

THE CONTRAST
BETWEEN
CHRISTIANITY & MUHAMMADANISM

By
REV. GODFREY DALE, M.A.

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AND MUHAMMADANISM



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AND MUHAMMADANISM

Four Lectures Delivered in Christ
Church Cathedral, Zanzibar

BY

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IT seemed well to me these last few months to try and interest the European residents in Zanzibar by causing a series of lectures to be given in the Cathedral on the Sunday mornings, separate from the ordinary Sunday services and dealing with subjects which are often freely discussed, on which the Church has a right to be heard.

The first course of lectures was given by Canon Dale, and it was followed by a second course on "The Modern Criticism of the Bible," given by Rev. F. Weston, the Chancellor of the Cathedral.

I have reason for knowing that these lectures were appreciated by those who heard them, and we may be able to continue similar courses at intervals from time to time.

As Canon Dale's lectures seemed to me likely to be useful to others beside ourselves who live and work in Muhammadan lands, I asked him to allow them to be printed. When Christians, whether missionaries or not, first come into contact with a great religion like Muhammadanism, and find it zealously followed by multitudes of men, they often feel the want of some guide as to the real truth about that religion, and as to the relation in which it stands to Christianity. We believe that our holy religion is the true faith—not one among many religions all equally good; but the one and only final and complete revelation made known to man by Almighty God in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. But we also need to understand the religion which opposes

it, how far it is true, how far and in what particulars it falls short or is contrary to the truth.

I think that these lectures may help us to understand better what that relationship is; and at the same time to remind us of the work which God has given us to do, namely, to make all men see that Jesus lives.

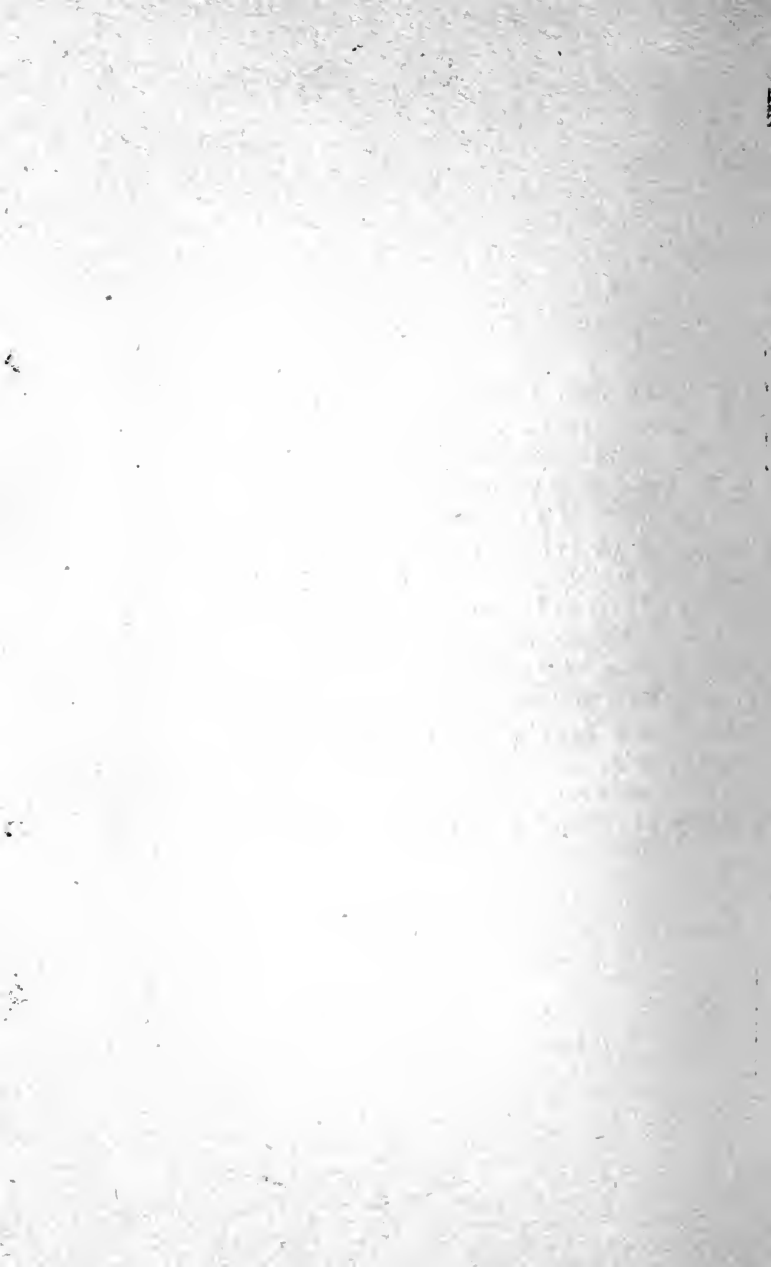
✠ J. ZANZIBAR.

MKUNAZINI, *April 26, 1904.*

PREFACE

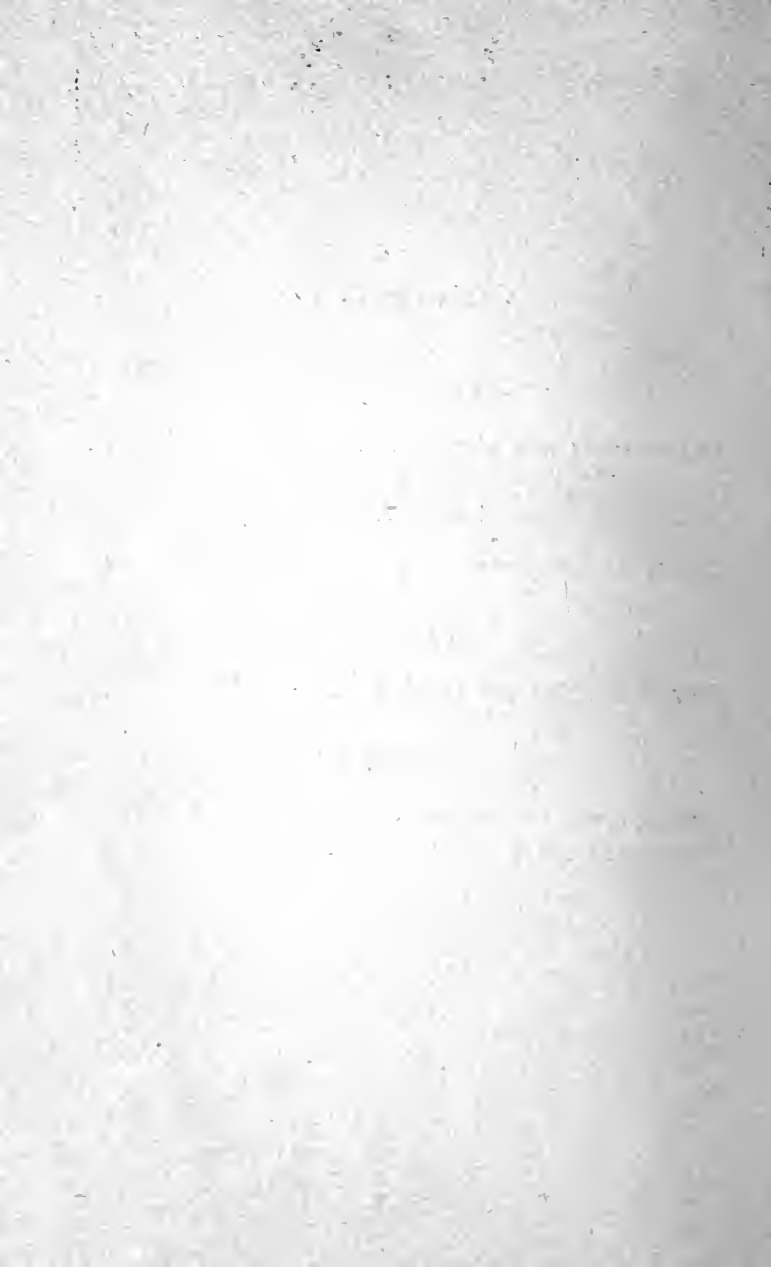
THESE Four Lectures on "The Contrast between Christianity and Muhammadanism" were delivered to a European congregation in the Cathedral in Zanzibar on the Sundays in September, 1903. They lay no claim to originality. I have used freely the translations of the *Qur'an* by Palmer, Rodwell and Sale. I have also used very freely Canon Sell's *Faith of Islam*, Dr. J. M. Arnold's *Islam and Christianity*, and Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*. But the conclusions to which these and other books have led me have been verified by constant discussions with Muhammadans, by contact with Muhammadanism in Zanzibar and East Africa, by some study of the *Qur'an* in the original, and by some knowledge of Muhammadanism as it is popularly believed and practised in Zanzibar at the present time.

G. D.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
LECTURE I	
CHRISTIANITY AND MUHAMMADANISM . . .	II
LECTURE II	
CHRIST AND MUHAMMAD	23
LECTURE III	
THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN	37
LECTURE IV	
THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM AND THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY	50



LECTURE I

Christianity and Muhammadanism

IT has recently been pointed out¹ that no man can approach the consideration of such a subject as religion, (especially a religion other than his own), with a mind entirely free from bias or prepossessions of some sort or other. Every one has been born of particular parents, in a particular country, at a particular time; and has been brought up under particular circumstances, in a particular social, moral and intellectual atmosphere; and although he is a free agent, yet, in spite of this freedom, his character has been coloured by his antecedents and environment, and he looks out upon the world around him, or upon any particular subject in which he happens to be interested, with coloured spectacles. He brings something with him from which he cannot free himself. Yet we believe that we are capable of forming correct moral judgments, that we are capable of distinguishing the moral worth of what is presented to us, and that there is something in man which may respond to all that is good and pure and holy and true, and that "we needs must love the highest *when we see it!*" The Christian believes more than this. He believes that by the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God, we are capable of discerning the spirits whether they be of God, and that we have a capacity for proving all things. I propose therefore to deal with Christianity and Muhammadanism by way of contrast,

¹ *Reason and Revelation*, by J. R. Illingworth.

drawing as far as possible from the most original sources, the Bible and the Qur'an, and relying on the capacity of *moral selection* resident in every man to draw the practical conclusions from such a contrast.

I propose to deal first with the contrast between the fundamental doctrines of the two Faiths in order to clear the ground; then with the contrast between the lives of the Founders of the two Faiths, then with the contrast between the Gospel and the Qur'an, the books of the two Faiths, and then with the contrast between the spirit of the two religions. And I hope to deal with these four subjects in the spirit which "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth," diligently strives to see good in everything, recognizes that there is often a "soul of goodness in things evil," is ready to make reasonable allowances for the imperfection that is inherent in all that is human, and recognizing its own imperfections, limitations, and prepossessions when approaching such a subject, earnestly desires the assistance of that Holy Spirit who will guide us, if we will, into all the Truth.

The two leading principles of Muhammadanism are expressed in the well-known creed: There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God. And its principal article of faith is the Unity of God. There is no finer description of what this belief in the Unity of God implies than the celebrated verse of the "Throne" in the second chapter of the Qur'an.¹ Tradition says that Muhammad attached a special blessing to its recitation by a Muhammadan at the close of every prayer. Nothing, he said, could prevent such a man from entering Paradise. It is as follows:—

"God! there is no God but He, The Living, The Abiding. Neither slumber seizeth Him, nor sleep; To Him belongeth whatsoever is in Heaven and in Earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him, save by His permission. He knoweth what hath been before

¹ Chap. ii. v. 56.

them and what shall be after them ; Yet nought of His knowledge do they comprehend, save what He willeth. His throne reacheth over the heavens and the earth, and the upholding of both burdeneth Him not, and He is the High and the Great.”

