persuasion and preaching.

Let it, however, be said to the credit of the English race that without their noble instincts of justice, love of truth, and moral courage, the task of propagating Islam in their enlightened country would be simply hopeless.—Yours, &c.

BADRUDIN ABDULA KUR.

Bombay, *September 12.*

Consulate of the United States of America at Manila, Philippine Islands.

MANILA, *July 4, 1892.*

BUDRUDIN ABDULLA KUR, Esq., Bombay.

My dear Brother,—Your letter, dated 1st ultimo and enclosing one from our esteemed brother, Abdulla Arab, is at hand. It gives me great pleasure to know that you are taking such an active interest in the proposed American mission, which, I feel assured now, will be a pronounced success. I am fully satisfied that when the Mohammadans of India thoroughly understand the nature of the movement and the character of the field in which it is to be established, together with its possible effects upon the propaganda in Europe, and upon the Moslem organization in the East, they will give it their most earnest and active support. To me, it is in no sense an experiment likely to result in failure, for I know the general tendency of thought in my country and the general characteristic of my countrymen too well to entertain for a moment the idea that anything but success is possible. Besides I have faith in the power and wisdom of Almighty God (Praised be His name for ever), and as Islam is the true religion I feel confident that He will guide, direct and support a movement for its propagation which promised such great results as this. I have for several years been convinced that there were unseen influences at work bringing about a condition of things calculated to overthrow the current erroneous religious systems of the world and establish mankind in the one true system. But which that system was to be was to me uncertain until I arrived at a comprehension of the character and doctrines of Islam. I have had some strange experiences of which I hope to have the privilege of talking with you soon, and which have seemed to me as evidence that God was guiding me for some great and wise purpose, the ultimate object of which was the spiritual benefit of mankind. I do not desire to give you the impression that I believe I have been inspired directly, but circumstances have so shaped themselves in my life that they have drawn me directly toward the movement in which I am

about to engage with all the earnestness, vigour, and intellectual ability that God has given me. As I wrote to you more than a year ago it seemed that I was destined to work out quietly, and in my own way the bringing of my countrymen to a knowledge of Islam, and it hardly seemed probable then that any other way was open. But God in his wisdom has opened a broader, surer, and better way generally, and I can see clearly how I am to devote my efforts to bring about more speedily and thoroughly the desired results. I am impatient to meet you and talk freely with you concerning the matter, for I feel sure that you will agree with me not only that the object is of the grandest importance, but that there has been something more than ordinary human agencies at work in bringing the project to its present condition. God is great, and will surely guide his servants in the right way.

I have sent my resignation to my Government, and I am awaiting instructions as to the disposition of the office and effects. If I am obliged to remain here until my successor arrives, I will be unable to leave before about the 1st of October, but if I am authorized to turn the office over to some one here I can leave the latter part of August or early in September. I will then start for Bombay *viâ* Singapore, Rangoon, and Calcutta. My wife and family left for the United States on the 8th of last month, and will go to a fruit ranch about 40 miles from San Francisco, where they will remain until I am fairly settled in New York.

The books you sent me have been a source of the deepest interest to me, and I have learned a great deal that was new to me, concerning the diversity and general direction of Mussulman thought and opinion. I understand that you do not endorse all the views and the opinions expressed and judging from your marginal notes, I am inclined to the belief that you and I will not be very far apart in our views. I have, or think I have, a good conception of the spirit of Mohammad's teachings and the fundamental principles of Islam. Hence I am forced to reject many of the opinions I have encountered. Hughes' Dictionary of Islam abounds with prejudice and error, and there are some suggestions made by Syed Ameer Ali that I can hardly endorse. The critical exposition of the Jihad is a most important and interesting work to me, but it ought to be rewritten and revised, so that its English will be smoother and more concise. But in his treatment of the subject the author has furnished me with matter which will be of inestimable value to me when I begin active work in America. But of these matters I hope, if it is God's pleasure, to talk with you when we meet. God grant that the hearts and minds of our brethren in India may be opened, and that those who are able to do so will give us as much literary help as they can.

Praying that the peace of God and His richest blessing may be with you here and hereafter,—I am, your obedient brother.

ALEXANDER RUSSELL WEBB.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA.

Sir,—With reference to a letter appearing in your to-day's issue under the *nom de plume* of "A Mohammadan," you will kindly allow me to lay bare a few facts for the information of the public.

I have been in correspondence with Mr. Webb for more than two years past, and have been creating interest among the Mussulmans of this city for sending a Mohammadan Mission to the American Continent. So I showed the letters of Mr. Webb, with his permission, to many of my Mussulman friends, and among them to my friend Haji Abdulla Arab. Mr. Haji Abdulla Arab took up the matter so zealously that he went to Manila at his own expense to confer with Mr. Webb. Mr. Webb having expressed his desire to resign his post of Consul-General at Manilla and devote his whole life to the propagation of Islam in the United States of America, Mr. Haji Abdulla Arab on his part promised to help the American Mission scheme so as to bring it on a sound financial basis. Mr. Abdulla also requested Mr. Webb to visit India, Egypt, Turkey, and Liverpool, on his way to America, so that he might come in friendly contact with the Mussulmans of those countries. This, in short, is the whole story.

It will thus be seen that Mr. Webb has not come to India to collect any money, but, on the contrary, he was requested to come here. Such of the Mohammadans as are willing to show the true light and essence of Islam to the Western world may assist in this noble cause and give their humble quota.

I think, Sir, that your correspondent should have ascertained facts and made due enquiries on the subject before he rushed into print. I have ample documentary proof to corroborate my statements, and your correspondent may do well to come to me and personally see them instead of writing under a disguise of "A Mohammadan." Whether it be to bring the civilized nations of the West in close fraternity with the Mussulmans or to alleviate the sufferings and the misery of the poor Mussulmans of this country, the field is, indeed, a boundless one for the charitably disposed rich Mohammadans. But will our people wake up and do something?—Yours, &c.,

BADRUDIN ABDULLA KUR.

November 16.

THE LECTURE DELIVERED IN CALCUTTA.

GENTLEMEN,

You have asked me to explain to you why I have become a follower of Islam—why I an American, in a so-called Christian country and under so-called Christian influences, have accepted as my guidance in life the system taught by the inspired Prophet of Arabia. We Americans are accredited with a desire to talk about ourselves and our great country. I shall have nothing to say about my country; but it would be necessary to say something about myself. It is about twenty years since I became convinced of the absurdity and insufficiency of the system of religion called Christianity and drifted out into the uncertain sea of Materialism. For nine years I had no religion at all, but by what may seem an accident to some persons, but which I firmly believe was due to the direct influence of God, I became interested in the study of oriental religions. It seemed to me that if there was a life beyond this, the preparation for that life must be the most important study that man could engage in. The life here can be no more than 60 or 70 years, while the life beyond must cover eternity. I began with the study of Budhism and followed it by an effort to probe to the bottom of every religious system known to man. At that time I had access to a library of 13,000 volumes, covering quite fully the subjects in which I was most deeply interested. Fortunately, I had considerable spare time, about four or five hours a day, and was thus enabled to accomplish a great deal in my researches.

I need not ask you to follow me in details through various phases of my investigations. Let it be sufficient to say that after going through all the religious system of world I reached the positive conviction that Islam was the only true faith—the only effective means of salvation—the best system for the masses of humanity—the one divine truth revealed by God to all the Prophets from Abraham and Moses to Mohammad, the last, and in many respects the greatest of all.

Now in order for you to attain a more adequate idea of the extent, nature and result of my researches let us consider the subject of religion in the abstract and its relations to human life. Cicero defined Religion as “that which bring with it the care and cult of some higher power which men call divine,” Max Muller

after carefully tracing the history of the word finds that its earliest conception can have meant only respect, care and reverence, that later on it took the moral sense of scruple and conscience, and lastly became more and more exclusively applied to the inward feeling of reverence for the gods and to the outward manifestation of that reverence in worship and sacrifice. What the Romans expressed by 'Religion' was chiefly the moral or practical, not the speculative or philosophical, side of religion. The Greeks at first used the word to express fear of the gods or demons and the divine power in a good sense. But very soon it began to be used in a bad sense as expressive of superstition. And Marcus Aurelius spoke of it as meaning God-fearing without superstition. Spinoza thinks that practical religion ought always to be simple piety and obedience as distinguished from philosophy and love of knowledge.

