

FOOD FOR REFLECTION

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BEING AN
HISTORICAL COMPARISON
BETWEEN
MUHAMMADANISM AND CHRISTIANITY
BY
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PREFACE

THIS book was originally written by the Rev. Dr. Koelle, a profound oriental scholar, who for many years resided in Turkey, as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society.

It was published by the Church Missionary Society in 1865, and is now reprinted as it deals with an interesting and important aspect of the Muhammadan controversy. The transliteration has been changed into the form adopted by the C.L.S. and a few notes have been added; otherwise this edition is an exact reproduction of the original.

MADRAS,
October, 1914

E. S.

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INTRODUCTION

I VENTURE to address a few words of truth and love to my Muhammadan brethren on a subject I well know they agree with me in thinking one of the most important, solemn, and sacred, which can occupy the thoughts of man, namely, religion. If our intercourse is to be really profitable, we must speak according to truth, and our object must be to apprehend God's truth more clearly, and grasp it more firmly and fully, as well as to practise it more diligently. As the claims of truth are paramount, every man ought to be ready to submit himself to it. If, therefore, in the course of our investigation, we become acquainted with divine truths hitherto unknown to us, it is our duty to embrace them; and should we also arrive at the conviction that there are other points we have held as of divine authority which have not the characteristic and the claims of truth, then we must be ready to renounce them; for nothing ought to stand in the way of that obedience which every man owes to the truth of God when he knows it. The discovery of error is the first step on the way to truth.

One of the first things that strikes a man in turning his mind to the existing religions, is their great number and variety. No nation has yet been discovered without some kind of religion, or some object of worship. This indicates plainly that man was originally created for God, and that he cannot help feeling at times that there is a higher Being on whom he depends, and to whom he owes something. But the manner in which men seek to serve and worship God differs most widely: There are heathen religions in which the priest can take any piece of stone, wood, or iron, any feather, fruit, or other thing, and consecrate it an object of worship for the people. In some pagan lands God is worshipped under the symbol of animals, such as cows, alligators, serpents, or that of fire and light, or of the sun, moon, and stars. In India, besides the highest God, or Brahm, many subordinate deities are worshipped. Others, again, assert that themselves and all existing things together, constitute the Deity. Now with these different polytheistic and pantheistic systems we will have nothing more to do on the present occasion, as it is not supposed that, for any one reading these lines, they can have the slightest attraction. Nor is any attempt made to persuade us to embrace them. They only show that man cannot live without God and without religion; so that, if he does not know the true God

and the true religion, he will invent for himself false deities and false modes of worship.

But besides these polytheistic or pantheistic, and therefore erroneous and heathen creeds, there remain three religions claiming an origin in a special divine revelation, and equally professing the worship of the one true God, the Creator and Lord of all, namely, the Jewish, the Muhammadan, and the Christian.¹ These three contain, in their monotheistic character, a most essential element of the true religion. But as they also differ from one another in many respects, and on most important questions, they cannot all be equally true; and if we do not wish to entertain the preposterous idea that all religions are false, and that in regard to his highest, that is his religious, wants man is left entirely in the dark without the unerring light of a divine revelation, we must allow that one of them is the true religion in the highest and absolute sense. Now which of the three is it? On this momentous question we shall endeavour, by what follows, to enable the reader, with the blessing of God, to arrive at a clear and well-founded conviction.

¹ By the terms Judaism and the Jewish religion is meant, in this book, the religion taught in the Old Testament. How far this ancient religion was the same as the now existing modern Judaism is not here discussed.

FOOD FOR REFLECTION

PART I

RELATION BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

OR

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW FULFILLED AND SUPERSEDED BY
THE ECONOMY OF THE GOSPEL

I

JUDAISM SUPERSEDED BY CHRISTIANITY, AS SHOWN BY THE WONDERFUL
VITALITY OF CHRISTIANITY, ITS CONVERTING EFFECTS, AND
TRIUMPHANT SPREAD NOTWITHSTANDING THE MOST FORMIDABLE
OPPOSITION