Now compare this with the following passage of Isaiah¹ : “ Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard ? The Everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary ! there is no searching of His Understanding.”

And the following passage from the Book of Job² : “ He closeth in the face of His Throne, and spreadeth the cloud upon it. He hath described a boundary upon the face of the waters, unto the confines of light and darkness. The pillars of the heaven tremble and are astonished at His rebuke. He stirreth up the sea with His power. By His spirit the Heavens are garnished ; Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways ; and how small a whisper do we hear of Him ! But the thunder of His Power who can understand ? ”

I have quoted these two passages from the Old Testament in comparison with the passage from the Qur'an for a deliberate purpose.

In these wonderful descriptions of the Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Everlasting God, we see the principal points of agreement between the two Faiths. But I wish to point out that just where Muhammadanism is at its best, viz. : in the vividness of its realization of the Omnipotence and Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, it is equalled, and I think surpassed, by the very books which in the eyes of the Muhammadans have been practically supplanted by the Qur'an. These truths had already been stated and revealed in the Old Testament in the noblest poetry in the world.

So far then there is agreement. Christian and Muhammadan alike believe in an Eternal, Omnipresent, Omnis-

¹ Is. xl., cf. the whole chapter.

² Job xxvi. 9, etc.

cient, and Omnipotent God : the Creator and Upholder of all things visible and invisible.

There is still further agreement, though this additional agreement has, it seems to me, been somewhat unfairly slurred over in the heat of argument.

It is sometimes stated that the God whom Muhammadans worship is conceived of as a God of power only. From this it might be inferred that the ideas of gentleness and loving-kindness are almost entirely absent from the minds of the average Muhammadan ; but they are certainly not absent from the Qur'an. Every Muhammadan who says his rosary calls God "The Merciful," "The Compassionate," "The Forgiver," "The Clement," "The Guardian," "The Loving," "The Acceptor of Repentance," "The Pardoner," "The King," "The Patient."

In the description of God which we find in the Qur'an these gentler attributes are mentioned again and again. There is gentleness as well as strength. I think we Christians should make the most, not the least, of this point of contact. This combination of gentleness and strength is one of the characteristics of the Saviour of mankind. We deprive ourselves of a very powerful argument by ignoring or minimizing the gentle side of the Being of God as described in the Qur'an. Muhammad, we are told, was never tired of telling his followers that the love of God for man was more tender than that of a mother bird for its young.

Still, although there is this recognition of the loving-kindness of God, it is true to say generally that in the mind of the Christian the predominating thought is that of the Love of God, while the predominating thought in the mind of the Muhammadan is that of the power of God, and some of the great differences in the character formed by the two religions, when men live up to them, is due to this difference. You may read through the hundred Names of God recognized by the Muhammadan, but you will not find the Name Father. The Muhammadan call to prayer is "God is Great." If there were

a similar Christian call to prayer it would be "God is Love."

But it is when we approach the second article of the Christian Creed ("And in Jesus Christ," etc.), that the vital difference begins to appear. But even here it is not always recognized or known how much there is in common between the Christian and Muhammadan creed. The Muhammadans believe that our Lord was born of a Virgin ¹ by the creative power of God, without the intervention of a human father. It is true that when in His cradle our Lord is intentionally represented as calling Himself the Servant of God,² but He is also called the Prophet of God³ the Word of God, the Spirit of God,⁴ and the Messiah.⁵

He is illustrious in this world as a prophet, in the next world as an intercessor. He was given the Gospel by God, that is to say, He was given a book *already written*, the contents of which He taught to others. He performed miracles,⁶ (unlike Muhammad, who says that he himself performed no miracle save the miracle of the Qur'an). He healed the blind and the leper and raised the dead. He was strengthened⁷ by the Holy Spirit of God (the Angel Gabriel is meant). All Moslem divines admit that Jesus saw no corruption and still lives with a human body in Paradise, having been translated. There are two traditions which seem to point to the belief that He alone of all the prophets is sinless.⁸ One tradition tells us that He and His Mother were specially guarded from the touch of Satan at their birth. Another that Muslims will seek an Intercessor at the last day.⁹ They will try Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and these will all remember their sins and refuse, but Moses will send them to Jesus the Servant of God,

¹ Virgin birth. Sura xix. 22-34.

² Servant of God. Sura xix.

³ Prophet. Sura xix. 31. Messenger of God. Sura iv. 169.

⁴ Spirit of God. Sura iv. 169. Word of God. Sura iv. 169.

⁵ Messiah. Sura iii. 40. ⁶ Miracles. Sura iii. 43-46.

⁷ Strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Sura ii. 81.

⁸ *Mishkat*, xxiii. ⁹ *Mishkat*, xii.

the Apostle of God, the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Though in the tradition Jesus sends them to Muhammad, there is no mention of the sins of Jesus, though of Muhammad Moses said "Go to Muhammad who is a servant whose sin God has forgiven first and last." Miraculously born, sinless, worker of mighty miracles, prophet of God, revealer of the Gospel, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, translated to Paradise, such is the Christ as described in the Qur'an. And in speaking with Muhammadans it is well to keep all this in mind, to make the most of these points of contact, and then from these to lead up to the points of difference. For differences there are, and differences which strike at the root ideas of Christianity, viz: The Eternal Sonship, the Incarnation, The Atonement, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection, Christ's Session at God's Right Hand, the Coming of the Holy Ghost, and consequently the Fatherhood of God and the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The Incarnation of the Word of God ¹; "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That is the Christian Faith.

Hear the Muhammadan version; I quote the Qur'an, Sura cxii. the chapter of Unity: Say, "He is God alone, God the Eternal, He begets not and is not begotten. Nor is there like unto Him any one." These words are held in particular veneration, and if a Christian enters into discussion with a Muhammadan he is certain to hear them. They occur in the daily prayers.

Sura iii. 51. The chapter of the Family of Imran. "Verily the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from earth, then He said to him 'BE' and 'He was.'" When it was urged that the Christian belief was in the Book given to the Christians, Muhammad replied in the same Sura v. 72. "They

¹ St. John I.

twist their tongue concerning the Book. They say it is from God, yet it is not from God and they utter a lie against God and they know that they do so. It becometh not a man that God should give him the Scriptures and the wisdom and the gifts of prophecy, and that then he should say to his followers, 'Be ye worshippers of me as well as of God.'"

In the Fifth Sura *v.* 19. "Infidels now are they who say 'Verily God is the Messiah, son of Mary.' Say! and who could ought obtain from God if He chose to destroy the Messiah."

Again, Sura xix. *v.* 35-36. "That is Jesus, the son of Mary, the Word of Truth, whereon ye do dispute. God could not take to Himself a son. Celebrated be His praise. When He decrees a matter He only says to it BE, and it is, and verily God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him; this is the right way."

Again, Sura ix. *v.* 30. "The Jews say that Ezra is the Son of God, and the Christians say that the Messiah is the Son of God, that is what they say with their mouths, imitating the saying of those which misbelieved before. God fight them! How they lie!"

I have no doubt myself that Muhammad entirely misconceived the nature of the Christian belief in the Incarnation. He took a carnal and material view of the Christian doctrine of the Sonship of Christ. But whatever view he took it is quite certain that every one who becomes a Muhammadan will be diligently taught that the doctrine which Christ declared was the rock on which He would build His Church is a lie.

Can Christian people then allow races, even if backward, to be misled by a faith which denies the central doctrine of the Christian religion?

At the close of these quotations, I merely add the words of St. John in his first Epistle, the Apostle who knew best the inner mind of his Master.

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his Only-Begotten Son into the

World that we might live through Him.”¹ “We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.”² “He that hath the Son of God hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”³

There is no possibility of compromise here and we must make no compromise.

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Qur’an states quite emphatically that God sent down the Law, the Psalms, and the Gospel, and yet it categorically denies that Christ was crucified, in spite of the prophecies in the Law and the Psalms and the messages of the Prophets, in spite of the obvious fact that it is the culminating point in the narrative of each of the four Evangelists, and in spite of the fact that Muhammad must have known that Christian and Jew alike believed, and with obvious sincerity, that the Crucifixion took place. This difficulty is evaded by the assertion that God tricked the Jews by substituting for Christ some one whom He made exactly like Him, so like Him that even His disciples were deceived.

“And the Jews plotted and God plotted and God is the best of plotters. Remember when God said, O Jesus, verily I will cause thee to die and will take thee up to myself and deliver thee from those that believe not.”⁴ This looks like the Christian belief as to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but in the fourth Sura⁵ the Jews are cursed for having spoken against Mary a grievous calumny, and for their saying “Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the Son of Mary, an apostle of God Yet they slew Him not, and they crucified Him not, they had only His likeness. No sure knowledge had they about Him but followed only an opinion, they really did not slay Him but God took

¹ St. John iv. 9.

² St. John iv. 14, 15.

³ 1 St. John iv. 12.

⁴ Sura iii. 47, 50.

⁵ Sura iv. 155.

Him up to Himself. And God is mighty and wise."

The Muhammadan denies altogether both the Incarnation and Atonement. In fact it is said in a book about the birth of Muhammad very much read in Zanzibar that the day Muhammad was born all the crosses fell down. There is a tradition that Muhammad hated crosses so much that he destroyed everything that was marked with one. Some Christians have had the same dislike to the symbol but they have generally been those who have preached most vigorously the *fact*. The Muhammadan denies the *fact*.

As to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ there is a great difference of opinion; some Muhammadan doctors teaching that our Lord was translated without dying, a substitute having been provided, while some teach that He died a natural death, and remained dead three or seven hours and was then taken up to Heaven. Some think that He did not die but will come again, overcome the great Dejjal or Anti-Christ and then die Himself. A vacant place is reserved for our Saviour's grave near the Prophet's tomb at Medina. Sura iii. says: "God said, O Jesus, I will cause thee to die and I will take thee up unto Me."¹ Sura xix. Jesus says "Peace be on the day I was born and the day whereon I shall die and the day whereon I shall be raised to life."² But in spite of these two passages, and in spite of the unanimous testimony of the Evangelists, who wrote the Gospel which the Qur'an says is sent down by God, the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection is explained away as I have described. Divorced from the Crucifixion it would lose half of its meaning to the Christian world.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is mentioned in some nineteen passages in the Qur'an: Cf.: "We strengthened Jesus with the Holy Spirit": In most of these are we told the Angel Gabriel is meant. In three places it is one of the names of Jesus, in other

¹ Sura iii. 47.

² Sura xix. 34.

places it is used of the Spirit of Prophecy, and in some places of the life given to Adam. In one place, "On the hearts of the faithful God hath graven the Faith and strengthened them with a spirit proceeding from Him,"¹ it is used of God's grace and strength.

Though there are some minor points of contact, we do not find any reference to the great Christian Doctrine of the Coming of the Holy Ghost, the Promised Comforter, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. In fact by a curious mistake as to the Greek word Paracletos, which Muhammad thought was Periclutos, he regarded our Lord's prophecy of the Coming of the Holy Ghost as a prophecy of himself. Jesus the son of Mary said "O Children of Israel, of a truth I am God's Apostle to you to confirm the law, and to announce an Apostle that is to come after me whose name is Ahmad, viz. : the praised or glorified one."²

Sale says that the Muhammadan doctors are unanimous about the point, and I have often heard it urged in Zanzibar.

It follows from what has been quoted above that it was impossible for Muhammad to accept the Christian doctrine of the unity of God, viz. a unity of Nature and not a unity of Person. He rejects with scorn the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. But he evidently confounds it with Tritheism.

We read "They misbelieve who say God is the third of three, for there is no God but one. The Messiah is only a prophet, and his mother was a Confessor, they used both to eat food."³

Muhammad thought that the Trinity according to Christian teaching consisted of the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary, a natural result of his gross misconception of the doctrine of the sonship of Jesus Christ. "They both ate food." He writes this of our Lord and His mother, and thinks no more need be said.