The modern definitions are numerous and varied. One philosophical writer says: "Religion is our recognition of the unity of nature and teaches us to consider ourselves as parts of the whole." Another writes: "Theology and Metaphysic have nothing to do with morality. Religion has never been other than science plus worship or devotion.

Max Muller says: "We can hardly open a book without meeting with random definitions of religion: Religion is said to be knowledge and it is said to be ignorance; Religion is said to be freedom and it is said to be dependence. Religion is said to be desire and it is said to be freedom from all desires: Religion is said to be silent contemplation and it is said to be splendid and stately worship of God. People take every kind of liberty with this old word. Young poets will tell you that poetry is their religion: young artists, that their religion is art; while it has been said of old that pure religion is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world."

In the consideration of the subject we will find it convenient to keep in sight the dividing line between Religion and Theology—words which are too often used promiscuously. By 'religion' we are to understand the subject; by 'theology' the study or science of that subject.

Sir Syed Ahmad, a devout Mussalman says: "Of all the numerable wonders of the universe the most marvellous is religion, the foundation of which lies in the distinction between the acts of men, distinguishing them into good, evil indifferent, for if there be no such difference there can be no religion."

And although this statement may seem at first glance rather

extravagant, there is a great deal of solid truth in it. Notwithstanding the absence of anything like proof of the reality of religion, the very idea alone acts upon men's thoughts and determines men's actions with a force far exceeding in intensity and enthusiasm that resulting from any other belief, however satisfactory and conclusive may be the proof of the truth on which that belief is based. And the average man who has become wedded to a form of religion is as firmly fixed there as the mountain, even under the force of the most convincing proofs that he is following error if his conversion depends upon theological arguments. He must be led gradually to think outside the old lines.

In a private letter, dated may 4, 1891, Herbert Spencer writes: "In my earlier youth I constantly made the foolish supposition that conclusive proofs would change beliefs. But experience has long since dissipated my faith in men's nationality.

The religious idea differs from every other in that man's belief in every thing, religion excepted, depends, or is based upon, a previous conviction of its truth; the religious idea, on the contrary, appears to be inmate and is accepted, entertained and acquiesced in.

Victor Hugo once said:—"I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest that has been more than once cut down. The new shoots are stronger and livelier than ever. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. The sunshine is over my head, the earth gives me the generous sap, but heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why then is my soul luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head and eternal spring is in my heart. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which unite me. It is marvellous, yet simple. It is fairy tale and it is history. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song. I have tried all. But I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, "I have finished my day's work"; but I can not say "I have finished my life." The tomb is not a blind alley, it is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight to open in the dawn. My work is only a beginning, is hardly above its foundation. I would be glad to see it mounting and mounting and mounting for ever. The thirst for the infinite proves infinitely."

This declaration is not only a forcible expression of the spiritual instinct of man but it contains suggestions full of deep

meaning for those who have any knowledge at all of all of the occult side of human life.

Had the religious idea or the sentiment been the same in all the human races it must have found expression in a universal form of religion, and to my mind the fact that there is to-day such diversity of religious system is strong evidence of the true fundamental principles which underlie them all, the one truth—Islam.

In every age, every clan, tribe and nation has had its idea of religion and its distinctive form of worship, and it would be extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to-day, to find outside civilized Christendom, any collection of men without some sort of form for the expression of their ideas of religion. There are in some of the islands of the Pacific Ocean tribes which have never, as far as is known, come in contact or had direct and intelligent intercourse with people professing any of the popular forms of religion, and yet they have religious ceremonies and ideas of post-mortem existence which are near enough like those to be found in the Christian, Muhammadan, and Buddhist systems, to warrant the suspicion that they must have been borrowed from those religions. There are in the mountaneous regions of the Philippine Islands savage tribes, who have never been subdued by the Spaniards, who have a most intense hatred for the white face and who know of no other country or religion than their own, but who still have religious forms and religious ideas very similar to those of some of the earlier and more superstitious Christian sects.

“Religious ideas of one kind or another,” says Herbert Spencer, “are almost universal. We are obliged to admit that if not supernaturally derived, as the Majority contends they must be derived of human experience slowly accumulated and organized. Considering all faculties to result from accumulated modifications, caused by the intercourse of the organism with its environment, we are obliged to admit that there exists in the environment, certain phenomena or conditions which have determined the growth of the feeling in question, and so are obliged to admit that it is as normal as any other faculty. We are also forced to infer that this feeling is, in some way, conducive to human welfare.”

All the evidence at hand tends to support Mr. Spencer's conclusion that the religious faculty is just as normal as any other; but why should there be such an apparent vanity in its manifestation? The reply to this query will be apparent when we have considered the principles which lie at the roots of all religions.

The Europeans and Americans have acquired the habit of speaking of the Oriental Religions as if they were entirely different and distinct in their essence and purpose from Christianity and

its numerous progeny, This is a habit which we should overcome if we ever expect to reach a condition of complete enlightenment. Christianity is founded upon exactly the same truths as those which form the foundation of Brahmonism, Buddhism, Mohammadanism and all the systems of the world north, south, east, and west. If it were possible to strip all these religions of the misconceptions and materialistic errors of fallible mortal man, and lay before their corner stone we would find that the Christian, Jew, Buddhist, Mohammadan, Brahmin, Hindu, Parsee all the nations of the earth, including the Savage Pacific Islander, could clasp hands and embrace each other on one platform of religious unity and harmony. But as the truth of eternal truth makes such a result impossible now at once, we must content ourselves with the acquirement of each knowledge concerning this truth, as we are individually capable of assimilating and which will solve to some extent the mystery of religious development.

The ordinary man, whatever his religion may be, whatever he believes in, whatever he doubts, acknowledges himself and acknowledges infinity and longs to connect to two. He cannot conceive the *Infinite* in any one of its aspects, is appalled as he looks at the sky, and utterly and hopelessly fails to find a limit to his look and his thought but he listens to the craving within him, welcomes the heaven-promising teachings of those whom he believe to have been inspired and, in many cases, learns sufficient for his satisfaction. At the same time there are many men who cannot comprehend and, still more, cannot, accept, as revealed truth those writings which appear to them to be the work of men very imperfectly acquainted with the laws of nature inclined to write history from a rather partial stand-point and often teaching very bad morality. These sceptics should either cease to occupy their minds with religion or assume that it is the subject of some law which neither they nor any one else can understand ; for if it is not governed by some law, any attempt to reason on it would be waste of time. A searching analysis of all religions reveals the fact that they have two aspects, the exoteric or that system of doctrine and ceremonial which is taught, to, and followed by the masses, esoteric or that class of doctrines which are learned by the few who have earned the right to know them and which are never taught publicly. This doctrinal division is more plainly apparent in the Oriental religions than in Western Christianity, which notwithstanding the perfectly clear and unmistakeable teachings of the New Testament upon the subject has drifted away from the spiritual mysteries and has hardened itself into a solidity, materialistic creed. To the average Christian the saying of Jesus to his disciples "unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables" has lost its true meaning.

There never can be one presentation of religion suited equally to all classes and casts of men ; and the attempt of the Christian Church to compose this impossibility has, of necessity, resulted in the alienation of those who are unable to accept the creed, coarse fare, dealt out to the multitude. Enacting the part of a Procrustes, in respect of things spiritual, she has tried to fit to one measure minds of all kinds and dimensions, in total disregard of the apostolic dictum. " We speak wisdom among the full-grown. But not unto you as unto the spiritual, but as unto the carnal, unto babes is Christ feeding you with milk not with meat, being not yet able to receive it."

There is no lack of evidence to prove that every inspired teacher from Moses to Mohammad clearly taught that there was a certain kind of knowledge which could neither be spoken nor written ; that it could only be learned by those who would sacrifice every thing that the world holds dear and adopt a certain course of life.

The most potent factors in the degradation of Christianity, and its divorce from the spirit, Psychic training have been the absurd dogmas of the Trinity, the emaculate conception and the vicarious atonement, by which man has been practically relieved of responsibility for his sins and has become divested of his character as a free agent.