THE Jewish religion is the oldest of the three in question. If we date its origin from the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, in the days of Moses, it is more than fourteen hundred years older than the Christian, and more than two thousand older than the Muhammadan religion. From the time of the giving of the Law to the coming of Jesus Christ, the people of Israel, or the Jews, were the only worshippers of the one true God, and all the other nations of the earth were sunk in ignorance and

idolatry. During that period, therefore, the religion of Israel was the only true religion in the world. But if this is the case—if the religion of Israel was once the only true one, having been revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (see Ex. xix. etc.)—is then our question not answered already, and ought not all Muhammadans and Christians to become Jews? By no means; for it does not follow that what was once the whole revealed truth of God is so still; on the contrary, there was a growth and progress in revelation, as in every thing else, until completeness and maturity were attained. As God created the world, not in one day, but in a succession of days, so also did He reveal the whole of His saving truth, not at once, but gradually. At the call of Abraham, the great ancestor of the Jewish nation, many hundred years had already elapsed since the deluge; and between the call of Abraham and the giving of the Law in the days of Moses again more than four hundred years passed away. God is not dependent on time, but time depends on Him. He can well wait with His manifestations of mercy and judgement till mankind is prepared for them, or till the right time is come. The family of Abraham had first to be prepared by their great affliction in Egypt and their miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh, before God saw fit that they should receive His Law from Sinai. So, likewise, ages of preparation had to pass away, before the time of the

coming of Messiah was fulfilled. And again, generations have come and gone since then; and still the day of judgement, which will close the present order of things, has not yet broken in upon us, because the world, in the eyes of God, is not yet ripe for it. It seems, then, there is good reason why God should not reveal His truth all at once, or at the beginning of the world, but gradually, and after mankind, by a long history and accumulated experience, has become prepared for it; and we must easily perceive it to be possible that, when God sends a further revelation, men should sin against Him and His truth, by rejecting the later revelation under the pretence of clinging to that which had been revealed before. Now it appears that this is actually the sin of which the Jews have made themselves guilty; for when the Messiah came, and proved, by His holy life no less than by His mighty words and works, that He was sent from heaven, only a few thousand Jews glorified God by believing in Him, whereas the nation at large refused to receive the gospel, and the Pharisees, or leaders, said, 'We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is' (John ix. 29). By thus rejecting the messenger of God, who spoke to them not His own words, but those of the heavenly Father that had sent Him (John xii. 49-50), the Jews separated themselves from the true religion; and instead of still being God's favoured people, they

have been banished from their own country, and are scattered among all nations, as a punishment for their unbelief and sin. It is therefore plain, that although the Jews had once the true religion, and although they still hold the truth that 'there is no God but one', yet now their doctrine is mixed with error and their religion with unbelief.

Their rejection, then, of Christ, and the divine truth He offered them, was a national crime which a righteous God could not but visit with a condign national punishment. Scarcely forty years elapsed after that crime ere God's judgements overtook the Jewish nation in such a manner, that the towns and villages of their land were destroyed, their temple was burnt, Jerusalem was made a heap of ruins, most of their men were slain by the sword, or perished by famine and disease, and the remainder, with the women and children, were scattered to the four quarters of the globe. This was not done by Christians, but by the heathen Romans, whom God employed as the instruments of His vengeance. Since that time until now the Jews have remained without government and country of their own, frequently oppressed and generally despised by all the nations among whom they are sojourning as strangers.

The number of Christians meanwhile steadily increased everywhere; though fiercely opposed by the Jews up to the destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards relentlessly persecuted for several centuries

longer by the Roman emperors, who had cause, from the rapid spread of the new faith, to fear for idolatry, the religion of the State.

There were then two monotheistic religions face to face, the Jewish and the Christian; the former (evidently no longer the same with that which anciently bore its name) but powerless, lifeless, productive only of the dead works of an outward legality, substituting a multitude of ritual observances for a living and loving faith; deprived of its sanctuary, its divinely-ordained services and priesthood, yet failing to discern that the time for those services was gone by; professed by a dismembered people, still boasting of ancient privileges, yet unable to make any converts in the many countries over which they were scattered; the latter, or the Christian religion, on the contrary, full of life and power; leading men from a course of sin to a life of holiness; transforming self-righteous Pharisees into humble and honest believers; enabling the selfish to yield up their possessions and their life for the good of others; imparting heavenly wisdom to the unlettered, and undaunted courage to the timid; spreading from city to city, from country to country; emptying the temples of the idols, extinguishing the fire on their altars, gaining converts by its heart-conquering power from amongst the poor and the rich, the simple and the learned, and, in less than three centuries, mounting even upon the throne