You find the same idea lurking in Sura iv.⁴ : "The

¹ Sura liii. ² Sura lxi. 6. ³ Sura v. v. 76-80. ⁴ Sura iv. 168.

Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is only an Apostle of God, and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit from Him. Believe in God and His Apostles ; Say not three (viz. there is a Trinity). Forbear, God is only one God. Far be it from His Glory that He should have a son. He is a sufficient Guardian." Again in Sura v.¹: " And when God shall say, O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said to mankind, Take me and my mother as two Gods beside God ? "

It should be mentioned that one of the principal commentators does give another explanation. " Say not there are three *Essences*. The Father the Essence, the Son the Knowledge, and the Holy Spirit the Life." But the passage quoted above seems to make it quite clear what was in Muhammad's mind, and it is this interpretation which the same commentator places first. But of course it was an impossibility for one who had so distorted a notion of the Christian Doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus Christ to understand, as far as it can be understood, and to accept the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

The meaning of the other articles of the Christian Creed viz. the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting, depends so completely upon the fundamental doctrines of our most Holy Faith, that it is scarcely worth while to dwell on any passages here which superficially and only superficially resemble them.

Surely such a survey of the treatment dealt out to the fundamental and distinctive doctrines of Christianity leaves the faithful Christian little room for doubt. The difference is fundamental. The Incarnation becomes a mere miracle of creation ; instead of the Atonement made on Calvary we are offered a piece of jugglery. The Resurrection is enveloped in a thick mist of doubt, and even if the Messiah appears to the disciples who

¹ Sura v. 116.

have been tricked by the Jews there are no marks of the nails in the Hands and Feet. The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father and the Son, becomes the Archangel Gabriel. And instead of Him who said "All power has been given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye into all the world and make disciples of every nation, baptising them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." "I am He that liveth and was dead," and, "Behold, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world," we are offered the guidance of Muhammad, whose mortal remains lie buried at Medina unto this day.

It seems to me a mere matter of loyalty and common honesty not only to contend ourselves for the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, but to do all that in us lies to bring the same Faith within the reach of the most backward of the races of mankind. "For God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of the days spoken unto us in His Son, whom also He hath appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, who being the refulgence of His glory and the very image of His Substance, and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down at the right Hand of the Majesty on High."¹

"And while He was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him.' And when the disciples heard it, they were sore afraid, and Jesus came and touched them, and said, 'Be not afraid.' And lifting up their eyes they saw no one save *Jesus only*."²

¹ Heb. i. 1-4.

² St. Matt. xvii. 5.

LECTURE II

Christ and Muhammad

“**T**HERE is no God but God, and Muhammad is His prophet.” These are the two articles of the Muhammadan creed. We have considered the first, and infer that much of the success of Muhammadanism is due to the vigour with which it was enunciated. That Muhammadanism is now the religion of at least 200,000,000 members of the human race has been thought to be due to the vividness with which the first article of the creed was preached in an age when men, even Christian men, were fast forgetting the significance of it.

As Frederick Denison Maurice said in his Boyle lectures ¹: “The sense of a Divine Almighty Will to which all human wills were to be bowed had evaporated amidst the worship of images, moral corruption, philosophical theories and religious controversies. Notions about God occupied men, but God was not in all their thoughts. At this very crisis the old truth, the foundation truth of all truths, was reasserted with extraordinary vividness, that there is a living and eternal God, who lives and rules and whom men must confess and obey.”

We now turn to the second article “Muhammad is the Prophet of God.” Both these articles of Faith are rigidly exclusive. God is God to the exclusion of all

¹ Lecture I. p. 23. *Religions of the World and their Relation to Christianity.*

other Gods, and Muhammad is His prophet to the exclusion of all the other prophets.

He excludes them by *superseding* them. Who is the man then that makes such an extraordinary claim?

Muhammad was the posthumous son of Abdallah, a member of the noble family of Hasheem, of the Quraish section of the Arabian race who were said to have been descended from Ishmael. To them was entrusted the guardianship of the Kaaba—the Holy of Holies of the Arab worship.

Both these points, the supposed descent from Ishmael and the connexion with the Kaaba, are extremely important. They explain much that occurred afterwards. Of his early youth and manhood little is known that can be called history. A whole host of extraordinary legends has sprung up, which outrival the imaginary miracles connected with the childhood of Christ in the Apocryphal Gospels.

There is however this great difference between the two religions, that whereas the Church of God, guided by the Spirit of Truth, has condemned and excluded these apocryphal legends about the early life of Christ, the most extraordinary and puerile legends about the childhood of Muhammad are implicitly believed by devout and orthodox Muhammadans to-day, in spite of the fact that Muhammad himself, in the Qur'an, asserts that he performed no miracle save the recitation of the Qur'an.¹ He acknowledges this, although he plainly admits his belief, not only in the genuine miracles of our Lord, but even in His spurious miracles, thus claiming for these miracles, spurious and genuine alike, the testimony of God. *For, according to Muhammadan belief, every word of the Qur'an comes from God.*

Two or three of these extraordinary tales about the childhood of Muhammad will suffice. 1. That the angel Gabriel ripped him open and extracted the black drop of original sin from his breast. 2. That the black stone

¹ Cf. Sura xxix. 29: xiii. 27-30: xvii. 92-97.

in the Kaaba left its position to touch the face of Muhammad. 3. That his nurse Halima said that they needed no lamp at night as long as they nursed Muhammad, because of the brilliant light that streamed from his face.¹

The facts in his early life which are historical and important are his close connexion with those who guarded the Kaaba, and his journeys to Syria with Abu Talib from the age of twelve and upwards, during which he must have come into contact with Jews and Christians and heard and seen much of Jewish and Christian worship. At the age of twenty he was engaged in the war called the sacrilegious war, fought contrary to law in a sacred country and during the sacred months. There seems to be general agreement that the title of "the Faithful" which his countrymen bestowed upon him was no more than his due. It was owing to this faithfulness that he was chosen by the wealthy widow Khadija to conduct her commercial affairs. He afterwards became her husband, and from that date to the beginning of his mission he seems from all accounts to have led a life free from reproach, and to have been so faithful and devoted to Khadija, that Ayesha, a most candid young person and his favourite wife after Khadija's death, is stated to have said that she never felt jealous of any of Muhammad's wives save that toothless old woman.²

I have mentioned this because I believe that a true estimate of Muhammad's character depends on the recognition of the fact that he was sincere and honest at the beginning of his career, and that at any rate at first he was not consciously untruthful. His character was an extraordinary mixture of good and evil. He was, as he himself admits, a sinful man.³ He was subject to epileptic fits, to depression of spirits and melancholia. He thought himself at one time possessed.

¹ *Kitab Maulid*, by Barazanji, which is very popular in Zanzibar.

² *Mishkat*, Book xxix. chap. xxii. ³ Sura xciii., xctv

He was exorcised and was once on the verge of suicide. He appears to have been a man of simple habits and humble manner of life. When once he had an end in view he pursued it with quiet determination and indomitable perseverance. It is probable that the religious instinct was strongly developed in him from childhood.

An Arab of the Arabs, born of a noble family, speaking the purest Arabic, full of religious feeling, with a mind intensely coloured by Arab traditions and the Arabian environment, familiarized with pagan idolatry from childhood, brought into contact in youth and early manhood with the puerilities of the Talmud and a debased and degenerate form of Christianity, faithful in performing what he conceived to be his duty, steadily and patiently pursuing the road to the goal he had set before him : such a man, at such a time and in such surroundings, suddenly finds himself the possessor of two strong convictions : 1. The conviction of the existence and the unity of God in the midst of an idolatrous and polytheistic race ; and 2. the conviction which gradually forced him from meditation to action, that he was the prophet of God divinely called and sent to preach the existence and unity of God. No man can read the Qur'an without realizing how powerful, and I will add how sincere, these two convictions are. Two indisputable facts seem to demand such an admission, the character of faithfulness which he had gained from his fellow countrymen, and the fact that many of those who were nearest to him and knew him best were his first disciples. And there is one other noticeable point. It is difficult to deny the sincerity of his belief in his mission when we remember the bitter and galling persecutions to which he was subjected for several years and the splendid perseverance and courage with which he continued to preach the existence and unity of God in spite of every discouragement. These facts do not of course prove the divine origin of his mission, but it seems to me that they go very far towards proving the sincerity of his con-

victions on these two fundamental points—the existence and unity of God and his own prophetic mission. And in addition to these it is impossible, in reading the Qur'an, not to notice the keenness of delight with which the new convert to the belief in God regards the phenomena of nature. He is not hampered in his conception with the thought of natural laws and a long chain of causation. The night when she spreadeth her veil, the day when it appeareth in glory, the star-bespangled heaven,¹ these have become to him revelations of the King Eternal Immortal Invisible.

To this God he flees for refuge against the mischief of the stealthy withdrawing whisperer, who whispereth in man's heart i.e. Satan : against the mischief of the first darkness when it overspreadeth i.e. the eclipse : against the mischief of the enchantress i.e. the witch : against the mischief of the envier when he envieth i.e. the evil eye.² Here we have the superstitious heathen emerging out of darkness into light, feeling in the darkness for God and finding Him. And if you read the earlier chapters of the Qur'an, the conviction forces itself on your mind that you are reading the utterances of a soul that *is* thus gradually feeling its way, gradually realizing something of what is involved in the great truths of the existence and unity of God.

Carlyle says in his *Heroes*, "I confess I can make nothing of the critic in these times who would accuse Muhammad of deceit preense, still more of living in an element of conscious deceit and writing the Qur'an as a forger or juggler would have done. Every candid eye will read the Qur'an far otherwise. It is the confused ferment of a great, rude, human soul. Fervent, earnest sincerity in all senses seems to me the merit of the Qur'an." (*I should say of much of the Qur'an.*) "*The confused ferment of a great, rude, human soul.*" That seems to me the exact truth. It is the truth of the

¹ Cf. The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. ² Sura cxiii.

Living Personal God, and the humanity of the man which have attracted the 200,000,000 of human worshippers who profess Muhammadanism to-day. But "the great, rude, human soul" calls himself (and is called) the seal of the prophets, who has brought the last and final revelation of God to man, has ousted the Saviour of men, has superseded Christianity. He aimed at founding a universal religion, and claimed the homage and allegiance of mankind. Thus a comparison and decision is forced on us by Muhammad himself.

But there is another side to the picture, and it is impossible to form a true estimate of the life and character of Muhammad unless we keep this other side of the picture in sight. And we are compelled to do this because of his claim to establish a universal religion, and because of the claim that his revelation has superseded Christianity. Who is the man who makes this extraordinary claim and what are his qualifications? The Muhammadan who claims that his prophet is the greatest member of the human race must bear with the Christian if he scrutinizes carefully the life and character of the man for whom so much is claimed, viz. : that he and not Christ should possess the dominion over the hearts of men.

He was a sinner according to his own confession in the Qur'an, and by the confession of his followers.¹ "He found thee erring and guided thee."² "Have we not opened thy heart and eased thee of thy burden which galled thy back?"³ On one occasion he frowned and turned his back on a blind man, who came to make a request. Muhammad deeply regretted his discourtesy. He vacillated once in preaching his message and tried to come to terms with the Quraish. He had been sorely tried and at last he made the admission when reciting Sura liii. that regarding their gods Lat, Ozza and Manat, their intercession might be hoped for from God.⁴ He very

¹ Sura cxcii. The Brightness. ² Sura xciv. ³ Sura lxxx

⁴ Palmer Intro, p. xxvii

soon repented and revealed the following passage with reference to the goddesses : " Shall ye have male progeny and God female ? These are mere names which ye and your father have given them." ¹ It is to this another passage is said to refer in the Qur'an. " Nor have we sent *any* apostle or prophet before thee into whose readings Satan hath not injected some wrong." ² This was given to console him for his slip !