The essence of Islam which brings it apparently in direct opposition to Christianity is that each man is his absolute lawgiver—the dispenser of glory to himself—the decreer of his life, his reward and his punishment. He is in every sense a free agent and is imposed with the idea that man attains his highest and becomes perfect only through his own voluntary-co-operation with the spirits ; that he must in himself and for himself at some time in this life or the life hereafter, suffer punishment for every evil thought, word and deed, he has indulged in, and be rewarded for every good thought, word or deed. The plan is one of perfect justice. Now this clearly defined idea of personal responsibility makes the believer self-reliant and his mental training fits him peculiarly for the arduous and often dangerous task of soul-development. He takes for his guide the motto: "Purity of life, purity of heart and purity of doctrine," and, learning to worship God only, he seeks to become perfect even as his father is perfect.

Admitting that man is composed of these parts, body, soul and spirit, and that materialistic science house the character of only the lower portion of this trial, let us see what it is that Eastern aspirant for perfection seeks to do.

"Who holds the secret of life?" asks a well-known Theoso-

phist, "who knows what force is and what causes it brings around its countless, eternal co-relations with the atoms of matter? What adept can solve for us the problem how worlds are built and why? Can any one tell us whence man come, whither he goes, who he is? What is the secret of birth, of sleep, of thought, of memory, of death?"

Because the materialistic scientist can tell you the name of every bone, and muscle, sinew and nerve in the human body and yet can not tell us the difference between a living man and a dead one, we at once leap to the conclusion that the latter kind of knowledge is not attainable. The materialistic divines positively and with curious inconsistency the possibility of positive knowledge and declares that all we can know is that nothing can be known; but he is greatly mistaken.

Matter is the antithetical ultimate of spirit, wherefore enemy of spiritual perception is always materialism. It is therefore by the dematerialization of himself that man obtains the seeing eye and hearing ear in respect of divine things. Dematerialization consists not in the separation of soul from the body but in the purification of both soul and body from engrossment by the things of sense. It is but another example of the doctrine of correspondence as with the vision of things physical, so with the things spiritual. Purity alike of instrument and medium is indispensable to perception, which means that religion is not mechanical, but must proceed from the heart by living so purely in thought and deed as to prevent the interposition of any barrier between his exterior and interior, his phenomenal and his substantial life, and by steadfastly cultivating harmonious relations between these two, by subordinating the whole of his system to the divine central will who sits in the soul, the man gains full access to stores of knowledge laid upon his soul and attains cognition alike of God and of the universe, and for him it is said "there is nothing hid which shall not be revealed." This doctrine is the *Spirit of Islam* and it may be traced through devious windings to the foundation of every religious system the world has ever known, although except *Islam*, they have all drifted from it into materialistic form. The fact is, and the sooner Christians learn it the better it will be for them and their posterity, the system known as Christianity to-day is not in any sense, except in its generally ignored moral ethical code, the religion taught by Jesus, and intelligent and thoughtful man in both America and Europe, and are gradually becoming more and more sceptical, and, as Mathew Arnold has very truthfully said, "at the present moment there are two things about the Christian religion which must be obvious to every percipient person; one that man can not do without it; the other that they cannot do with it as it is."

In an age distinguished as is the present, by all-embracing research, exhaustive analysis and unsparing criticism, no religious system can endure unless it appeals to the intellectual as well as the devotional side of man's nature, and this orthodox Christianity does not do. In perpetual conflict with rapidly advancing materialistic science it must of necessity lose its hold upon the minds of men capable of candid, unprejudicial thought and research and there is to-day apparently in the future for it but collapse and ruin. This result can only be prevented by the earnest, honest efforts of those who know the truth to teach it to Christians who do not know it. Then the ultimate purification of Christianity must follow. It must be relieved of the soul-destroying reason-enchaining error and superstition that have been fastened to it by selfish, ignorant fanatics during the past 15 hundred years and restored to its original beauty and perfection—true Mohammadanism.

I was very much interested in reading sometime ago a short article entitled "are clergymen honest?" by the Rev. Howard MacQuarry of Canton Ohio, an honest manly Christian clergyman, who had the moral courage to preach what he believed and was kicked out of his pulpit for it by the council of Ecclesiastical bigots and Pharisees who governed his church. He says: "But there are clergymen in all churches who do not believe the old dogmas and yet do not say so publicly. A clergyman in the Epyscopal church expressly rejected the bodily resurrection of Jesus, in a letter to me, but in a sermon on this subject he merely emphasized his re-appearance in some form after his death. Another clergyman said to me: "The longer I live the less I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus," but I have not found this statement in his published opinion. A third wrote to me that he had always preached my view of Christ's resurrection (that he appeared as a spirit and not in bodily form) and he expected to continue to preach it. Others said: "We agree with you but you have spoken too plainly."

And then Mr. MacQuarry charitably says that these numerous Christian clergymen are not dishonest; they simply hate to disturb the existing order of things and yet know at the same time that disturbance is absolutely necessary to health and growth. I am afraid that in some cases these clergymen do not proclaim their heretically opinions because they fear that they will lose their salaries. But of one thing I do feel quite firmly convinced, that is that if all the intelligent clergymen of the Christian churches, who believe at heart, as the Rev. Howard MacQuarry believes, were as honest, as manly and as independent as he has been orthodox Christianity would fall to the ground with a crash

that would shake the earth. I hope that this event is near at hand but I am afraid that it will not occur until long after you and I have passed away. "But" says the orthodox Christian "why is it that the civilization of the East is so far behind that of the West?"

This is the question which the American and European Christians are almost sure to ask. When one comprehends the difference between the Exoteric and Esoteric sides of a religion and the fact that the creed of a country is not the explanation of its civilization the answer is apparent. True Christianity is in no sense the cause of American or European Civilization. Nor is true Mohammadanism or Buddhism the basis of the civilization of the East.

The essence of true Christianity may be had in the sermon on the Mount. Compare the doctrines there enunciated with the life and principles of Western civilization and harmonize them if you can.

Some people tell us that Mohammadanism is inconsistent with human advancement and improvement. Stanely Lanepole, a Christian, in his excellent work called "The Moors in Spain," says:—

"For nearly eight centuries under her Mohammadan Rulers Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened State. Her fertile Provinces rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors bore fruit a hundred-fold. Cities innumerable sprang up in the rich valleys of the Guadel quiver and the Guadiana, whose names, and names only, still commemorate the vanished glories of their past. But literature and science prospered as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France, Germany and England to drink from the fountains of learning which flowed only in cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science; women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study; and the lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, Astronomy and Botany, History, Philosophy and Jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation the arts of fortification and shipbuilding the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the masonic trowel, were brought to perfection by the Moors. In the practice of War, no less than in arts of peace, they long stood supreme. * * * * . Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain."

“In 1492 the last bulwark of the Moors gave way before the Crusade of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with Granada fell all Spain’s greatness. For a brief while, indeed ; the reflection of the Moorish splendor cast a borrowed light upon the history of the land which it had once warmed with its sunny radiance. The great epoch of Isabellah, Charles V and Phillips II, of Columbus, Cartes and Pizarro, shed a last halo about the dying moments of a mighty State. Then followed the abomination of desolation, the rule of Inquisition and the blackness of darkness in which Spain has been plunged ever since. In the land where science was once supreme, the Spanish doctors became noted for nothing but their ignorance and incapacity, and the discoveries of Newton and Howey were condemned as pernicious to the faith. Where once seventy public libraries had fed the minds of Scholars and half a million books had been gathered together at Cordova for the benefit of the world, such indifference to learning afterwards prevailed, that the new capital, Madrid, possessed no public library in the 18th century, and even the manuscripts of the Escorial were denied, in our own days, to the first scholarly historian of the Moors, though himself a Spaniard. The 16,000 looms of Serelle soon dwindled to a fifth of their ancient number ; the arts and industries of Toledo and Almeria faded into insignificance ; the very baths—public buildings of equal ornament and use—were destroyed because cleanliness savoured too strongly of rank infidelity. The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of the Moors, grew impoverished and neglected ; the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted ; most of the populous cities which had filled every district of Andalusia fell into ruinous decay ; and beggars, friars and bandits took the place of scholars, merchants and knights. So low fell Spain when she had driven away the Moors.”