of the then mightiest empire in the world. The Jews, whilst they had the power, were not deterred by their religion from persecuting the Christians; but the Christians were enabled by theirs to bear persecution patiently, yea, even, as we are informed by the historians of those days, to suffer death for their faith—death in its most cruel forms, by the sword, by fire, by water, by wild beasts—and tortures even worse than death, and not unfrequently to meet their doom singing songs of joy and triumph with their last breath, as if they were going to a wedding-feast, or to be crowned as victors. To every thoughtful and unprejudiced man it must, then, have appeared . indubitable that Christianity was the true means to lead the erring into the way of truth, and sinners into the path of righteousness; that it was a heavenly light, a divine gift, a life stronger than death, a power to overcome the world by its own spiritual nature and influence, without the aid of the sword or other worldly weapons; and that it was justly entitled to take its place as God's revealed truth, the religion destined for all mankind.

II

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY FORETOLD AND EXPECTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT DISPENSATION

IF this much is clear from the triumphant spread of the new religion, and the effects attending its reception in the hearts of believers, an honest examination

of its nature and evidences can likewise not fail to demonstrate that it is a higher and maturer form of the true religion than the Mosaic law which it has superseded.

The first observation we have to offer in this place is, that Christ and Christianity did not appear without due notice, but that, on the contrary, in the sacred writings of the Jews themselves there were explicit intimations, or prophecies, respecting the coming of a great reformer under the character of a Prophet, Priest, and King, and of a consequent change in the national religion.

We shall now note a few of these prophecies. According to Deut. xviii. 18-19, God said unto Moses, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' The fulfilment of this prophecy can be gathered from Acts iii. 22-6; Luke xxiv. 19; John iv. 25-26; viii. 28; xii. 49-50; xv. 15; Heb. ii. 3 iii. 1-2; xii. 25. In Psalm cx. 4 we read the remarkable word addressed to one who was then still future, and who was to be not only David's son, but at the same time his Lord (see Matt. xxii. 42-5), 'The Lord has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'

For the fulfilment of this word, see Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 1-25. Respecting the royal dignity of the Messiah expected by the Jews, we will quote a passage from the book of the prophet Daniel, in which he says (Dan. vii. 13, 14), 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and language should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' The fulfilment of this prophecy appears from passage, such as these—Matt. xxiv. 30; xxviii. 18; Eph. i. 20-2; Rev. i. 7; xi. 15; xiv. 14; xix. 11-16. The following is one of those Scriptures in which it is plainly foretold that the form of the true religion should not remain the same to the end of time, but that it should undergo an important amelioration: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying; Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more' (Jer. xxxi. 31-4).

Now if these and similar prophecies were not contained in the sacred writings of the Jews; they would have had a plausible excuse for not believing in Jesus Christ, for they could have said, 'We know that our religion came from God, and that Moses was his chosen servant; how then could we believe in one who claims to be even greater than Moses, or accept his religion, when God had never told us in his word that a prophet should come, or that the Law given by Moses should ever be superseded by another more efficacious, and better adapted to the wants of man?' As it is, they are without excuse in rejecting Jesus Christ, in whom all these predictions are fulfilled, and who has brought in a complete redemption.

III

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY ACTUALLY AROSE AMONG THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WHERE THE GROUND HAD BEEN PREPARED

IT appears, from the preceding observations, that Christianity sprang from the bosom of the ancient

Jewish faith, and was its higher development, just as the boughs and branches of a tree grow out of its stem and roots. God saw fit to withhold the revelation of the Gospel until the ground had first been prepared for it by the Law; and when He actually gave it, He did so where the preparing process had been going on, namely, among the people of Israel. This seems to deserve special notice for though we are unable fully to scan the works of God, yet we reverently discern in this fact a reasonableness that can hardly fail to approve itself to sound judgement. It is what every one would reasonably expect, that the fullest divine revelation should be made among the people where preceding revelations had already prepared men's minds for it. Accordingly, we are not only informed in the Gospel that Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David (see Matt. ii. 1; Luke ii. 1-7), and grew up in Nazareth, a city of Galilee (Luke ii. 39, 51); but also, that during His public ministry He expressly declared that the offer of His salvation was first of all to be freely made to the Jewish nation. So we read, e.g. in Matt. x. 5, 6, that when He first sent forth the twelve apostles to preach and to heal, He charged them in the following words: 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' And on another occasion, when His disciples asked Him to heal the daughter of a