And on this or on another occasion, he seems to admit that he wavered. " They had well nigh beguiled thee from what we inspired thee with, that thou shouldest forge against us something else and then they would have taken thee for a friend, and had it not been that we stablished thee, thou wouldest have well nigh inclined unto them a little." It may be said these are but the signs of human frailty. Granted ; but he has claimed to supersede the Sinless One.

Again no one can deny that he lived partly by plundering caravans, and that he engaged in several warlike expeditions. Al Kindy says that Muhammad engaged in twenty-nine campaigns besides minor raids and night attacks, and nine pitched battles. If a caravan was weak he attacked it, plundering and slaughtering. His success seems partly due to this concession to the national love for raids and forays. Again it is undeniable that he cruelly massacred some Jewish tribes.

Specially noticeable is the case of Beni Kaynokaa. He attacked them, and (it is a noticeable fact) after his victory over the Meccans at Bedr. An Arab girl was insulted by a youth of this tribe, bloodshed followed, and then the whole tribe was attacked, proscribed, and banished. Their lands, houses, and goods were confiscated and divided among the victors. Had it not been for the intercession of Abdallah bin Obey, Muhammad would have massacred them all. He was strong now, he despaired of converting them, and their neighbourhood to Medina was a perpetual menace to his power.

¹ Sura liii. 19, 20.

² Sura xxii. 51.

He sues when he is weak, he attacks with merciless severity when he is strong. The same change of tone runs through the Qur'an. It gets more and more intolerant, and the ominous words "Fight" and "Kill" more and more frequent.

Again there is the case of the Bani Quraidha¹ whom he attacked by order, as he said, of the Angel Gabriel after the retreat of the Meccans from Medina. They had deserted him in the hour of peril, and he realized what dangerous neighbours they were. He was strong, with an army prepared for battle. It was too good an opportunity to be lost. He consequently attacked them, and, after overcoming them, cruelly massacred over 600 of the male members of the tribe, the women and children being sold as slaves. If we compare Muhammad with the rude warriors of uncivilized days he is no worse than they, but, as I said before, the Muhammadan does not ask us to make such a comparison. We are to follow Muhammad in preference to Jesus Christ.

And the grotesqueness of the comparison is accentuated when we remember the assassinations which Muhammad instigated and which he certainly sanctioned.

In all these actions we have the man, the Arab. He was no better and no worse than his circumstances. And it must be remembered, when we consider his patience under persecution, that the patience failed when he had the power to retaliate, and that he meted out to the Jewish tribes who refused to receive him even worse treatment than that for which he curses Abu Lahab in one of the early Suras (Sura cxi.). This may be the key to his whole character, that he was spoilt by power and success, first employing the power at his command to spread the faith which he honestly believed to be true, then in the pride of his heart imagining that he could safely indulge where he had placed a restraint upon others, and then proceeding to commit the greatest

¹ Cf. Sale's note, page 315. *Chandos Classics.*

crime of his life "to forge the signature of Almighty God to a blank cheque," giving him the right to an unlimited indulgence. There is no escaping the fact that, having let his passion for Zaid's wife be known to Zaid, who was his adopted son, he allowed Zaid to divorce her in order that he might marry her, contrary to all custom, and then, when his somewhat complaisant followers began to murmur, justified the breach by a supposed revelation from God. In the thirty-third Sura¹ he first legalizes the marriage: "Nor has He made your adopted son your real son." Thus he secures a revelation to suit his private ends, and then he continues further on²: "And when thou didst say to him to whom God had shown favour and to whom thou hadst shown favour, 'Keep thy wife to thyself, and fear God,' and thou didst conceal in thy soul *what God was about to display*, and didst fear men, though God is more deserving that thou shouldst fear Him.' And when Zaid had divorced her Muhammad tells us that the following words were revealed to him: "*We did wed thee to her that there should be no hindrance to the believers in the matter of the wives of their adopted sons after divorce, and so God's bidding be done*" And a little further on he calls himself the "Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets."

As Al Kindy says, this is surely sufficient for all reasonable men.

In Sura lxvi. we find another supposed revelation which was required to settle a domestic difficulty. In this passage³ we also see to what use the words "forgiving," "compassionate," can be put. His wives have had the temerity to find fault with the prophet. The man who could write this chapter called Prohibition⁴ had fallen very low indeed. It is scarcely Muhammad the faithful, the devoted husband of Khadija, the sincere preacher of a rigid and austere monotheism. And these incidents illustrate

¹ Sura xxxiii. v. 4.

² Sura lxvi. v. 2.

³ Sura xxxiii. 36-39.

⁴ Chapter lxvi.

also a phrase about which I must speak presently,¹ the expression "If God will."

Or read again Sura xxxiii. v. 49, where Muhammad is given permission to marry as many wives as he pleases, "a special privilege this for thee above all other believers." In connexion with this we call to mind the convenient theory that one passage can be abrogated by another and later passage. There are over two hundred passages supposed to be so abrogated. It is almost impossible to resist the conclusion that the prophet is no longer, as at first, overpowered by the splendour of the thought of the Unity of God. He is using revelation for his own private ends and to meet each emergency. This is a conclusion reinforced by his treatment of Old Testament stories quaintly distorted by legends from the Mishna and Talmud. It is most evidently the kind of information which a man who is interested in religion picks up from second-rate and third-rate sources, but he produces these stories as original revelations to himself. Of pure Judaism and pure Christianity he was profoundly ignorant. He never could have written what he has written about the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospel, had he been familiar with their contents. It seems as if at last he came to the belief that a man, once called to be a prophet, can do no wrong, and that any information he picks up, no matter how he picks it up, is due to revelation.

As occasions and exigencies arise, domestic or otherwise, he makes his decision to the best of his ability, but whatever these decisions may be, good, bad, or indifferent, they are all in the Qur'an, and all equally divine.

Is it astonishing that the poetry of the earlier Suras becomes the dull prose of the later ones, and that the brightness that shone round the earlier days of his mission, fades into the light of common day?

We might sum up his life briefly thus:—A strong

¹ In the Fourth Lecture.

faithful man of a religious temperament becomes a convert to the monotheistic creed of his supposed ancestors, Abraham and Ishmael. For a time he is absorbed by the new idea, but not for some years does it occur to him that he is commissioned to preach it. He has four classes of people to deal with, 1, idolators, 2, a few sincere seekers after truth, the Hanifs, 3, Jews, and 4, Christians. He begins to preach at Mecca sincerely, and after much persecution and suffering flees with a few disciples to Medina.

Here he begins to succeed. He looks round him and finds Jews and Christians professing a religion something like his own. He endeavours, and hopefully endeavours, to bring them back to the original and, as he thinks, and pure and only true faith of Abraham. The Qur'an speaks in two different voices at two different times about Jews and Christians. He is disappointed, they fail to respond. He then begins to talk of religious warfare, to accuse them of tampering with their Scriptures, which had prophesied his coming as the Seal of the Prophets. He bitterly persecutes the Jews. He conquers the Meccans. He receives deputations from various Arab tribes, and at last, just at the close of his life there dawns on him the idea of a universal empire and universal faith. One Prophet, One Faith, for all the world. There was much of religious fervour in the man, much of patriotism blended with political ambition, and as Milman says, "This political ambition grew out of and accommodated itself to the circumstances of the times, submitted to change and modification, and only fully developed itself according to existing exigences," and he continues: "At this distance of time, through the haze of adoring and hostile tradition, it is difficult to trace clearly the outward actions of the Prophet, how much more the inward impulses, the thoughts and aspirations of his secret spirit. To the question whether Muhammad was hero, sage, impostor, fanatic, or blended, and blended in what proportions these conflicting elements in his character, the best reply is the favourite reverential phrase of Islam—"God knows." Yes, but when it is

claimed for a man that he is the final revealer of God's Will this is very unsatisfactory.

Now if we were asked to contrast two men like David and Muhammad there might be some grounds for comparison. In the lives and characteristics of each we find a curious but very human mixture of good and evil. Both passed their early days in comparative obscurity, both gained high reputation in early manhood, both were of a deeply religious and poetic temperament, both suffered severely from persecution, both eventually succeeded to positions of great power, both were guilty of great crimes and acts of merciless severity, and yet, both realized deeply their relationship to Almighty God, and both, in old age, seem to have lost something of the religious fervour and inspiration of their earlier years. But the character of the relationship between God and man, as the two men conceived it, is utterly different. You may search the Qur'an through and through for passages revealing the tenderness of God as seen in the twenty-third Psalm,—“The Lord is my Shepherd.” You may search the Qur'an through and through for passages of heart-broken penitence and contrition like those in the fifty-first Psalm. The relationship as David conceived it is that of Father and son, the loving guardianship of the Father, the humble and contrite heart of the sinful son, approaching a just and holy Father. Whereas the other conceives of the relationship as that of a servant to an all-powerful and despotic Lord who has elected him to be the instrument of His arbitrary will, overwhelms him with partial favour, and who originates and justifies his crimes.

But the point is this, that the Muhammadan does not ask us to make such a comparison. He challenges us to make a comparison between Muhammad and Him who was both David's Son and David's Lord. He wishes us to regard Muhammad as the last and the most perfect of the long and unfailling line of divine messengers to mankind, the *Seal* of the Prophets of whom Jesus was only one and not the greatest. The truth of Muham-

mad's mission is thought to be proved by the one great miracle—the Qur'an—in which there is such a passage as that which I read about the wife of his adopted son. He firmly believed that his coming had been foretold in the Law and the Gospel, and that Jews and Christians, in an impossible conspiracy, had either wilfully misinterpreted these passages, or deliberately obliterated them ; and his followers believe to this day that the prophetic mission of Muhammad was "the one divine event" for which the whole universe had been created. He is the pattern man, the ideal character, the original of the race. We turn with unspeakable relief to the sacred pages which tell us of "the sinless years which breathed beneath the Syrian blue." We think of the Holy Child concerning whom it was prophesied that He would save His people from their sins, of the Baptism when it was announced that He was the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world and had come to fulfil all righteousness. We think of Him who went about preaching a Kingdom of God wherein dwelleth righteousness, and doing good by means of miracles which were not mere appeals to idle curiosity and wonder, but revelations of the power, the tenderness and the mercy of God. We think of Him whose description of a perfect man is that of one who is humble, contrite, gentle, righteous, merciful, pure, peaceable, and patient under wrong. We think of Him who taught men to forgive, not to resist evil, to bless those who curse, to pray for those who oppress, to overcome evil with good, and who attracted men to Himself, not by hopes of earthly rewards or pictures of a sensual paradise, but by prophecies of suffering, tribulation, and cross-bearing, alluring men by revealing the love of God and the means whereby men may obtain a quiet conscience and a purified heart. We think of Him who crowned His life and teaching by laying down His life for His friends, who offered Himself on the Cross as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, conquered death by dying, and on the first Easter Day brought

life and immortality to light. We remember that He has told us that all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth, and has commanded us to go and preach the gospel to all nations—to every creature—until the Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of God and of His Christ.

On which pattern do we intend to mould our lives, and the lives of all with whom we come into contact ?

We have, I suppose, no doubt about ourselves, but is it compatible with our duty to God and our duty to our fellow men to hand over millions of mankind to a religion which I can only describe as a rival and hostile religion ?

If we believe that God has once for all at the end of the world spoken unto us by His Son, then only by preaching Christ in word and deed to all can we truly be said to love our neighbour as ourselves and to love God with all our strength and all our heart and all our soul and all our mind.