What is the spirit of our so-called Christian civilization ? Is it fraternal love, justice, charity, humility, meekness, unsparing devotion to the happiness, comfort and welfare of others ? Is it the sermon on Mount, or the Golden Rule ? Are the teachings of the meek and lowly Nazarene apparent in our elegantly furnished Churches and in the lives of our salaried clergymen ? I would ask the Christians to look the situation fairly in the face and tell me how much of the Christianity of Jesus there is in our civilization. What do you see in our social, political, commercial, professional and civil life, from the home of royalty to that of the humble sexton of the humblest church ? Is it one persistent, incessant struggle to be pure and holy in thought, word and deed and to love their God with all their hearts and with all their minds and their neighbours as themselves ? Or is it a wild, wicked, heartless, deceitful fight for dollars and comforts ? a mad scramble to get to

the top even if they have to kill their neighbours in order to get there? Is their civilization truly Christian civilization? No, decidedly not. Lust, the arch-fiend whose dead body we must pass over before we can stand in the presence of God lies at the root and is the inspiration and architect of that which is called civilization in all parts of the world and true religion has no place in it.

Absolute fraternal love, absolute virtue, absolute purity should be the corner-stone of our civilization, for from such a civilization only can the perfect man evolve.

The principles of Mohammadanism are such as any intelligent Christian can fully and heartily adopt without doing violence to any of the doctrines taught by Jesus. They are the incentives to a universal brotherhood, of humanity and the guide to the light of everlasting truth. They lead on to all that is purest, holiest and loftiest in the human character; and those who follow them humbly and faithfully will surely find that paradise wherein is perfect rest, perfect peace and perfect love.

INTERVIEW OF A CORRESPONDENT OF THE "MOHAMMADAN OBSERVER" WITH MR. A. R. WEBB.

When I went to see Mr. Webb about the reasons which led him to embrace the Mohammadan religion. I found him seated in a chair and dressed in the Mohammadan costume. Mr. Webb, who is very polite, good-humoured, and well-educated, received me cordially, and when asked if he had any objection to being "interviewed" and having his views published, replied that he would be very pleased to afford any information to the public and to answer any question which any one cared to ask him. He spoke of the Christian religion in general in a most harsh way, as he thought it was incomparable with the dogmas of the Mohammadan faith. His opinion of the Bible was very poor, and when questioned as to whether there were not likely to be as many defects in the Koran as in the Bible, replied that the Koran was the result of a combination of facts actually recorded at the time; while the Bible record was one produced by the gathering together of a number of documents and praying for the right one to leap up. Speaking of the Salvation Army, Mr. Webb thought nothing of them at all. These are all Mr. Webb's opinions, and I give below exactly what he has to say on the subject—

Q.—Mr. Webb, what Church did you belong to before you embraced the Mohammadan faith?

A.—The Presbyterian Church. I was born at Hudson, New

York. When I was young I went to Sunday school. In those days I was a pretty wild kind of a boy, and I used to go to church simply for the sake of seeing nice-looking girls and escorting them home. It was a most delightful task. When I was a little older, I changed from the Presbyterian church, to the Episcopal one, as there were equally nice young ladies to look at in the latter church.

Q.—Then you only went to church to look at young ladies ?

A.—Yes. I gave religion no thought. About the age of 20 I met a family of Universalists, and they began to preach religion to me, and I began to think of religion. The more I thought of it, the more absurd it seemed to me. Now take the mystery of the Trinity.

Q.—Were you not taught the mystery of the Trinity ?

A.—Yes, about 20 years ago, but I was unable to find anybody who could enlighten me.

Q.—Did you interview the clergy about it ?

A.—Yes. They told me that I must not go into these things, as it was the mystery of God ; and I told them that if the Christian religion was necessary for my well-being I ought to know something about it.

Q.—Have you read through the Bible ?

A.—I have studied the Bible. I do not believe in the Immaculate Conception and the Vicarious Atonement.

Q.—Why don't you believe in the Atonement ?

A.—Because I could lead the most wild life, and with 15 minutes' atonement expect to go to heaven.

Q.—What do you mean ?

A.—By simply declaring my belief in Jesus Christ.

Q.—What do you think of the High Church ?

A.—There is no Christianity in the High Church.

Q.—What do you again mean ?

A.—Because it does not teach religion. The whole of the Catholic Church systems and forms of ceremonies are based upon the old Pagan system of ceremonial magic.

Q.—Are you speaking from what you have read, or from actual observation ?

A.—I have been deeply interested in these studies for years. I have never lost an opportunity of interviewing anybody at all,

be the person never so high. I have studied books, and have interviewed the clergies.

Q.—How long have you embraced the Islam Faith?

A.—For the last 5 years.

Q.—Are you married?

A.—Yes, and my wife has also embraced the Islam Faith.

Q.—What do you think of the Roman Catholic Church, as compared with the Protestant Church?

A.—Well, the Protestant Church allows more liberty, whereas the other Church does not.

Q.—But is it nice to allow the ignorant to understand more than they need for purposes of salvation?

A.—They should be allowed freedom. The Roman Catholics are never allowed to read the Bible.

A.—But I have seen a Bible in a Roman Catholic house.

A.—You may have; but it is against the rules.

Q.—But you believed in the Christian religion once?

A.—No: never in my life.

Q.—Don't you think the Mohammadan who has embraced the Christian religion is likely to have the same opinion of the Islam faith that you have of the Christian faith?

A.—Yes: there are a great many who do say the same thing against the faith they have ignored. I remember an article once written in reference to Mohammadan marriage; but it was all false.

Q.—Do you believe in polygamy?

A.—Yes: I was speaking to the American Consul General in Calcutta, and he was horrified that I had turned Mohammadan. He asked me whether I believed in Mohammad as well as I believed in Jesus Christ; and I said that I most positively did so. Well, he then said that Jesus had not half a dozen or more wives; and I said that Mohammad had not either. People have to be educated to polygamy. It is not obligatory at all. It is from childhood that one must be taught the advantages or otherwise of polygamy. In American there are 90 per cent of polygamists.

Q.—Now what really induced you to turn Mohammadan?

A.—I began to be interested in it about 20 years ago. I am near 45 years old. For nine years I had no religion. I followed the old materialistic idea. By reading Bulwer Lytton's "Zanoni,"

my curiosity was excited. My association with Christian clergymen and others had convinced me that the masses of Christians neither new nor cared to know what their system was. The priests were as much in the dark: they shrank from investigating anything which promised to deprive them of their valuable hood.

Q.—What do you think of the Greek Church?

A.—I can't say.

Q.—Don't you think it is the primitive Church?

A.—Yes: it may have been the primitive Christian Church.

Q.—Do you believe in the Deluge?

A.—No: not as an actual fact.

Q.—What do you intend doing in America?

A.—We intend to establish a high class weekly newspaper, to be devoted to the real doctrines of Islam. We propose to establish a place for the issue of pamphlets and books, to establish a free library and reading room for the masses, and a free lecture-room where lectures will be delivered once or twice a week. We propose to educate the English-speaking people, and to overturn the false impressions that have been made by many writers. Also to establish in the various cities branch societies to propagate the Islam Faith.

Q.—Do you think there is a possibility of converting Americans?

A.—Yes, most certainly.

Q.—What makes you think so.

A.—Because during the last 19 or 15 years there has been a great falling off in confidence in the Christian faith. People have been drifting away from it, and hence there are so many societies formed, such as the Sectarian Society, the Theosophical Society, and various others; and people are anxious to investigate, in order to get the bottom of the system of religion. Now in St. Louis, where there is a population of half a million inhabitants, where a special staff of reporters were sent to take the census of the people who attended church, it was reported that only 7,000 people did so out of the half million; and rest attended the various places of amusement.

Q.—But that is no criterion. A man's own house may be as good as his church. He may say his prayers at home, and should not be classed as one who preferred the saloon to the church

A.—Yes; but in America things are different. There is no such thing there as saying prayers in one's own house.

Q.—Don't you think there are as many defects in the Koran as there are alleged to be in the Bible?

A.—No.

Q.—Why?

A.—The Koran is a thing which I should not like to discuss in a newspaper article. But Mohammad's words were actually recorded, while Jesus's words were not recorded. The present Bible was compiled 300 years after Christ died. The Bible was compiled from a collection of mystical books, by a set of people who prayed that the true Scriptures would leap from the pile.

Q.—That is only a matter of opinion. Where do you find that?

A.—In books.

Q.—Do you believe in Sunday?

A.—Yes: only as a day of rest, when needed.

Q.—But the Mohammadans have a day also?

A.—Yes. But the Sunday of the Christians is really the Saturday of the Jews.

Q.—What do you propose doing here in Bombay?

A.—Nothing. I am neither a missionary nor a theological juggler. I have only come down here to make the acquaintance of my Mohammadan friends, and not to convert people.