Phoenician woman, he replied, 'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. xv. 24). It was only after a number of disciples had been gathered among Israel, and they were qualified by the descent of the Holy Ghost to become preachers of the gospel to other nations, that Jesus Christ ordained His religion to be carried beyond the bounds of Judea and to the ends of the earth (see Acts i. 3-8). The subsequent history of Christianity plainly shows, that although the bulk of the Jewish nation proved unbelieving, yet its Author had perfectly succeeded in laying among the true Israelites a strong and solid foundation of His Church on which might be securely built the vast and massive superstructure of the future.

IV

CHRIST'S DIVINE MISSION THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DISPENSATION, GLORIOUSLY ESTABLISHED BY THE PROOF OF MIRACLES

THE many miracles which Christ did, and which no one had done before Him, were calculated to prove to the thoughtful Jews, that, by embracing the spiritual religion which He preached, they would only act in accordance with the will of God. We read in the beginning of the book of Exodus, that when God called Moses to be a prophet and deliverer to Israel, He gave him power to work a number of miracles, both before Israel and before the people

of Egypt, so that they might understand that he was a true messenger of God, and that the religion which he taught was a divine revelation. It is remarkable, in the case of Moses, that he received no general or indiscriminate power of working miracles, but that, on each occasion, he was specially empowered and directed to act, and that without such a special commission from God it would appear he neither did, nor could, work any miracle. For examples of these special directions, see Exod. iv. 2-9; viii. 5, 16, 20-1; ix. 3, 8, 9, 22; x. 12, 21; xiv. 16, 26; xviii. 6.

In consequence of these miracles which Moses did in the name of the Lord, the people believed in him, as we read in Exod. iv. 31; xiv. 31; and it was on the same account, and because the Lord knew him face to face, that we read in Deut. xxxiv. 10-12, that among all the prophets in Israel he had no equal in rank. Now if the Israelites believed in Moses on account of the miracles he did, how much more cause had they for believing in Jesus Christ, whose ministry could thus be described by Himself. 'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.' (see Matt. xi. 5); and of whom it is said in Mark iii. 10-11, 'for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him. And the unclean spirits,

whosoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God!' Not many days before His own death He called Lazarus out of the grave, though he had been dead four days, by which time, according to the natural course of things in that climate, decomposition would have already begun (see John xi. 39). Surely we cannot wonder that St. Peter, in addressing the Jews on one occasion, described Him to them as 'a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know' (see Acts ii. 22); and it is not too much to say, that neither before nor since has there ever lived a man whose actions bore the same impress of boundless beneficence and supernatural power. Therefore He might well challenge the Jews in those wonderfully gentle and condescending words recorded in John x. 37-8: 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.'

V

THE DIVINE REVELATION BY CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL PRESENTS A REAL ADVANCE BEYOND THAT OF THE JEWISH DISPENSATION

THIS subject admits of almost an unlimited illustration; but, for the present, we shall restrict our

comparison to six points, the first three bearing more particularly on our relation to God and divine things, and the last three on our relation to our fellow-men.

1. With regard to God.

Every attentive reader of the Bible must remark some differences between the views given to us of the God in the Old Testament, and those which are supplied in the New. In the old economy He is predominantly presented as the Almighty Creator and Lord of all, or as the holy and righteous Judge, or the benign and merciful Ruler of men, or (more particularly) as the God of the people of Israel. In Exod. xx. 5-6, e.g. God says: 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments.' And, in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter we read that the people were so afraid of God that they said to Moses, 'Speak thou with us, and we, will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.' In Ps. xcv. 6-7, we read, 'O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we (i.e. especially we the nation of Israel) are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.'

It is true that the typical part of the Mosaic Law

threw further light on the divine attributes, and that the prophetic writings contain intimations of the propitiation that the promised Messiah was to effect, and of the glorious manifestation that would thus be made of God's infinite love. But the typical and prophetic teaching in its spiritual character seems to have been but little understood by the nation generally, and they seem to have contented themselves with the more elementary apprehensions of God as stated above.