LECTURE III

The Bible and the Qu'ran

THE subject of this lecture is the contrast between the Bible and the Qur'an; and for the sake of clearness and uniformity it will be well to adhere to the plan followed in the two previous lectures, and to deal mainly with the Qur'an, concluding by some sort of comparison, as far as comparison is possible, between the two books.

In what light does the orthodox Muhammadan regard his Sacred Book? He buys a copy at some book-stall; he believes that the text itself is a faithful copy of the text which was arranged in the days of the Khalif Othman, (there are seven editions which differ mainly in the number of the verses), and there is no reason to question the accuracy of his belief. If he asks about the sources from which Othman's text was compiled, he will be told that it was a new and revised edition of the old edition compiled by order of Abu Bakr at Omar's suggestion after the battle of Yemama. Abu Bakr's edition had to be revised owing to different modes of recitation and owing to differences of expression in the sources from which Zaid's copy was made. A variety of different readings had crept in. This alarmed the faithful, the theory being that the Qur'an is free from error.

So the Khalif Othman ordered the new edition and burnt all the older copies. Othman's version has been,

ever since, the authorized version of Muhammadan scriptures. But how did Zaid compile the first edition? There was no complete canon of Muhammadan Scripture for at least a year after Muhammad's death, in the same way that there was no written Gospel in the years following our Lord's Ascension. In each case it was the death of those who knew their Master's teaching, or the approach of their death, which suggested a complete record. Zaid was ordered by Abu Bakr to make one. Zaid had been accustomed to write down the revelations of Muhammad in Muhammad's life-time and he proceeded to collect them from date-leaves and tablets of white stone and bones and the hearts of men.

Muhammad had left his revelation in very great disorder. Zaid collected it in the order in which the book is now arranged, which is really no order at all, and for twenty-three years this edition remained the authorized edition, viz. : until Othman's. Thus the Muhammadan student will travel back to Muhammad himself and learn that he either wrote down his message,¹ or recited it to men who wrote it down or committed it to memory.

Had it all been written down word for word we should not hear of Omar's alarm after the battle of Yemama. There is no reason to doubt, however, that the text as it stands, apart from the arrangement of the various chapters and verses, is substantially a correct transcript of the sayings of Muhammad. But how did Muhammad receive these revelations? We are tracing the book up to its source, according to the views of the orthodox Muhammadan. Not a word or letter of it is Muhammad's; it was all revealed to him in various ways² for a space of more than twenty years. He was a servant sent with a message which he had to deliver word for

¹ It seems very probable, if not certain, that Muhammad could write. He asked for a pen on his deathbed.

² Some verses cited at Medina are in Meccan Suras and *vice versa*. These various modes are quoted by Canon Sell in his *Faith of Islam* from the Muderiju 'n Nubuwat.

word. We are told that a brightness like the brightness of the morn came upon the Prophet. Through this brightness Gabriel revealed the will of God. At times Gabriel appeared in the form of one of the companions of the Prophet renowned for grace and beauty. At times Muhammad heard the sound of a bell, he alone discerning the meaning of the sounds. He became ghastly white and the perspiration would roll from his face. At other times he roared like a camel, the sound as of bells well nigh rending his heart in twain. At the time of the journey to heaven "Miraj," God spoke to the Prophet without the intervention of an angel, though it is not certain whether the face of God was veiled! Sometimes God appeared in a dream. Twice angels having six hundred wings appeared. The exact words of the Qur'an were written in Arabic by the pen of power on what is called in the Qur'an the "preserved table," by the fiat of Almighty God. The Qur'an was then entrusted to the Angel Gabriel,¹ who descended with it to the lowest of the seven Heavens and revealed it piecemeal to Muhammad as the occasion required. The Qur'an as we see it is an exact transcript, to use the language of the Qur'an, of this heavenly original. The heavenly original is said to date as far back as two thousand years before the creation of the world. The letters are created, but the message enshrined in them is eternal and immutable as proceeding from the Essence of God Himself. Since it was revealed to Muhammad no man has ever seen the original. It is far beyond the reach of the human critic; it is never made a subject of investigation nor tried by the ordinary rules of criticism.

A Muhammadan, holding a copy of the Qur'an, believes he holds in his hand the very Word of God, both in matter and form; the last and perfect revelation of God's Will to mankind. He believes that part of this revelation is so clear that he who runs may read it, but that the meaning of part of it is hidden, ambiguous and

¹ Sura lxxxv. 21. 7.

capable of several interpretations, and that some passages are so difficult that only the prophet can understand them. Such are the anthropomorphic phrases "God's hands," "the face of God." In all doubtful passages the resort is to the traditions, of which there are several authorized collections, traditions, that is, of the sayings of the infallible prophet. These traditions have to be traced back by an unbroken line to trustworthy persons, or to a companion of the prophet. Such a traditional rendering and explanation would be accepted as final. The commentator has only to reproduce what has been written before. Anything like the work of a Christian commentator is out of the question. Innovation or novelty of any kind is abhorrent to the mind of the Muhammadan.

The adaptation of the Qur'an to new conditions of life is impossible. A passage has a certain obvious meaning or a certain traditional meaning, and nothing but a new tradition (a practical impossibility) can throw new light on a passage in the Qur'an. As it has been said¹: "The greatest proficient in theology is the man who can repeat the Qur'an by heart, who knows and can produce at will what the early commentators have said, who can remember and quote in the most apposite manner the Prophet's sayings preserved in the traditions handed down by the Companions, their followers, and the followers of their followers; who can point out a flaw in the chain of narrators of a tradition, or can maintain the authority of a tradition he quotes himself. A good memory, not critical acumen, is the great desideratum in a Muhammadan theologian."

The correct repetition and pronunciation of the Qur'an is the important point, and often men can repeat and pronounce correctly a passage without having the least knowledge of the meaning of the passage. No man ever invented a more mechanical theory of inspiration than that accepted by the orthodox Muhammadan.

¹ Sell's *Faith of Islam*, pp. 41, 42.

It is once more the denial of the "Word made Flesh" of Christian belief. The type has been set up in Heaven, was conveyed to Muhammad, and by him repeated to his followers, word for word, letter by letter.

Something must be said here about the doctrine that certain passages have been abrogated.¹ At first sight it does not seem easy to reconcile this doctrine with the Muhammadan belief in an exact copy of the heavenly original.

There are two hundred and twenty-three abrogated passages according to Sale. Every commentator must know what passages abrogate and what passages are abrogated. Sometimes sense and words have been abrogated. Sometimes the sense remains and the letter is abrogated. Sometimes the sense is abrogated and the letter remains. To give a few illustrations of this convenient doctrine. 1. The first case is when a verse has been altogether omitted. 2. The second case is when a verse is omitted but the sense remains. The Khalif Omar said there was a passage about stoning adulterers in the Qur'an originally. It is no longer there but the sense remains. 3. The third class is the most important. The best illustrations are the change in the position of the Qibla and the change in the attitude adopted towards Jews and Christians—the letter remains but the sense is abrogated. If you ask how a passage can be abrogated in a book which is entirely the composition of God, they answer that the circumstances which necessitated the abrogation were determined on from all eternity.

There was therefore a Sura for the original circumstances and a Sura for the altered circumstances. And this is the explanation given of the celebrated verse,² "Whatever verses we cancel or cause thee to forget, we give thee better in their stead, or the like thereof," and again,³ "What He pleaseth, will God abrogate or

¹ The whole subject is well treated in Sell's *Faith of Islam*, p. 58.

² Sura ii. 100.

³ Sura xiii. 39.

confirm, for with Him is the source of revelation." There is an interesting illustration of the uses to which this law of abrogation was supplied. It was revealed¹ that those who stay at home in the time of Jihad are not in the sight of God as those who go to war. Two men exclaimed "And what if they were blind?" Muhammad asked for the shoulder blade upon which the words were written, had a spasmodic convulsion, and made Zaid add the words² "free from trouble." "Those believers who sit at home free from trouble." It is such an obvious afterthought.

Let us judge of this theory of abrogation by the passages abrogated. The Qibla was altered from Jerusalem to Mecca.³ The verse "It is not permitted to thee to take other wives hereafter, nor to change thy present wives for other women,"⁴ is abrogated by a verse in which it is stated "We allow thee any other believing woman who hath bestowed herself upon the Prophet."⁵

Again another verse reads⁶ "Stand up all night, except a small portion of it, for prayer." A year later—according to Ayesha the prophet's favourite wife—we read⁷ "God measureth the night and the day; He knoweth that ye cannot count its hours aright and therefore turneth to you mercifully. Recite then so much of the Qur'an as is easy for you."

We cannot help feeling that Muhammad found it necessary to shift his position from time to time, and thus it became necessary to annul earlier portions of his revelation. And of course this was all the easier because of the way in which what he uttered was recorded. It was easy to rub out what had been written on a shoulder bone. There is a well known tradition, that a verse

¹ Sura iv. 97.

² Sale quotes this interpretation from the Muhammadan commentator Beidhawi.

³ Sura ii. 109 and 139.

⁴ Sura xxxiii. 52.

⁶ Sura lxxiii. 2.

⁵ Sura xxxiii. 49.

⁷ Sura lxxiii. 20.

recited one day was found to have vanished from the material the next. When inquiry was made, Muhammad merely replied that it had been revoked.¹

Now these remarks on abrogation lead us on to the vital difference between the orthodox Muhammadan and any other person who approaches the study of the book from outside the Muhammadan world. The orthodox and devout Muhammadan thinks that the Qur'an is the very Word of God, and this accounts for the scrupulous care with which he handles it, the extreme reverence with which he treats it. It has an honoured place in his house, he holds it in a certain way, never places it on the ground, and before he reads it performs an ablution and utters a prayer. The student however who approaches the Qur'an from outside, especially if he has first studied Muhammad's history, and reads the Qur'an as far as possible in chronological order (it is very important to do this the first time, and after reading Muhammad's life), is more and more convinced that it is exactly what you would expect from a man so gifted, and of such a character, at such a time, and under such circumstances. *We* naturally say Muhammad said this or that, but the Muhammadan will point out, that the first words revealed to Muhammad were "Read in the name of the Lord the Creator, read for thy Lord is the most Beneficent. He hath taught men the use of the pen (to be a faithful copyist), He hath taught man that which he knoweth not,"² and so again and again we find the word "Say, say." The very words of God are put into his mouth.

And yet to the student who is not a Muhammadan it is obviously the work of man, and of *one* man, who picked up information from all kinds of sources, Jewish, Christian, Oriental, Persian. Space will not permit me to dwell long on this. I will take two instances—1. a story from the Old Testament, and 2. a story concerning

¹ Cf. Sell, p. 59, quoting Abdullah bin Masud.

² Sura xcvi.

the boyhood of Christ, each containing details which we should consider puerile, but which are just the kind of details on which the present day Muhammadan in Zanzibar loves to dwell. When *we* read them for the first time we wonder what was the source from which Muhammad derived them.

In the account given of Cain and Abel,¹ we are told that when Cain was puzzled what to do with the body of his brother and God sent a crow to scratch in the earth and show him how he might hide his brother's shame, he said "Alas for me. Am I too helpless to become like the crow and hide my brother's shame?"

Now the Jewish fable in the Talmud differs very slightly from this. Adam and his wife sat weeping and lamenting, not knowing what to do with the body of Abel, as they were unacquainted with burying. Then came a raven whose fellow was dead and took and buried it in the earth, hiding it before their eyes. Then said Adam, "I shall do like this raven." I might just add here that both the Talmud and the Qur'an say that the people of the flood were destroyed with *boiling* water.²

Again take the story of our Lord's boyhood supposed to come from the Gospel. In the third Sura³ we read "I taught thee the scripture, and wisdom, and the law, and the Gospel, and thou didst create of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird by my permission and didst breathe thereon and it became a bird by my permission." Most Christians know that this and similar stories of our Lord's infancy come from the Apocryphal Gospels.