Mr. Webb, at the end of the interview, expressed himself very pleased at the opportunity he had had of speaking on the subject; and stated that he would be very pleased indeed to discuss the question of the Christian religion, as compared with the Islam faith, and to hear any arguments that people cared to advance on either side of the question.

SELECTIONS FROM THE HOLY KORAN.

GOD.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Praise be unto God, the Lord of creation.

The all-merciful, the all-compassionate;
Ruler of the day of Reckoning!

Thee do we worship, and Thee do we invoke for help. Lead us in the straight path, the path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, not in that of those who are the object of wrath, or who walk in error.

Say:* "He is God alone; God! the Eternal!

He begetteth not and is not begotten.

Nor is there any like unto Him."

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

Perceivest thou not that God knoweth whatever is in heaven and in earth? 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 may be; and He will declare unto them that which they have done, on the day of resurrection; for God knoweth all things.

With God are the keys of the secret things; none knoweth them beside Himself; He knoweth that which is in the dry land and in the sea; There falleth not a leaf but He knoweth it; neither is there a single grain in the dark recesses of the earth, neither a green thing, nor a dry thing, but it is written in the perspicuous Book.

* The speaker throughout is God, either in the first person singular, or more commonly, the plural of Majesty "We."

Glory unto Him immensely high is He exalted! The seven heavens praise Him, the earth and all who are therein. Neither is there aught which doth not celebrate His power; but their utterance of praise ye understand not.

God!—there is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal! Nor slumber seizeth Him, nor sleep. His, whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him but by His own permission? He knoweth what hath been before them and what shall be after them, yet nought of His knowledge shall they comprehend, save that which He willeth. His throne* is extended high over heaven and earth, and the upholding of both is no burden to Him;—He is the High—the Mighty!

And say: Praise be to God who hath not begotten a son, who hath no partner in the Kingdom, nor any protector on account of weakness. And magnify him by proclaiming His greatness.

Oh men! ye are paupers in need of God, but God is the rich, the praise-worthy.

Who supplieth you from heaven and earth? Who hath power over hearing and sight? and who bringeth forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living? Surely, they will answer—"God!" then say: "What will ye not therefore fear him?"

Doth any one desire greatness? All greatness is in God: The good word riseth up to Him, and the righteous deed will He exalt. But terrible punishment awaiteth the planner of iniquity, and the machinations of such will be surely confound.

He is God beside whom there is no God. He knoweth things visible and invisible; He is the Compassionate, the Merciful. He is God beside whom there is no God:

He is the King, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Powerful, the Strong, the most High! Far be the glory of God from that which they unite with Him! He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner! To Him are ascribed excellent titles. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth praiseth Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise!

With Him are the secrets of the heavens and the earth. Look thou and hearken unto Him alone?

Man hath no guardian but He, nor many share in his judgments.

*The throne, allegorically, signifies—the divine providence, which sustains and governs the heavens and the earth, and is infinitely above all human comprehension.

Swear not by God, when ye make an oath that you will be virtuous and fear God and promote peace among men; for God is He who Heareth, Knoweth.

God will not punish you for a mistake in your oaths; but He will punish you for that which your hearts have done. God is Gracious, Merciful.

To God belong the secret things of the heavens and the earth; unto Him all things return; worship Him then and put your trust in Him; Thy Lord is not regardless of thy doings.

Whatever is in the heaven and the earth—is God's; and whether you bring forth to light what is in your minds, or conceal the same God will surely reckon with you for it.

They say the Merciful hath begotten issue. Now have ye uttered an impious thing; it wanteth little but on occasion thereof, the heavens be rent, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in fragments, for that they attribute a son to the God of Mercy, when it beseemeth not the All-merciful to beget children. Verily, there is none in heaven and in earth but shall approach the Merciful as his servant.

O men! a parable is set forth to you, wherefore hearken unto it. Verily, they on whom ye call beside God, cannot create a fly though they assemble for it; and if the fly carry off aught from them, they cannot take it away from it! weak the suppliant and the supplicated! Unworthy the estimate they form of God! for God is right Powerful, Mighty.

He calleth upon that beside God which can neither hurt him nor profit him. This same is the far-gone error! He calleth on him who would sooner hurt than profit him. Surely, bad the lord, and, surely, bad the vassal!

Take not yourselves two gods,—for He is one God! Me, therefore yea, me revere! All in the Heavens and in Earth is His! His due unceasing service! Will ye then fear any other than God!

CREATION.

It is God who hath created the heavens without pillars thou canst behold; then ascended He His throne, and to the sun and moon assigned He laws, each travelleth to its appointed goal. He ordereth all things. He maketh His signs clear that ye may have firm faith in a meeting with your Lord.

He hath created the heavens and the earth to set forth his truth; high let Him be exalted above the gods they join with Him

Do ye, indeed, disbelieve in Him who in two days, created the earth? and do ye assign unto him peers! The Lord of the worlds is He.

And He hath placed on the earth the firm mountains which above it tower; and He hath blessed it and distributed food throughout for the cravings of all alike, in four days.

Then applied He himself unto the heaven which was then but smoke, and to it and the earth did He say: "Come ye, whether in obedience or against your will;" and they both replied: "We come, obedient."

Whatsoever is in heavens and earth singeth praise unto God. He is Mighty and Wise. His is the Kingdom of heaven and earth. He giveth life and he putteth to death, and He is almighty. He is the first and the last; the manifest and the hidden; and He knoweth all things;—it is He who hath created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then ascended the throne. He knoweth that which entereth the earth and that which issueth out of the same, and that which descendeth from heaven and which ascendeth thereto, and He is with you, wheresoever ye may be; for God seeth that which ye do. His is the Kingdom of heaven and earth and unto God all things return. He causeth the night to succeed the day, and He causeth the day to succeed the night; and He knoweth the innermost parts of men's hearts.

Your God is one God: there is no God but He, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Now in the creation of heaven and in the alternation of night and day, and in ship which saileth on the sea laden with what is useful to man; and in the rain which God sendeth down from heaven, quickening again the dead earth, and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface; and in change of the winds, and the clouds balanced between the heaven and the earth;—are signs for those who understand; yet some men take idols beside God, and love them with the love due to God.

Were they created by nothing? or are they the creators of themselves? created they the Heavens and Earth? Nay, rather, they have no faith. Hold they thy Lord's treasures? Bear they the rule supreme?

PARENTS.

The Lord hath ordained that ye worship none but Him, and that ye show kindness to your parents, whether one or both of them attain to old age with thee: and say not to them "Fie?" neither reproach them, but with respectful speech address them both, deferring humbly to them out of tenderness; and say,

“ Lord have compassion on them both, even as they reared me when I was a little one !”

Moreover We have enjoined on man to show kindness unto his parents. With pain his mother beareth him ; with pain she bringeth him forth ; and his bearing and his weaning are thirty months.

But if they importune thee to join that with me of which thou has no knowledge, obey them not : comport thyself towards them in this world as is meet and right ; but follow the way of him who turneth to me. Unto me shall ye return at last, and then will I tell you of your doings.

CHILDREN.

God's, the Kingdom of the heavens and of the earth!. He createth what He will! and He giveth daughters to whom He will, and sons to whom He will ; or he giveth them children of both sexes, and He maketh whom he will to be childless ; for He is Wise and Powerful.

Wealth and children are the adornment of this present life, but good works, which are lasting, are better in the sight of thy Lord as to recompense, and better as to hope.

ORPHANS.

Give unto orphans their property ; substitute not worthless things of your own for their valuable ones ; and devour not their substance, for this is a great sin.

And they will also enquire of the concerning orphans. Say, “ Fair dealing with them is best. But if ye intermeddle with the management of what belongs to them, do them no wrong, for they are your brethren ; God knoweth the corrupt dealer from the righteous one ; and, if God please. He can indeed afflict* you and touch not substance of the orphan, unless in an upright way, till he attain his age of strength : and perform your covenant ; verily the covenant shall be enquired of.

PIETY.

There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or towards the West ; but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Scriptures ; who, for the love of God, disburseth his wealth to his kindred and to the orphans and

* By the curse which shall certainly bring to nothing what the orphans shall have been robbed of.

the needy and the way-farer, and to those who ask and for ransoms, who observeth prayer and payeth the legal alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and who are patient under ills and hardships and in times of trouble; these are they who are just and pious, these are they who fear the Lord.