In the New Testament, however, God is preeminently known and adored as the God of love, as our Father in Christ Jesus; an unquestionable advance this from the mere recognition of an omnipotent Creator, or a moral Governor and Judge. In the pattern for prayer which Christ gave to His disciples, He directed them to address God as 'Our Father which art in heaven' (Matt. vi. 9). St. Paul writes to the Christians of Galatia, 'For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise' (Gal. iii. 26-29). And St. John, in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, wrote to the Christians of his day (iv. 7-8, 16), 'Beloved, let us love one

another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love . . . and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.

But, besides this, the gospel clearly reveals to us what in the law is but darkly intimated, namely, that the unity of the Godhead is not one of poverty or dreary isolation; but that, as the perfection of God consists in its matchless unity, so it also consists in a richness and self-sufficiency of life, rendering God absolutely independent of the world as to His own happiness and glory, and unfolding, in three blessed Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three blessed Persons, or Hypostases, who, in the absolute unity of their Godhead, have created the universe with all it contains, both visible and invisible, are also the efficient cause of the salvation of believing man from Satan, sin, and death.

This tri-partite existence of divine life, or this threeness of Persons in the one Godhead, which Christian divines have called the Trinity is undoubtedly revealed in the Gospels in those passages where either to the Son or to the Holy Ghost divine attributes are ascribed, or where the three blessed Persons are expressly mentioned, as e. g. respecting the Son, in John i. 1, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God' (see vv. 14-17); and John v. 20-3, 'For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgement unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent Him.' The Holy Spirit is sometimes spoken of as sent to the believers by the Father, as e.g. in John xiv. 26, 'The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you' (comp. also John xiv. 16; Acts xv. 8; Gal. iv. 6); and sometimes as sent by the Son, e.g. Acts ii. 32-3, 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.' (See also John xv. 26; xvi. 7; xx. 22.) Of this Holy Spirit it is written in 1 Cor. ii. 10-11, that 'The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit

of God.' The three Persons of the blessed Godhead are all mentioned together in Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; 1 John v. 7. To each of these Persons in the Godhead a share is ascribed in the salvation of fallen man. Of the Father it is said, in Eph. i. 4, that 'he chose us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world;' and in John iii. 16, that 'He so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Of the Son it is said that He died a sacrifice for our sins, in order to redeem us from their guilt and power, and to reconcile us unto God (see Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 24; Col. i. 19-22.) And regarding the Holy Ghost, we are taught that He sanctifies believers, and makes them, as it were, temples of God (see Rom. xv. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. iii. 26; vi. 19, 20). All this is well comprised in 1 Pet. i. 2, where the true believers are called 'elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.'

2. With regard to worship.

The service or worship of God is much more elevated and spiritual in the new economy than in the old. The Law of Moses contains a great many precepts concerning ritual defilement and purification, the observance of certain times or places,

and of different kinds of sacrifices, as will be seen from a perusal of the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Whereas in the New Testament we read that Jesus, far from appointing a new Qibla, or other needless observances, said to an inquiring women of Samaria, 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father . . . but . . . the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers' (John iv. 21-3). St. James writes in his Epistle (i. 27), 'Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' According to the gospel, the service which God requires of us does not consist mainly in a number of outward acts, such as frequent ablutions, public prayers, fasting, visiting of particular temples, etc.; but what He requires of us, above all, is repentance from sin, faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, a complete change of mind, a conversion from sin to holiness, so thorough and real that it can be called a 'new or second birth', and then a whole life spent according to His will and for His glory. Hence we read that both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus began their preaching by the exhortation. 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe

in the Gospel: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (see Mark i. 15; Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17); and that the Apostles likewise 'went out and preached that men should repent' (see Mark vi. 12, and compare Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; xvii. 30). On one occasion Jesus Christ declared before the Jews, 'For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (see John vi. 40); and on another He assured one of their rulers, saying, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3). St. John writes in his first Epistle (v. 4), 'Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.' We are taught that only such faith leads to eternal salvation, whilst no man can be saved by mere ceremonial observances and legal practices. Thus, for example, it is written in Gal. ii. 16, 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' And that this saving faith is not a dead and unfruitful thing, or consistent with a life of carelessness and sin, appears with abundant clearness from a number of passages. In 2 Pet. i. 5-8 we read, 'Yea, and for this very

cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in your temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' St. Paul writes to the Romans (Rom. xii. 1), 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' and again to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 31), 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Instead of prayer in a certain place or at a certain hour, St. Paul recommends to the Christians the spirit of prayer, or a life of prayer, by exhorting them to 'pray without ceasing' (see 1 Thess. v. 17; Rom. xii. 12). In the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 1-14) the Christian view of sacrifices is thus expressed: 'The law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, they can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh . . . For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he (Jesus Christ) with . . . Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God, . . . for by one offering he

hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' We learn from this and similar passages that the Levitical ceremonies foreshadowed the atoning death of Christ and the blessings He bestows, and that when the realities are come, the types are no longer needed (see also Col. ii. 16-17).