These two instances are quite sufficient to give the average reader an idea as to the sources from which Muhammad compiled the greater portion of the later Suras which are full of such tales taken from the Talmud and from the Canonical or Apocryphal Scriptures. Again the frequent, wearisome, and monotonous repetition of

¹ Sura v. 30.

² Cf. here Dr. Arnold's *Islam and Christianity*, pp. 128-129.

³ Sura iii. v. 40. etc.

the same idea, the same moral truths, the same stories, the ever recurring description of the terrors of eternal torments, of the delights of the eternal paradise (which are said to occupy one-sixth of the book), the utter want of system, or arrangement, or connexion, the not infrequent contradictions, the obvious historical and chronological blunders; these tell us plainly enough that this is man's work and not God's; these, in spite of the purity of the Arabic, in spite of passages inculcating ethics sound if somewhat commonplace, in spite of passages of superb poetry, in spite of passages full of religious awe and emotion to which it is difficult to refuse the word inspiration, make the reading of the Qur'an a wearisome task to any but the man who believes he holds in his hand the perfect, eternal, and final Word of God to man.

To read the Qur'an—especially in a translation like Rodwell's where the Suras are arranged in chronological order—is not unlike a journey in the Arabian desert as we find it described in the books of travellers. First there is the promise of the dawn, and the splendour of the sunrise, and the radiance of the morning when all nature seems clothed in new and beautiful apparel. Then a long stretch of monotonous desert, until the first oasis appears, which breaks the tedium of the desert, where there are cool waters, refreshing shade and welcome repose. The heat of the sun untempered by any cloud becomes intolerable, the long waste of sand more and more wearisome, more and more monotonous, until the traveller begins to long for the journey's end, and sometimes, in the absence of any landmark, to wonder if the journey will ever lead anywhere at all.

Now, what is the relation in which the Book stands to the Gospel, and what is the nature of the difference between them?

The orthodox Muhammadan seems to believe that the Gospel was given to Jesus in the month of Ramadhan, all at once in a book. "We gave Him the Book—the Injili." The Qur'an does not charge the Jews or Christians with corrupting the *text* of their sacred books

and many learned Muhammadan commentators admit this. It asserts that the scriptures sent down by God existed in the days of Muhammad, who invariably speaks of them with respect,¹ and as these expressions of respect are found in the very latest Suras there is no reason to believe Muhammad ever altered his opinion.²

The Gospel existed in his day intact. Christians could read it and should read it. But there *are* statements in the Qur'an about reading the scriptures perversely. Christians or Jews are accused of interpreting it falsely, it is said that they pronounced words in the wrong way, and that they misstated the context of the books; but the text itself was intact. It is certainly noticeable that the older commentators, who had probably never seen the Gospel, interpret this charge of corruption as referring to bad interpretation, not to any tampering with the text. Had they known the text they would never have admitted so much. Modern commentators of the Qur'an who are far better acquainted with the contents of the Gospel see what a fix they are in. For if the text of the Gospel was intact in Muhammad's day, and is the same as that referred to in the Qur'an as sent down by God, then to the orthodox Muhammadan it must be of divine origin. Why then does he reject so much of it? If it is not divine, then the statement of the Qur'an that it was sent down by God is untrue. Again, God cannot contradict Himself as these two books represent—one saying that Jesus was crucified—the other denying it. There is no mistaking the meaning of the text in this case. The modern Muhammadan sees this, and he escapes the difficulty by saying that Christians have lost the Gospel which was given to Jesus Christ,

¹ Sura v. 77.

² The reader who wishes to convince himself of the truth of the statement must read Sir William Muir's book, *The Qur'an*, in the Non-Christian religious systems. S.P.C.K. The Suras are arranged chronologically.

³ Cf. Sura v. 47; v. 14-16; iii. 77; iv. 43.

⁴ Sir William Muir points out that the passages have this meaning.

and that what we possess is not the Gospel but the traditions of His companions and the followers of His companions as to what Jesus said and Jesus did. If the text of the Gospel has not been corrupted, Muhammadans must either admit that the Qur'an contains a few false statements, which is sheer blasphemy to them, or that God can make two contradictory statements. They see this now and rally in the last stronghold and say— You have not got the Gospel which was revealed to Jesus Christ and of which Muhammad speaks. We tell them they must prove that, and that it is impossible to prove it in the face of the evidence at our disposal. As education spreads, they must recognize this. Nor do I fear that when the Muhammadan professor hears of the theories of the Higher Criticism he will say " There, I told you as much, that is what we have been saying all along." For if Higher Criticism has something to say about the Canonical Scriptures, what will it say about the passages from the Talmud and the Apocryphal Gospel imbedded in the Qur'an, believed to be inscribed in the preserved Table beneath the Throne of God ?

Whatever the last word of the Higher Critics may be about the Christian Scriptures they will still leave the old theory of inspiration at once so sound and so human that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost in various ways according to time, place, circumstance, and race ; but before the scrutiny of modern historical methods the Muhammadan mechanical theory of inspiration must inevitably collapse.

I will conclude by stating four reasons out of many, why the difference between the Bible and the Qur'an is such that a man who knows both can scarcely hesitate which to choose and which to teach. I place the question of the poetry on one side, inasmuch as it is very questionable whether there is any finer poetry in the world than the poetry of the Christian Scriptures ; and I leave out the comparison between the ethical and social teaching of the two Books because it will be alluded to in the last address.

I take first the question of Inspiration because I have just referred to it. I do not believe that Christians need fear any criticism from whatever quarter it may come. We are not tied to the letter. We believe in the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. We believe that the Scriptures which we possess have a distinctly human element—the treasure is in an earthen vessel. We believe that God spake to men in many parts and in many fashions by the Prophets, that the message He gave them by His Spirit was coloured by the sinful human medium through which it passed, and that all revelations are as it were but “broken lights of Him who is more than they.” We believe that there was a progressive revelation until at last the very Word of God Himself “became Flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory—the Glory of the Only-Begotten Son of God—full of grace and truth.”

Now a Muhammadan does not hold such a theory of inspiration. He believes that a man wrote down what he was told to write down exactly as he was given it, and that it never passed through a human medium at all. It was never in any sense a Word of God Incarnate.

Secondly, the Qur'an deals mainly with precepts and positive ordinances and not principles.

The more we read the Qur'an, the more we are struck with the commonplace character of its ethics. We are on our own level. The virtues inculcated are the virtues of the natural and not of the regenerate man. But when we study the teaching of Christ we are constantly coming upon paradoxes; human methods of thought and ways of looking at life are turned upside down, and the sayings themselves go right down to the very heart of human nature and touch and purify the very innermost man. We are not told to do a certain thing in a certain way but to follow a principle and act according to a certain spirit, to be, not to do.

And this leads me to the third point.

The Qur'an is spuriously catholic, the Bible genuinely so. I say the Qur'an is spuriously catholic. Though it is not true to say Muhammadans will not translate

it, there is no doubt that such translations are against the current of Muhammadanism.

It is written in Arabic in heaven, it is written in Arabic on earth : it is studied in Arabic, it is committed to memory in Arabic, often without being understood ; it is recited in the Mosque in Arabic, it claims to be attested by the purity of its style, an argument which appeals only to an Arab and not even to all Arabs. It enjoins as an obligatory duty a journey to an Arabic Qibla, it enjoins methods of fasting which would be impossible, say, in the Arctic regions. I need not say that the Bible is catholic in the best sense of the world. It corresponds to the fulness of life. It has proved its claims, and the mere fact that Christianity lays down principles and enjoins character rather than positive precepts and external acts, is a guarantee of the genuineness of its catholicity.

And fourthly : the Qur'an is without arrangement or order, contradicts itself, and has no definite aim from beginning to end.

Now the Bible has this definite aim from beginning to end. "All as in some piece of art is toil co-operant to an end." Whatever our opinions may be of the date and authorship of the various books, we are increasingly conscious as we read them of a wonderful unity of thought tending to a definite goal. The apparent contradictions are contradictions of development. We are conscious as we read it of an "increasing purpose," of a gradual development of spiritual power, of a deepening insight into righteousness, of the gradual revelation of an ideal character, realized at last in the Person of Christ ; of the coming of a Kingdom of God by means of the perfect character of that Person. We learn to see the King in His beauty, we see the nations of the earth gathering round His standard, and we are taught to look ever onward to the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves, when the Kingdom of this world shall become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, and God shall be all in all.

LECTURE IV

The Spirit of Islam and the Spirit of Christianity

WE can examine the spirit of a religion in two ways (1) by examining its first principles, or (2) by testing the ethical and social results which may fairly be said to be an outcome of the teaching of that religion. Let us examine the spirit of Islam in these two ways, pointing out the contrast to Christianity as we proceed.

Islam means submission to the will of God and belief in Muhammad as the chosen revealer of that will to which submission is to be made.

Now it is obviously a matter of the first importance to discover what is the nature of that will which we are called upon to obey. Because on the nature of that will must depend the character of our obedience, whether, for instance, it is to be filial or servile. And it is also evident that we can regard the revealed will in two ways (1) as a revelation to man of the nature of God, or (2) as a mere succession of orders and precepts and ordinances which are quite arbitrary in their nature, and give us no insight into the nature of that Being who issues them. In this case our obedience will be quite servile. We shall do what we are told to do, not because the things themselves are right and just and true and holy,

but because He who tells us to do them has the power to enforce His decrees, and we believe that He intends to enforce them.

If on the other hand we believe that He who issues the commands is Himself righteous and just and true and holy and loving, and that His revealed will is the expression of those characteristics, and a proof of His desire to enter into communion and fellowship with men, our obedience will not be servile but filial.

Now I firmly believe that this is the fundamental difference between the Spirit of Christianity and the Spirit of Islam. It is fundamental, a difference in first principles : it results from a difference in our conception of God Himself.

We have seen that the strength of Muhammadanism and the secret of the astonishing success of its appeals to mankind lies in the vividness of its recognition of the existence of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, of an absolute eternal Being, of the sovereignty of His divine and almighty Will. Muhammadans have such a keen perception of the Existence of God, of His Omnipresence and Omnipotence, that, when they watch Europeans at their worship, they are tempted to doubt whether they believe in God at all. We must acknowledge that their self-abasement in the Presence of this omnipotent Being possesses two of the essential elements of all true worship—wonder and submission. Frederick Denison Maurice pointed out that the success of Islam is principally due, not to force of arms, nor to the proneness of the human mind to embrace imposture, nor to the plagiarisms from the Bible, nor to the just and benevolent sentiments which occur in the Qur'an, nor to the character of Muhammad, nor to what has been called its crusade on behalf of the first and second commandments, nor even to the fact that the times were ripe for judgment. There is something of truth, he says, in all these views ; but the success of the religion is due to the intensity of the belief that God *is*, that God is *omnipotent*,

and that man must either obey or be made to obey His revealed will.

Now this is the root and core of the whole matter. Of course if the idea of God contained in the faith of Islam is defective or false, these defects and these falsehoods are bound to appear sooner or later in the character, social life and worship of those who hold the creed.