MORAL INJUNCTIONS.

Verily God enjoineth justice and the doing of good, and gifts to kindred; and He forbiddeth wickedness and iniquity, and oppression: He warneth you that haply ye may be mindful.

O my son! observe prayer, and command the right and forbid the wrong, and be patient under whatever shall betide thee: for this is a bounden duty.

And distort not thy face at men: nor walk thou loftily on the earth; for God loveth no arrogant vain-glorious person but let thy pace be middling; and lower thy voice; for the least pleasing of voices is surely the voice of asses.

And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge; because the hearing and the heart—each of these shall be enquired of.

Say not thou of a thing, I will surely do it to-morrow, unless thou add "if God please."

Good and evil* shall not be held equal. Turn away evil by what is better, and lo! he between whom and thyself was enmity, shall be as though he were a firm friend. But none attain to this save men steadfast in patience, and none attain to it except the most highly favoured.

If ye make reprisals, then make them to the same extent that you were injured: but if ye can endure patiently, best will it be for the patiently enduring.

If ye are greeted with a greeting, then greet ye with a better greeting, or at least return it; God taketh count of all things.

Have nought to do with adultery, for it is a foul thing and an evil way.

Speak unto the believers that they restrain their eyes and observe continence. Thus will they be more pure. God is well aware of what they do. Walk not proudly on the earth, for thou canst not cleave the earth, neither canst thou equal the mountains

* Seek again him who drives you away; give to him who takes away from you; pardon him who injures you, for God loveth that you should cast into the depth of your souls, the roots of His perfections.—Zamakhshari Kashshaf, p. 280.

in stature. All this is evil and abominable in the sight of thy Lord.

Be patient with those who call upon the Lord at morn and even, seeking his face and let not thine eyes be turned away from them in quest of the pomp of this life; neither obey him whose heart we have caused to neglect the remembrance of Us, and who followeth his lusts and leaveth the truth behind him.

Come, I will rehearse what your Lord hath made binding upon you: that ye assign not ought to Him as partner; that ye be good to your parents, and that ye slay not your children, because of poverty; for them and for you will we provide; that you come not near to sins open or secret, and that ye slay not one whom God hath forbidden you, unless for a just cause. This hath He enjoined on you, to the intent that ye may understand.

O believers! surely wine and games of chance and statues and the divining arrows are an abomination of Satan's work! Avoid them that ye may prosper. Satan seeketh to sow hatred and strife among you, by wine and games of chance, and to turn you aside from the remembrance of God and prayer; will ye not, therefore, abstain from them? Obey God, and obey the Apostle, and be upon your guard.

O children of Adam! wear your decent apparel at every time of worship, and eat ye and drink; but be not guilty of excess, for He loveth not those who are guilty of excess.

O, ye, who believe! stand fast to justice when ye bear witness before God, though it be against yourselves or your parents, or your kindred, whether the party be rich or whether he be poor. God is more worthy than both; therefore follow not your own lusts in bearing testimony, lest ye swerve from truth: and if ye wrest your testimony or decline giving it, God verily is aware of what ye do.

Verily God enjoineth you to give back your trusts to their owners and when ye judge between men, to judge with fairness. Excellent is the practice to which God exorteth you.

And clothe not the truth with falsehood, and hide not the truth when ye know it.

And seek help with patience and prayer: a hard duty indeed is this, but not to the humble.

And vie in haste for pardon from your Lord, and a Paradise, vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing, who give alms in prosperity and adversity; who bridle their anger, and forgive men; for God loveth the beneficent.

SLANDERERS—BACKBITERS.

Woe to every slanderer and backbiter ! Who amasseth wealth, and stereth it against the future ! He thinketh surely that his wealth shall abide with him for ever. Nay ; for verily he shall be flung into the crushing Alhotoma ; And who shall teach thee what the crushing Hotoma ? It is God's kindled fire which shall mount above the hearts of the damned ; it shall verily rise above them like unto an arched vault, on columns of vast extent.

O believers ! let not men laugh men to scorn who haply may be better than themselves ; neither let women laugh women to scorn who may haply be better than themselves ! Neither defame one another, nor call one another by nicknames.

O believers ! avoid frequent suspicions, for some suspicions are a crime ; and pry not ; neither let one of you traduce another in his absence. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother ? Surely ye would loathe it. And fear ye God for God is ready to turn and Merciful.

O men ! Verily we have created you of a male and a female ; and we have divided you into nations and tribes that ye might have knowledge one of another. Truly, the most honourable of you, in the sight of God is the most pious of you. Verily God is Knowing, Cognizant.

 MEASURE (should be just.)

Woe unto those who stint the measure or weight ! Who when they take by measure from others, exact the full ; but when they mete out or weigh to them minish ! What ! have they no thought that they shall be raised again ? For the Great Day, the Day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the Worlds.

The Lord of mercy hath taught (his servant) the Koran, hath created man, and taught him articulate speech. The sun and the moon have each their times, and the plants and the trees bend in adoration. And the Heaven hath He reared it up on high, and hath appointed a balance ; that in the balance ye should not transgress ; weigh, therefore, with fairness, and scant not the balance.

 PRAYER.

Recite that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Koran, and be constant in prayer, for prayer restraineth from the filthy and the blame-worthy, and surely is the remembering of God a most important duty.

Be ye constant in prayer, and give alms, and whatsoever good

ye have done and sent before for your souls, ye shall find it with God; for of a surety, God seeth that which ye do.

To God belongeth both the East and the West, therefore, whithersoever you turn yourselves to pray, there is God: for He is the Omnipresent, the Omniscient.

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

Enjoin prayer on thy family, and do thou preserve therein.

Glorify God therefore when ye reach the evening, and when ye rise at morn: and to Him be praise in the Heavens and on the Earth; and at sunset, and when ye rest at noon.

What thinkest thou of him who denieth the future judgment as a lie? He it is who thrusteth away the orphan, and stirreth not others up to feed the poor. Woe to those who pray, but in their prayer are careless; Who make a show of devotion, but refuse help to the poor.

And think within thine own self on God, with lowliness and with fear and without loud spoken words, and at even and at morn; and be not one of the heedless.

ALMS.

They who give their substance in alms, by night and day, in private and public, shall have their reward with their Lord; no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they be put to grief.

And whatsoever ye shall give, and whatsoever ye shall vow, of a truth, God knoweth it, but they who act unjustly shall have no helpers. Give ye your alms openly? it is well. Do ye conceal them and give them to the poor? this, too, is well, and will advantage you, and cleanse you of your sins. God is cognizant of your actions.

Fear God, then, with all your might, and hear and obey, and give alms for your own weal; for such as are saved from their own greed, shall prosper.

Whatsoever ye put out at usury, to increase with the substance of others, shall have no increase from God; but whatsoever ye shall give in alms, as seeking the face of God, shall be doubled unto you.

The likeness of those who expend their wealth for the cause of God, is, that of a grain of corn which produceth seven ears, and in each ear a hundred grains; and God will multiply to whom He pleaseth: God is Liberal and Wise.

O ye who believe! Make not your alms void by reproaches and injury; like him who spendeth his substance to be seen of men, and believeth not in God and in the latter day.

A kind speech and forgiveness is better than alms followed by injury. God is Rich and Clement.

KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY (recommended.)

Be good unto parents, and to kindred, and to orphans, and to the poor, and to a neighbour, whether kinsman or new-comer, and to a fellow-traveller and to the way-farer; and to the slaves which your right hands hold.

INGRATITUDE (of man to God.)

It is God who hath created the Heavens and the Earth, and sendeth down water from the Heaven, and so bringeth forth the fruits for your food. And He hath subjected to you the ships, so that by His command, they pass through the sea; and He hath subjected the rivers to you: and He hath subjected to you the sun and the moon in their constant courses; and He hath subjected the day and the night to you: of every thing which ye ask Him, giveth He to you; and if ye would reckon up the favours of God, ye cannot count them: surely man is unjust, ungrateful.

And truly the Lord is full of goodness towards men; but most of them are not thankful.

By the snorting chargers! And the war-horses that dash of sparks of fire! And those that rush to the attack at morn! And stir therein the dust aloft! And cleave there in their midway through a host! Truly man to his Lord ungrateful is, and of this he himself is a witness: and truly he is keen in the love of this world's good; Ah! wotteth he not that which is in the grave shall be laid bare and that which is in men's hearts shall be brought forth? Verily, their Lord shall, on that day, be informed concerning them.