3. With respect to the kingdom of God.

By the kingdom of God we mean the institutions which God graciously commenced on the earth for the purpose of reclaiming mankind from the power of sin and Satan, bringing them into communion with Himself, and thus preparing them for heaven. Now in this kingdom of God, or religious economy, as it existed during the Mosaic dispensation, there was much that had an exclusively national character. Israel was God's chosen people (Exod. xix. 5; Deut. x. 15), a 'kingdom of priests,' a 'holy nation' (Exod. xix. 6), and God even called them His 'first-born son' (Exod. iv. 22). They were 'the children of the kingdom' (Matt. viii. 12; xxi. 43); and in their temple at Jerusalem God had 'caused His name to dwell' as in no other place on earth (see Deut. xii. 5, 11, with 2 Chron. vii. 16; and Neh. i. 9), whilst all other nations were living in ignorance (Acts xvii. 30) and 'suffered to walk in their own ways' (Acts xvi. 16). Therefore if any believing Gentile wished to be recognized as a full member of the kingdom of God, he had first, by circumcision, to be naturalized in the Jewish community (Exod. xii. 48),

which, priding itself on its peculiar privileges (Rom. ii. 16-20), despised utterly all who did not undergo that initiatory rite (1 Sam. xxxi. 4; Eph. ii. 11). But with the coming of Christ the kingdom of God dropped its mere national character, or its exclusively Jewish form and colouring, and stood forth fully developed in its universal and truly spiritual nature. His precursor, John, told the Jews plainly, 'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' (Matt. iii. 2-3, 9). St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Romans (ii. 28-9), 'He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.' Circumcision as a religious practice is entirely done away with in the gospel, as seen from Gal. v. 2, where the Apostle declares, 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing;' and from Col. ii. 11, where he says to the Christians, 'In whom ye were also circumcised, with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ.' Jesus Christ Himself states, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, there! for lo, the kingdom of God

is within you' (Luke xvii. 20-1); and on another occasion, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. . . To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice' (John xviii. 36-7). St. Paul likewise affirms, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love' (Gal. v: 6); and again, 'The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv. 17).

4. On Retaliation.

The Mosaic code contained what is called the law of retaliation. In case of a murder it recognized the nearest relative of the person killed as his 'avenger of blood,' or Goel, whose duty it was to kill the murderer. We read in Num. xxxv. 19, 'The avenger of blood shall himself put the manslayer to death: when he meeteth him, he shall put him to death.' And if an intentional murderer had fled to the city of refuge, the elders of his city were commanded in Deut. xix. 12 to 'send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.' Even with regard to other injury inflicted, the law of retaliation was observed, as we gather from Lev. xxiv. 19-20, 'If a

man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him.' Now these regulations were designed for the guidance of the civil magistrate, and we must not for a moment doubt that they were perfectly suited to the purpose for which they were given; but it is known from history that the Jews generally were more enslaved to the letter of their law than animated by its spirit, so that the law of retaliation was often perverted by them to justify private revenge. Jesus Christ therefore found it necessary to declare, according to Matt. v. 38-9, 'Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' The spirit of this precept He Himself exemplified in His own conduct; for, according to 1 Peter ii. 23, 'when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' The teaching of His apostles breathes the same spirit of meekness and love. So St. Paul writes to the Romans, 'Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord' (Rom. xii. 19). And St. Peter, in his first Epistle (ii. 19-21), says, 'This is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a

man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.' If it be asked, Why were not these directions given with equal copiousness in the Mosaic Law? it must be owned that we cannot always explain the actions of the Most High; but it may be suggested, at the same time, that previously to the propitiatory death of Christ there had not been so clear a discovery of the reconciliation between hatred of sin and compassion for the sinner, so that if the same unlimited forgiveness of wrong-doing had then been unreservedly enjoined, it might have led men to think too lightly of the terribleness and malignity of moral and spiritual evil. Still, whatever the cause may have been, there must be recognized in this respect a moral advance in the New Testament as compared with the Old.