Now the Eternal Being is regarded by Muhammadans as separated from man by an impassable chasm. Those profound words, the germ of Christian theology, that God made man in His own image and after His own likeness, would be indignantly repudiated by the Muhammadan. Man's justice is no measure of the divine justice. There is no affinity. The idea of communion and fellowship with God, (impossible without such affinity,) is blasphemous to the Muhammadan. It follows that His commands do not aim at creating a likeness between God and man, do not aim at making him a son of God, do not aim at revealing the nature of God, but are the arbitrary commands of an oriental despot. It is precisely at this point that our Christian prepossessions lead us astray. We read into passages in the Qur'an which describe and name the attributes of God Christian conceptions of those attributes. If we remember that the Qur'an is supposed to be the perfect revelation of the Eternal Will of God, and that He has commanded everything in it because He willed to command it, and that if He wills to alter it He can alter it, you must face one of two conclusions, either (1) that there is a fixed moral standard and the passages in the Qur'an which enjoin slavery, polygamy, divorce, and religious warfare are immutable, or (2) that there is no fixed moral standard anywhere, no "Rock of Ages." The commands are not the revelation of a moral and righteous governor of the Universe, they are the arbitrary commands of an oriental despot. There is no fixed moral standard at all. If you tell a Muhammadan that Muhammad sinned in the matter of Zainab, he will reply, "He did not sin, because God commanded it." What is a moral impossibility to us,

that God should command a breach of the moral law, is by no means inconceivable to them. Sin with them is disobedience to an arbitrary will, rather than an offence against the holiness of God or a falling short of the glory of God. The will is arbitrary, it can be changed at pleasure, they say that it actually has been changed!

Now this conception of arbitrariness is the evil genius of Islam. It is necessary to read the Qur'an through, and let the repetition of the words "if God will," "what God will," "when God pleases," produce the required impression on the mind. Then you will begin to see how the arbitrariness of the will of God, as they conceived it, led them on to their rigid theory of predestination and *kismet*.

To quote from the Qur'an: ¹

"Had thy Lord pleased He would have made men of one nation, but they will not cease to differ save those on whom thy Lord has had mercy. For this has He created them and the Word of Thy Lord is fulfilled, I will surely fill hell with jinns and mankind altogether."

"We have created for hell many of the jinns and mankind." ²

"Thus God leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and no one knows the hosts of the Lord save Himself." ³ "And every man's destiny have we fastened on his neck." ⁴

Now to see how the traditions support this view.

The traditions are taken from two of the authorized collections—these of Al Bokhari and Abu Muslim. "God touched Adam and brought forth another family, and said, 'I have created these for hell, and their actions will be like unto those of the people of hell.'" Then a man said to the Prophet, "Of what use will deeds of any kind be then?" He said, "When God createth His servant for Paradise his actions will be deserving of Paradise until he die."

¹ Sura xi. 120.

² Sura vii. 178.

³ Sura lxxiv. 34.

⁴ Sura xvii. 14.

“ The first thing which God created was the Pen (of power.) And he said unto it ‘ Write ’ and it said ‘ What shall I write ? ’ And God said ‘ Write down the quantity of every individual thing to be created ; ’ and it wrote down all that was and that will be to eternity.” But the most astounding passage of all is one quoted by the well-known Oriental traveller Mr. Palgrave, who says that when in the Nejd he heard it again and again from admiring and approving Wah-habees. “ When God resolved to create the human race He took into His hands a mass of earth, the same whence all mankind were to be formed, and in which they after a manner pre-existed, and having divided the clod into equal parts, He threw one half into hell saying ‘ These to eternal fire and I care not,’ and the other half into Paradise and said ‘ These to Paradise and I care not.’ ”¹

It is the same traveller and oriental scholar, (and it must be remembered that he formed his opinion from constant intercourse with Arabs in their own country,) who says of the Muhammadan conception of God : “ The full sense of the words ‘ There is no God but God ’ is not only to deny absolutely and unreservedly all plurality whether of nature or person in the Supreme Being, not only to establish the unity of the Unbegetting and the Unbegotten, but, beside this, the words in Arabic and among Arabs imply that this One Supreme Being is the only Agent, the only Force, the only Act, existing throughout the universe. He is immeasurably exalted above all His creatures who lie levelled before Him in one common plane of instrumentality and inertness. He acknowledges no standard or rule save His own sole and absolute will. He communicates nothing to His creatures, their seeming power and act remaining His alone. This tremendous autocrat, this uncontrolled and unsympathizing force, would seem to be above passions or desires. But with respect to His

¹ Miskatu'l Masabin Babu l' Qadr,

creatures, His one main feeling and source of action is jealousy of them, lest they should attribute to themselves what is His only. Sterile in His inaccessible height, neither loving nor enjoying aught save His own self-measured decree, without son or companion or counsellor, His lone egoism is the cause and rule of His indifferent and unregarding despotism. The first note is the key of the whole tune, and this primal idea runs through and modifies the whole system and creed that centres in Him. He burns one individual through all eternity in red hot chains and seas of molten fire, and seats another in the plenary enjoyment of an everlasting harem, just and equally for His own good pleasure and because He wills it."¹

This is a terrible indictment and reads like the language of exaggeration, but it was written by one who formed his conceptions of Islam from Arabs, among Arabs in Arabia, and in a country which, unlike India, has been comparatively uninfluenced by Western thought and Christian civilization.

I believe it to be, at any rate in its main outline, true, and I think we shall find that it explains much in the social ethical and religious system of Islam.

And if, as I believe, it is substantially true, how vast is the difference in spirit between the resignation of Christianity and the resignation of Islam. It is the difference between the resignation, on the one hand, of a slave who knows that he is entirely in the power of an absolute and despotic Lord, the resignation of the slave to that master's arbitrary and despotic will; and the resignation, on the other hand, of a son, who knows that his Father is kind and loving and righteous and holy and true, and that He will never ask him to do anything which is incompatible with eternal truth and holiness and wisdom and purity and love.

¹ Read his book on *Travels in Arabia* in which I first saw this passage. It is quoted in *Hughes' Dict. of Islam*, p. 147.

The world knows of no sublimer act of resignation than the sacrifice of Calvary, and it is most noteworthy that that great oblation was the resignation of a Son, the first and last words spoken on the cross beginning with the word "Father." This name as applied to God is not found in the Qur'an, nor will you ever hear it so applied by the lips of the Muhammadan.

Let us turn now to the different ways in which the followers of Christianity and Islam have been commanded to spread their Faith by the founders of their Faith. I had better say here at once, that although Christians have endeavoured to spread their Faith by the use of the sword, they have done so in defiance of and not, as the Muhammadans, in obedience to the teaching of their Founder. This will appear.

Jihad comes from a word meaning "strenuous effort" or "zeal" and religious warfare is called in the Qur'an "The way of the Lord."¹ Every Muslim who is slain in a religious war is reckoned a martyr and promised immediate entrance into a very earthly Paradise. Now this was a great inducement to a martial and amatory race. Sale says ² Muhammadan divines call the sword "The Key of heaven and hell," and that every drop of blood spilt in the way of the Lord is most acceptable to Him. The Qur'an flatly contradicts itself in the matter. In the second Sura,³ to our astonishment, we read "There is no compulsion in religion." In the third,⁴ "If they turn their backs thou hast only to preach," and again in Sura xvi.,⁵ "Call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and goodly warning, and wrangle with them in the kindest way." But these Suras are abrogated. As the power of Islam increased, Milman says, the spirit of Islam became more and more intolerant and vindictive, and the words of the Qur'an breathe implacable animosity, betray a spirit utterly heedless of human life, and practically declare

¹ Sura ii. 149, 263.

² Preliminary Discourse, § vi. p. 110, *Chandos Classics*.

³ Sura ii. v. 257. ⁴ Sura iii. v. 19. ⁵ Sura xvi. 126.

war against all mankind. "O thou prophet, urge on the believers to fight. It has not been for any prophet to take captive until he hath slaughtered in the land. Eat of what spoil ye have taken and fear God, for God is forgiving and merciful."¹ We have just been told that God is mighty and wise. We should read the attributes of God in their context and then we see the force of what I said about Christian prepossessions. "When ye meet those who misbelieve, then strike off their heads until ye have massacred them, and bind fast their bonds."² In the ninth Sura,³ the last revealed, we read as follows: "Kill the idolators wherever ye find them, and take them and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every place." He rebukes the laggard,⁴ "Ye shall by no means sally forth with me nor shall ye ever fight a foe with me. Ye were content to sit at home the first time, sit ye with them now with those that stay behind." In fact the word "fight" occurs seventeen times in this Sura, and as Milman says, what may be considered the dying words, the solemn bequest of Muhammad to mankind, were really the last words of this last revealed Sura.⁵ "O true believers, wage war against such of the Infidels as are near you, and let them find severity in you and know that God is with them that fear Him." This teaching combined with the sanction given to secret assassination has borne bitter fruit indeed. Omar, Othman, Ali, Hassan, Hosein, all slain, or poisoned, or assassinated, and by Muhammadans. Islam waded to power through rivers of blood. Nor is it astonishing that there should have sprung up within Islam a sect of assassins. If you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind.

But compare with such a spirit of vindictiveness and intolerance the spirit of Him who told the Sons of Thunder, when they wished to call down fire from

¹ Sura viii. v. 65, etc.

² Sura xlvii. v. 4. ³ Sura ix. v. 5.

⁴ Sura ix. v. 84.

⁵ Sura ix. v. 124.

heaven on the Samaritans, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of, and that He had come to save men's lives not to destroy them; who healed the man wounded by the sword of his too zealous apostle; who commanded that apostle to sheathe his sword, and told him that those who use the sword shall perish by it; who told Pilate "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, but now is My kingdom not of this world." How can the Muhammadans challenge us to compare the Arab who robbed and killed and destroyed with the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.

Take again the position of *women* in Islam. The very worst passages in the Qur'an are unmistakably due to ideas which Muhammad entertained about the position of women. He consecrated and eternalized polygamy. What could have been the spirit of a man who could write Sura iv. 3, 28 and 29; xxxiii. 49, "Marry what seems good to you of women, by twos or threes or fours, this in addition to *what your right hands possess*"—a euphemism to the full significance of which I will call your attention in a moment.

What the spirit of a man who could allow a husband to divorce the same wife three times,¹ and after that allow him to marry her again, provided she had in the meantime been married to some one else; what the spirit of a man who could forge for himself a special license to marry the wife of his adopted son² in that son's life-time, who could write what he wrote about his liaison with Mary the Copt, and who could write what he wrote³ about his special permission as a prophet to increase the number of his lawful wives? Though it is untrue to say that Muhammadans think that women have no souls,⁴ it is true that you never see them in mosques, that they rarely eat with their husbands, and that they are often condemned to a kind of perpetual

¹ Cf. Sura ii. 228-230. ² Sura xxxiii. 37. ³ Sura xxxiii. 7.

⁴ Cf. Sura xxxiii. 5.

incarceration. There is a tradition that Muhammad said that he saw hell full of women. We read in the Qur'an what Paradise will be like for men, but there is no corresponding passage revealing what Paradise will be like for women.

I defy any candid and fair-minded man to read the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth chapters called "The Merciful" and "The Inevitable" and then say that the description of Paradise in the Qur'an is metaphorical and symbolical. The Traditions will very soon disabuse him if he accepts a solution of a difficulty which very shame has forced from some Muhammadan divines. The devout Muhammadan is offered a choice between eternal torment and an everlasting hareem. And then the words "Which your right hands possess." That means when analyzed that Muhammadans may fight unbelievers, capture their mothers and sisters and daughters and marry them by divine right in the life-time of their husbands, or after killing their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. This divine permission is written down by the Pen of Power on the Preserved Table before the Throne of God. Before we allow lower races to drift into Muhammadanism let us remember to whom these words, "which your right hands possess" might apply if there were a Jihad proclaimed in Europe, Africa, and Asia to-morrow.

And when we turn to Christianity and the teaching of the Divine Founder of our Faith about marriage and divorce, when we compare with the sensual descriptions of an earthly Paradise in the Qur'an the words "In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the Angels of God," when we think how much the spirit of Christianity has already accomplished for women all over the world, can any one desire for a moment the progress of a religion which regards women as Muhammadans regard them on earth and believe they will continue to regard them eternally in Heaven?