THE KORAN.

Blessed be He who hath sent down Al Forkan (the Illuminator) unto his servant, that unto all creatures he may be a warner. His—the Kingdom of the Heavens and of the Earth! No son hath He begotten! No partner hath He in His empire! All things hath He created, and, decreeing, hath He decreed their destinies!

By the star when it setteth, your Companion (Mohammad),

erretth not, nor is he led astray ; neither doth he speak of his own will. The Koran is no other than a Revelation revealed to him ; One mighty in power endued with wisdom taught it him.

What think ye? the fire which ye strike, do you produce the tree whence ye obtain the same, or are we the producers thereof? We have ordained the same for an admonition, and an advantage to the wayfarers of the desert. Wherefore praise the name of thy Lord, the great God, Moreover, I swear by the setting of the stars, (and it is a great oath, if ye knew it) that this is the honourable Koran, the original of which is written in the preserved Book: let none touch it but the purified* it is a revelation from the Lord of all creatures.

Cannot they consider the Koran? Were it from any other than God, they would surely have found in it contradictions.

O men! now hath a warning come to you from your Lord, and a medicine for what is in your breasts, and a guidance and a mercy to-believers. Say: through the grace of God and His mercy! and in this therefore let them rejoice: better is this than all ye amass.

And when the Koran is read then listen ye to it and keep silence that haply ye may obtain mercy.

MOHAMMAD (PEACE BE ON HIM.)

O Thou, enwrapped in thy mantle! Arise and warn! Thy Lord—magnify Him! Thy raiment purify it! The abomination—fly it! And bestow not favours that thou mayest receive again with increase; and for thy Lord wait thou patiently.

By the noon-day brightness, and by the night when it darkeneth, Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither hath He been displeased. Be assured the future shall be better for thee than the past, and the Lord shall give thee a reward wherewith thou shalt be content. Did He not find thee an orphan and gave thee a home? And found thee erring and guided thee, and found thee needy and enriched thee. Therefore oppress not the orphan neither repulse the begger but declare the goodness of thy Lord.

Recite, thou, in the name of thy Lord, who created man from nought but congealed blood. Recite! for thy Lord is beneficent. It is He who hath taught the use of the pen; hath taught man what he knoweth not.

We have not sent thee otherwise than as a mercy to all creatures.

* Purity both of mind and body being requisite in him who should use this book with the respect he ought, and hopes to edify by it.

THE SOUL.

By the sun in his noon-day 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 heaven, and by Him who built it! By the earth, and by Him who spread it forth!

By the Soul and Him who deftly fashioned it endowing it with knowledge to distinguish and power to choose, righteousness, or iniquity; blessed is he who hath preserved it pure, and lost is he who hath defiled it.

Oh, thou soul which art at rest, return to thy Lord, pleased, and pleasing Him: enter thou among my servants, and enter thou my Paradise.

But as to him who shall have feared the majesty of his Lord and shall have refrained his soul from lust, verily, Paradise—that, shall be his dwelling—place.

HAPPINESS AND MISERY (FOR WHOM.)

By the night when she spreadeth her veil; By the day when she brightly shineth; By Him who created the male and female; of a truth at different aims do ye aim: But as for him who giveth alms and feareth God, and yieldeth assent unto the Good: unto him will We make easy the path to happiness; but as for him who is covetous and bent upon riches, and who calleth the Good, a lie, unto him will We make easy the path of misery.

RESURRECTION.

Doth not man perceive that we have created him of the moist germs of life? Yet lo! is he an open caviller. And he meeteth us with arguments, and forgetteth his creation: "Who," saith he, "shall give life to bones when they are rotten?" say: He shall give life to them who gave them being at first, for in all creation is he skilled: Who even out of the green tree hath given you fire, and lo! ye kindle flame from it. What! must not He who hath created the Heavens and the Earth be mighty enough to create your likes? Yes: and He is the skilful creator. His command when willeth aught, is but to say to it, Be, and It Is.

And among His signs is this that thou seest the earth drooping: but, when We send down the rain upon it, it is stirred and swelleth; Verily He who giveth it life, will surely give life to the dead, for His might extendeth over all, things.

JUDGMENT DAY.

On that day (the last) there shall be a blast upon the trumpet, and all that are on earth shall be terror-stricken, save him whom God pleaseth to deliver ; and all shall come unto him as suppliants.

And thou shalt see the mountains, which thou thinkest so firm, dissolve away like unto the passing of a cloud. 'Tis the work of God, who ordereth all things. Of all that ye do, He is well aware.

When the Earth with her quaking shall tremble, and the Earth shall cast forth her burdens. And man shall say, "What aileth her?" On that day shall she unfold her tidings, for verily, thy Lord shall have inspired her. On that day shall men come forward in ranks to behold their works : and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil shall behold the same.

When the heavens shall cleave asunder, and when the stars shall be scattered, and when the oceans shall be commingled, and when the graves shall be turned up-side down, each soul shall behold its earliest and its latest deeds.

But when one blast shall be blown on the trumpet, and the earth and the mountains shall be upheaved, and shall both be crushed into dust at a single crushing, on that day the woe that must come suddenly shall suddenly come, and the heaven shall cleave asunder, for on that day it shall be fragile ; on that day ye shall be brought before Him, nor shall any of your hidden deeds remain concealed.

When the sun shall be folded up, and when the stars shall fall, and when the mountains shall be made to pass away, and when the she-camels shall be abandoned, and when the wild beasts shall be gathered together,* and when the seas shall boil, and when souls shall be again united to their bodies, and when the female child that had been buried alive shall be asked, for what crime was she put to death, and when the leaves of the Book shall be laid open, and when the Heaven shall be stripped away, and when Hell shall be made to blaze, and when Paradise shall be brought near, then shall every soul know what it hath wrought.

 THE REWARD OF BELIEVERS.

But they who believe and work righteousness, shall their Lord direct aright because of their faith. Rivers shall flow at their feet in gardens of delight : their cry therein, "Glory be to

For the Mohammadans believe that not only mankind, but irrational animals also, shall be judged on that tremendous day, when the unarmed cattle shall take vengeance on the horned, till entire satisfaction shall be given to the injured.

Thee O God!" and their salutation therein, "Peace!" And the close of their cry, "Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!"

Happy now the believers, who humble themselves in their prayer, and who keep aloof from vain discourse, and who are doers of almsdeeds, and who restrain their appetites, and who tend well their trusts and their covenants, and who keep themselves strictly to their prayers: these shall be inheriters, who shall inherit the Paradise, to abide therein for ever.

And the servants of the God of Mercy are they who walk upon the earth meekly; and when the ignorant address them, they reply, "Peace!" They that pass the night in the worship of their Lord prostrate and standing:—and that say, "O our Lord! turn away from us the torment of Hell, for its torment is endless: it is indeed an ill abode and resting-place! Those who when they spend are neither lavish nor niggard, but keep the mean:—Those who call on no other gods with God, nor slay whom God hath forbidden to be slain, except for a just cause, and who commit no fornication (for he who doeth this shall be involved in sin: doubled to him shall be the torment on the day of resurrection; and in it shall he remain, disgraced, for ever:—save those who shall repent and believe and do righteous works—for them God will change their evil things into good things, for God is gracious and merciful—and whoso repenteth and doeth what is right, he turneth unto God with a true repentance) they who bear not witness to what is false, and when they pass by frivolous sport, pass on with dignity:—and they who when monished by the signs of their Lord, fall not down thereat, as if deaf and blind:—And who say "O our Lord! give us in our wives and offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us examples unto the pious": These shall be rewarded with the High Places of Paradise for their steadfast endurance, and they shall meet therein with—Welcome and Salutation:—For ever therein a fair Abode and Resting-place.

Verily amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell. In the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King.

OPINIONS OF CHRISTIAN WRITERS ABOUT THE KORAN.

"That part of Islam * * * which most distinctly reveals the mind of its author is also its most complete and its most shining part—We mean the ethics of the Koran. They are not found, any more than the other laws, brought together in one, or two, or three Surats, but "like golden threads," they are woven into the huge fabric of the religious constitution of Mohammad. Injustice, falsehood, pride, revengefulness, calumny, mockery, avarice, prodigality, debauchery, mistrust, and suspicion are inveighed against as ungodly and wicked; while benevolence, liberality, modesty, forbearance, patience, and endurance, frugality, sincerity, straight-

forwardness, decency, love of peace and truth, and above all, trusting in one God, and submitting to His will, are considered as the pillars of true piety, and the principal signs of a true believer."—Chamber's Cyclopaedia, Vol. VI.