5. On the subject of Slavery.

There is every reason to believe that, amongst the Israelites, slaves enjoyed much more consideration and protection than amongst the heathen; for they were not only allowed but enjoined to abstain from work on the Sabbath (see Deut. v. 14), and to participate in the religious festival of the nation (Exod. xii. 44; Deut. xvi. 10-11). The murder

of a slave was punishable by law (Exod. xxi. 10); and if any master so severely chastised a slave as to cause him a bodily injury, he was bound to give him his liberty (Exod. xxi. 26-7). In general, the Israelites were recommended, in their dealings with their slaves, to remember that they themselves had been bondmen in Egypt (Deut. xv. 12). Nevertheless, the Law of Moses did never bring about the abolishment of slavery as an institution, but rather tolerated it, and allowed the bondage of aliens to be severer than that of Israelites (Lev. xxv. 39-46). The whole spirit and tendency of the gospel, on the other hand, is opposed to slavery, and directly tends to its abolition; for whilst it makes man free in the highest sense of the word, as Christ said to the Jews, 'If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed' (John viii. 36); it also enjoins the rule, 'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them' (Matt. vii. 12). No rank or position is to exclude a man from the blessings of the gospel, which are equally attainable to all who believe and are baptized, as we read in Gal. iii. 26-8, 'Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus.' Although it was no purpose of Christ to

revolutionize the world by at once authoritatively prohibiting the slavery then existing everywhere, yet His teaching tended directly to lead to its abolition by sure though slow degrees. Emancipation from the power of sin and Satan is so great a boon, that St. Paul felt it could make even slavery endurable, and yet he advises every Christian slave to seek his liberty, when he can fairly do so, as the servile state was inconsistent with his new standing as a freeman in the Lord Jesus Christ. This we learn plainly from what is written in 1 Cor. vii. 21-3, 'Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it: but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men.' This tendency of Christianity has also been manifestly unfolded in the course of history; for in whatever land the Gospel of Jesus Christ was believed and obeyed, there also slavery was first ameliorated, and then altogether abolished.

6. On Polygamy and Divorce.

Although the Law of Moses protected the rights of women more than the laws of most heathen nations, yet it left the power of divorce in the hands of the husband, who was still legally permitted to send away his wife, if she did not 'find favour in his eyes', as we read in Deut. xxiv. 1-2, 'When a

man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go, and be another man's wife.¹ It may also be stated in favour of the Mosaic Law, that it put some check upon the abuse of this power of the husband, by prohibiting him from taking back, under any circumstances, the wife he had divorced, after she had become the wife of another man (Deut. xxiv. 3-4). And in Mal. ii. 16 it is expressly said that divorce is contrary to the will of the Lord. So again, in Gen. ii. 24, it is plainly declared to have been the purpose of the benign Creator, that, by marrying, 'a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh' (Gen. ii. 24). But there were no legal enactments distinctly framed to carry out this purpose, by enforcing the sanctity of the matrimonial tie. The same may be said with regard to polygamy. God, in originally instituting marriage, joined only one woman with one man (see Gen. i. 27; ii. 21-5); but the law, although acquainting us with the divine institution of monogamy, and thereby representing it as best,

¹ The Hebrew text is not quite so strong as the English translation, inasmuch as, according to the correct construction of the original, the whole of the first three verses from the antecedent, and the consequent only begins with verse four.

did yet not forbid polygamy and concubinage by any express legal enactments, but rather tolerated them, as is seen from a number of passages, for example, Deut. xxi. 15; Ex. xxi. 8-10; 1 Sam. iii. 7; xii. 5.

Jesus Christ, on the contrary, maintained the perfect will of God on this subject in language too plain to be mistaken. We are informed in Matt. xix. 3-9, that, on one occasion, when His enemies sought to entrap Him, He replied to their question, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' And He regarded their erroneous view on the subject as so little justified by the Law of Moses, that He exposed its fallacy in these weighty words, 'Moses, for your hardness of your heart, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.'