With respect to slavery the very phrase we have been considering "what your right hands possess" conceals

the worst phase of slavery as it exists in the Muhamadan world. It is this consecration of servile concubinage which helps to make Muhammadan religion popular amongst uncivilized races ; I say "consecration," for what Muhammadanism recognizes in the Qur'an it consecrates. Again, where there is Jihad, there must be slavery. No one can deny that so far from slavery being restrained or discouraged by the spirit of Islam it has been perpetuated and encouraged by it. Instead of a Christian family we have a little or big despot with his wives and concubines and slaves, doing what he wills, as he wills, and when he wills, and this conception of the social life is projected both by the Qur'an and the traditions into Paradise itself. We see the little lords of Paradise reclining on couches of brocade, with the fruits of the celestial gardens in their reach to cull : they rest on green cushions, at their feet are beautiful carpets. Around them pass eternal youths with goblets and ewers and cups of flowing wine. No headache shall they feel therefrom, nor shall their wits be dimmed. One cannot help suspecting that these youths who are ministering to the Lords of Paradise are only slaves in disguise, and in the traditional explanation there is much to bear this out.

The idea of slavery is natural to Islam, it enters into their conception of the relation of man to God. It is true that Muhammad mitigated the condition of slavery in Arabia, that he describes manumission as a good act, that he allows a slave to redeem himself, but it is equally certain from history that unless there is some Christian power at hand to take advantage of and enforce these mitigations, slavery will continue unchecked with all its horrible cruelties. He who took upon Him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, who came to minister and not to be ministered unto, went to the root of the matter. The grand charter of Christian liberty is contained in the words of our Lord "One is your Master and all ye are brethren,"¹ and in those of

¹ Matt. xxiii. 10 ff.

St. Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, there is neither bond nor free, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus."¹

Let us conclude by one hurried glance at punishments and rewards held out to the believers in "the honourable Qur'an, the laid up book," which none must touch but the purified.² I have said something about the rewards of the faithful, let us see what is written about the torments of the damned.

What strikes the mind of the reader as he reads passage after passage descriptive of the torments of the damned is the cruelty of them. They are written as if the writing them gave delight, as if the author were gloating over the sufferings which he describes. True, our Lord says that the soul of the rich man was in torment; He speaks of eternal fire, but always with evident sorrow and pain. We read of a lake of fire and those in it, and the smoke of their torment going up for ever; but all these passages are at any rate modified by our knowledge that God is Love, that His mercy is everlasting, that He so loved the world that He sent His Son to die for it, that He freely invites all to come to the Water of Life, that He wills not that any should perish. We know besides that our Lord habitually spake in parables and concealed spiritual truths under material images. And we are made to feel that *sin* is a terrible thing, hateful to God, that the fire which consumes sin is His Eternal Holiness, and that wherever there is sin there is the worm that never dies, that the fire is never quenched because it must eternally consume the chaff of sin. There is a moral and ethical significance in these passages. Now it is not so with the descriptions in the Qur'an. They are detailed, they are vindictive, and there is not the obviously moral purpose in them which we find in the Bible. Hear a few details³: "The fellows of the left, what unlucky fellows! in hot blasts and boiling

¹ Gal. iii. 28.

³ Sura lvi. 40.

² Sura lvi. 75.

water and a shade of pitchy smoke." "He that is punished lightly will be shod with shoes of fire which will make his skull boil like a cauldron. They will be made to drink boiling water." ¹ The phrases "an evil journey shall it be," "and evil is the couch," "the torment of the blaze," "they shall abide therein for ever," these constantly recur and are like a perpetual refrain.

A man opposes Muhammad; God replies "I will broil him in hell fire and what shall make thee know what hell fire is? it scorches the flesh." And then a passage of almost fiendish joy: ² "But to-day (after the judgment), those who believe shall at the misbelievers laugh. Upon couches shall they gaze. Are the misbelievers rewarded for what they have done?"

Some Muhammadan doctors have endeavoured to prove that the descriptions of Paradise are material images of spiritual joys. They quote a tradition in which Muhammad promises as the highest of all rewards the Vision of God Himself. And there is a passage in the Qur'an which struck me much when I first read it—"Ye love the transient life and ye neglect the hereafter. Faces on that day shall be bright, gazing on their Lord." ³ But here is the traditional interpretation. The Apostle of God said: "Veily the least of the inhabitants of Paradise in rank is he who shall indeed behold his gardens, his wives, his pleasures, his servants and his couches extending over the space of a thousand years, and the most acceptable to God among them shall look upon His Face night and day." Then he recited "Faces in that day shall be bright looking upon their Lord." ⁴ The very same passage which speaks of the Vision of God speaks of the carnal delights of which the Qur'an is so full. They are at the Sultan's levée, and he is in a very generous mood.

We turn wearily away. We turn from darkness to

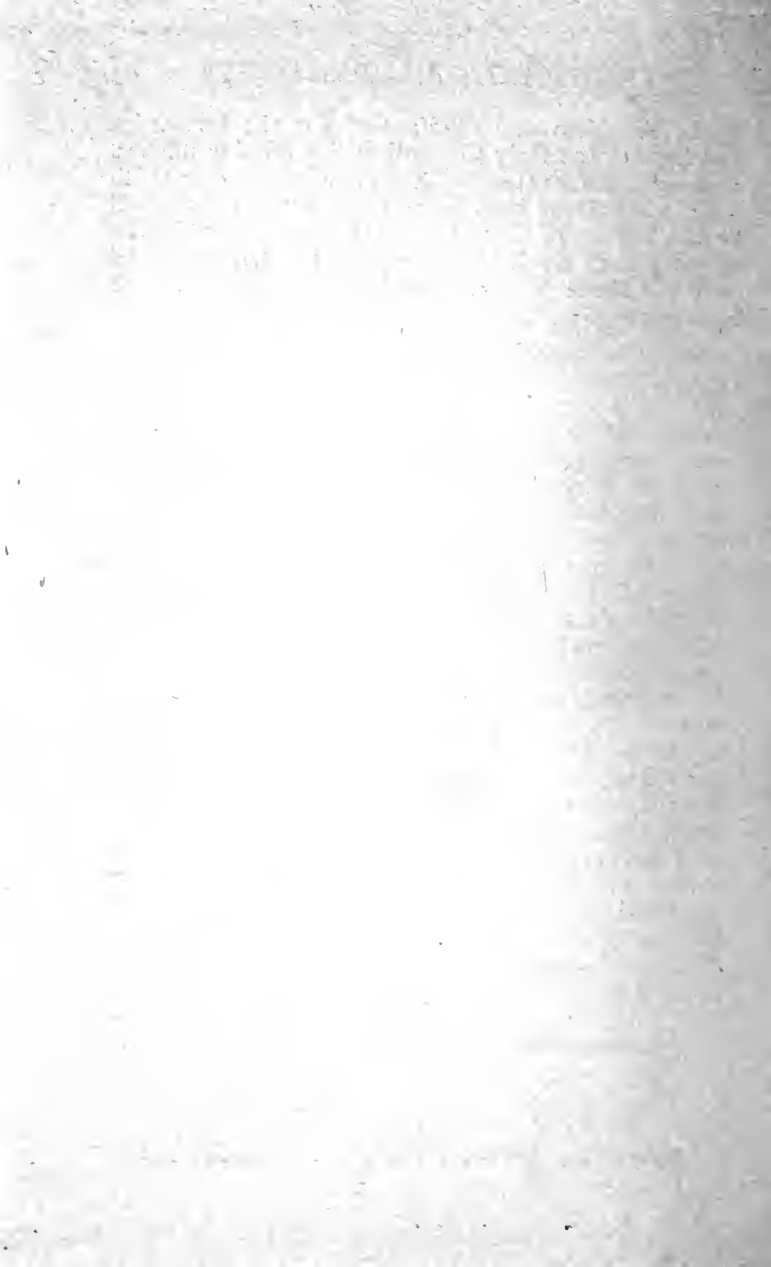
¹ Sura xlv. 45, and Sura lxxxviii.

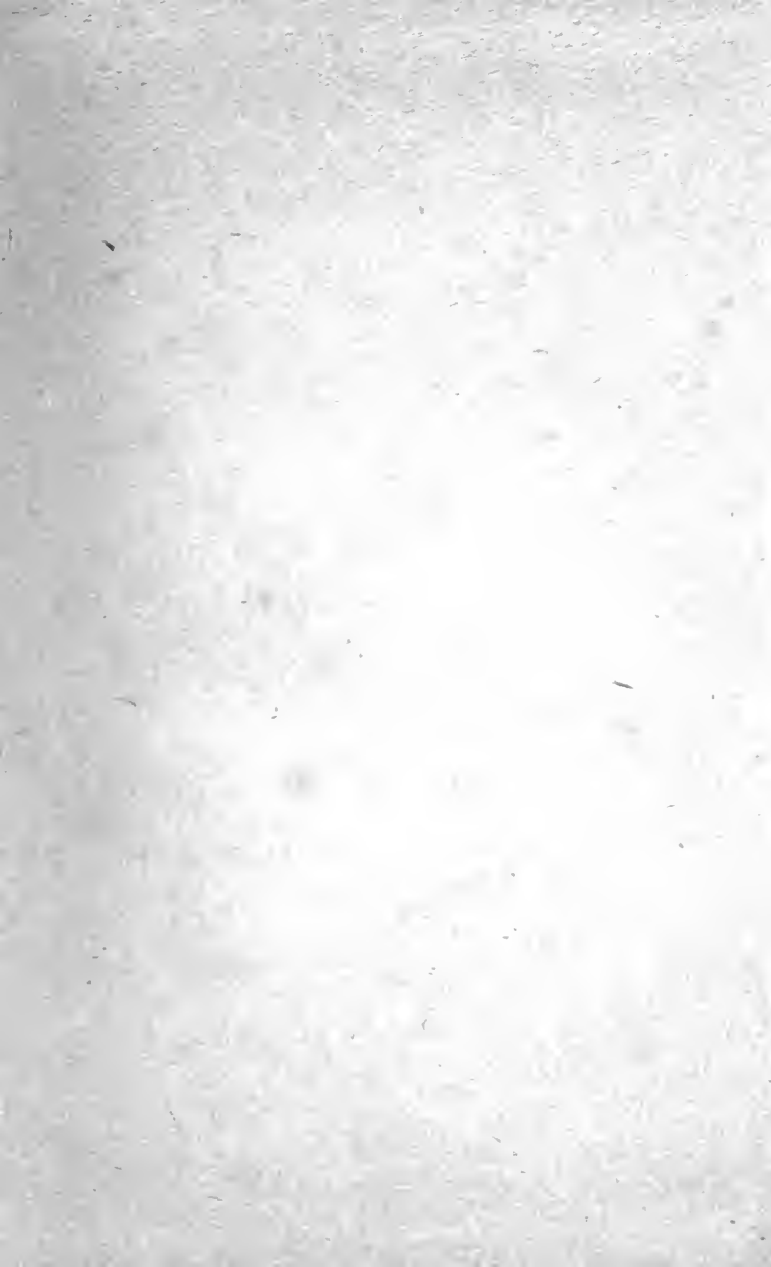
² Sura lxxxiii. 34.

³ Sura lxxv. 22, 23.

⁴ *Mishkat*, page 493, quoted in a pamphlet, which I have used freely, by the Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, upon "Islam."

light. We bless and glorify God for the knowledge and hope of the Holy City into which nothing unclean shall enter nor he that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, where there shall be no more curse, where shall be the Throne of God and of the Lamb, wherein His servants shall do Him service, and see His Face, and have His Name of Love inscribed upon their foreheads for evermore.





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