"The morality of the Koran has not been less unjustly attacked than its dogmas. It condemns debauchery and excesses of every kind, usury, avarice and pride, slander and calumny, covetousness, hypocrisy, the thirsting after worldly goods; it ordains on the contrary, alms-giving, filial piety, gratitude towards God, fidelity to engagements, justice, specially towards orphans and without respect of persons, chastity and decency even in words, the ransoming of captives, patience, submission, benevolence, forgiveness of injuries, the returning of good for evil, and the walking in the path of virtue not with the view of obtaining the approbation of the world, but for being acceptable to God."—J. Davenport.

'By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammad is a threefold founder —'of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion.' Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of laws, a book of common prayer, and a Bible in one, and is revered to this day by a sixth of the whole human race as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom, and of truth. It is one miracle claimed by Mohammad—his 'standing Miracle,' he called it; and a miracle indeed it is.' Bosworth Smith, Mohammad p. 343.

'The language of the Koran is considered the purest Arabic, and contains such charms of style and poetic beauties, that it remains inimitable. Its moral precepts are pure. A man who should observe them strictly, would lead a virtuous life.—The Popular Encyclopedia, Division VII, p. 326.

"The law of Islam contains admirable moral precepts, and, what is more, succeeds in bringing them into practice and powerfully supporting their observance."—The Herbert Lectures.

'Within a confined circle the code of the Koran makes doubtless a deeper impression than has been made on Christianity by the code of the Bible.'—Dean Stanely, Eastern Church, p. 279.

'The Koran contains pure, elevated and benignant precepts.'—W. Irving. Mohammad, p. 208.

"Among many excellencies of which the Koran may justly boast are two eminently conspicuous; the one being the tone of awe and reverence which it always observes when speaking of, or referring to, the Deity, to whom it never attributes human frailties and passions; the other the total absence throughout of all impure, immoral, and indecent ideas, expressions, narratives, &c., blemishes, which, it is much to be regretted, are of too frequent occurrence in the Jewish Scriptures. So exempt, indeed, is the Koran from these undeniable defects, that it needs not the slightest castigation, and may be read, from beginning to end, without causing a blush to suffuse the cheek of modesty itself."—J. Davenport.

"It (the Koran) is most unsparing in its condemnation of envy, hypocrisy, hatred, pride, vain-glory, uncharitable judgments, and such like, and as emphatic in insisting on the virtues of patience, gratitude, sincerity, and the fear of God." Rev. Professor Robertson.

'The contents of the different parts of the Koran are extremely varied. Many passages consist of theological and moral reflections. We are reminded of the greatness, the goodness, the righteousness of God, as manifested in Nature, in history, and in revelations through the prophets, especially through Mohammad, God is magnified as the One, the All-powerful. Idolatry, and all deifications of created beings, such as the worship of Christ, as the son of God, are unsparingly condemned.' Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol. XVI, p. 599.

"The Koran abounds with arguments drawn from Nature and Providence, with a view to prove the existence of God as the Supreme Ruler and enforce His sovereign claim on the obedience and gratitude of mankind. The retribution of good and evil in the world to come, the obligation to follow virtue and eschew vice the duty and happiness of the creature in worshipping and serving the Creator, and such like topics, are set forth in language of beauty and vigour, abounding often with real poetry. Thus, also, the reasonableness of the Resurrection is taught by many forcible considerations and especially by the analogy, so striking in southern climes, of the earth long dry and dead, quickened suddenly into exuberant life by the copious rain from heaven."—W. Muir.



THREE IN ONE AND ONE IN THREE!

It appears, after carefully deep considering the question, that there are three great principles upon which the good and evil of a religion as well as the hope of salvation depend.

1. To understand the existence and attributes of the Almighty.
2. To seek the way to salvation and a happy life in the other world.
3. After distinguishing between right and wrong to practice the former and abandon the latter.

These are the three principles underlie every system of religion; everything else is held to be subordinate to them, the religion which rests on the firm basis of these principles is in every way complete in itself while the smallest defects in any of these tenets renders a religion defective or the religion which departs from them is held to be fabulous. If one should with a due attention and with but the least religious intolerance test Christianity by the principles laid down he will find that there is nothing reasonable in it, and that it rests on a foundation which is altogether unstable.

As regards the first principle it has been held since the creation of the world alike by prophets and sages, philosophers and others that there is but one true God who has no second or equal to vie with Him, but the Christians believe in three gods, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which they call the Trinity, declaring that the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are "one in three and three in one," which is not only logically incomprehensible but traditionally a mere figment. They, however, then say that the personages perform separate functions.

Thus, the Father they say, creates and preserves the world. The son has to redeem mankind by sacrificing himself for their sins; while the Holy Ghost has but to strengthen the faith of the believer and to confirm the wavers.

No man in his senses can believe that all the three acts cannot be performed without the existence of three gods, and that man cannot be redeemed unless one of the gods be crucified for his salvation. Besides, if Jesus Christ combined the principle of divinity and three gods were but one, why is the principle of humanity absent in the case of the Father and of the Holy Ghost? On the other hand, divinity is capable of assuming a human form, it is clear enough that anything entering a bounded body has become finite. This is incredible as divinity. This passes our belief as the possibility of the divine being assuming a mortal frame has by no means been demonstrated. Nor is this all. When Jesus Christ remained in the womb of the Holy Mary and was born like a child it is possible that the Father and the Holy Ghost may have likewise remained there with him, for they were three in one and one in three. Under these circumstances all the three Gods must be called Fathers as well as Sons themselves. If the Father and the Holy Ghost have not been in the womb and have not been brought forth like Jesus then both of them are separate and to call them *three in one* is quite unreasonable and absurd.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.

Men, generally speaking, know what is right, but they yield to the temptation to do wrong. What they require is a motive powerful enough to enable them to resist.

There are several considerations prompting to virtuous conduct. A desire to please parents and other relations often exercises a beneficial influence; the ruinous consequence of immorality are another check; the still small voice of conscience, until it is silenced by repeated neglect, protests against a life of sin. But all these motives, while valuable in their place, are of themselves insufficient. There are some voices so common in India, that they meet with no reprobation from public opinion. There is also the hope of concealment,—“No eye shall see me.” Besides, sensual indulgence at least renders a man incapable of resistance. He will pursue his downward course in spite of every argument or entreaty.

Of all the motives which can be brought to bear upon man, religion is the highest and most enduring. Other considerations affect time, this reaches to eternity. To realize continually the presence of God, the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, is a most powerful safeguard against sin. We can go to him in all our trials and temptations; we can hear him saying to us, “thou art ever with me.” I will never leave thee; continue then in my love.”

Religion is all-important, because earthly blessings even if secured, terminate with the present life. An end will come, youth and beauty, mirth and joy, fame and honor, wealth and pomp, life and health, time and opportunity, all must pass away, and “what then?”

After the joy of earth,
After its songs of mirth,
After its hours of light,
After its dreams so bright,
What then?

Only an empty name;
Only a weary frame;
Only a ceaseless smart;
Only an aching heart.

After this empty name,
After this weary frame,
After this conscious smart,
After this aching heart. What then?

Only a sad farewell
To a world loved too well,
Only a silent bed,
With the forgotten dead

After this sad farewell
To a world loved too well,
After this silent bed
With the forgotten dead,

What then?

Oh! then, the judgment throne!
Oh! then, the last hope gone!
Oh then, the day of wrath!
Oh! then, the second death.

Many persons are absorbed with the present, and take no thoughts of God, of death and a future state may be distasteful, and the world may be considered sufficient to satisfy the desires. But a change will take place in all. The dark clouds of affliction will overcast the sky; wealth may take to itself wings and fly away; the coveted office may not be gained; health, the absence of which embitters every earthly pleasure, may be broken; loved ones may be removed by death, and, sooner or later the inexorable summons will reach ourselves.

Under trials like the above, our dearest earthly friends will prove “miserable comforters, physicians of no value.” But true religion can support us under the most trying circumstances, and cast a gleam of light across the dark river of death.

Seek Religion: Ponder the solemn question made by the great Teacher:—“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.