From these expressions it is plain that Jesus Christ insists upon the original character of matrimony, according to which it is a union for life between only one woman and one man. Polygamy in His eyes has a criminal, an adulterous character; for if He says that a man commits adultery by marrying again, after having put away his wife, it is plain that He would also say a man commits adultery who marries a second wife without putting away the first; the adulterous character of the second marriage resulting only from the circumstance, that, when it was contracted, a previously married wife was still living. Hence, also, the apostles only approved of a man's having one wife; and, when speaking of the married state of the Christians in their days, they speak of it uniformly as being of a monogamistic character. So, for example, St. Paul says in 1 Cor. vii. 2, 'But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband;' and in vii. 12, 13, 'If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband;' and in Eph. v. 33, 'Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband.' This re-assertion and restitution of the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage by Christianity is connected with

its general tendency to raise the woman from the degraded position she occupied in most heathen countries, and even from that state of minority and dependence in which the Law of Moses left her, to the position of a free child of God, a responsible member of His kingdom in this world, and an heir of glory in that to come (see 1 Pet. iii. 7).

PART II

RELATION BETWEEN MUHAMMADANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

OR

CAN THE RELIGION OF THE GOSPEL BE REGARDED AS SUPERSEDED BY
THAT OF THE QUR'AN?

VI

DID ISLAM, AS A RELIGION, EVINCE A SUPERIORITY TO CHRISTIANITY BY
A HIGHER VITALITY AND GREATER POWER IN CONVERTING MEN, AND IN
SPREADING SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL BLESSINGS

FROM the preceding comparison between Christianity and the Mosaic dispensation it must appear plain beyond any doubt that the former ranks higher than the latter, and is a more advanced revelation of the one true religion God has given to men, so that it must be a sin for any one to remain in the Jewish religion after having received the opportunity of becoming a Christian. The next question for our consideration is this: 'Does Muhammadanism stand in the same relation to Christianity in which Christianity stands to the preceding economy, or, in other words, is it a still higher revelation of the true religion?' And if, after carefully and candidly examining the question, we must answer it in the affirmative, we are bound to acknowledge it to be the

duty of every Christian to become a Muhammadan; but if, on the contrary, we have to answer it in the negative, every Muhammadan, who is really anxious not to be deceived in a matter of such stupendous importance, will learn from his own conscience what step it is his sacred duty to take. In order to avoid every appearance of partiality, we will now examine Muhammadanism on exactly the same points in regard to Christianity on which we have already found Christianity superior to the Mosaic dispensation, and we will do so in the same order in which each point came under treatment in the preceding comparison. Our object will now be, in considering each of these points separately, to see whether or not Muhammadanism is in that particular point as superior to Christianity as we have found Christianity to be superior to the earlier stage of revealed religion.

Above (*ante* p. 1) we recognized, in the vitality and world-overcoming power with which Christianity made its appearance, and effected its rapid spread amongst mankind, a proof that by it God had given to the world a higher stage of the true religion than that which previously existed; and we likewise discerned, in the awful dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth, soon after the rise of Christianity, a judgement of the Almighty upon the Jewish nation for their culpable rejection of Christ and His religion, as well as a token that the ancient dispensation had been superseded. Now if it is asserted, that, since

the rise of Muhammadanism, Christianity has similarly been superseded as the true religion, we are entitled to ask, in analogy with the above, whether this assertion is borne out by facts showing that Muhammadanism possesses greater vitality and power for conquering the hearts of men than the religion of Christ; and that, since Islam has made its appearance in the world, God's judgements so rest upon Christendom as to deaden in it all spiritual life, to deprive the Christian nations of their national blessings and prosperity, and to prevent a Christianizing influence amongst the non-Christian nations of the world.

There is so much undeniable truth in Islam that it would be strange indeed if it did not exercise some power over the hearts of men. At the time Muhammad began to preach his new religion, most of the Arabs were idolaters, and the Ka'ba contained above three hundred idols; it was, therefore, natural that the new doctrine, 'There is no god but God', should have made a deep impression upon some minds who felt the hollowness of idol-worship. But to exercise some power over the hearts of men, and to exercise a power stronger than Christianity, are two different things, and the latter is the question now under consideration.

It is true that a comparison between the effects produced respectively by Muhammadanism and Christianity upon the hearts of men is rendered somewhat

difficult by the fact, that whilst Christianity existed for three hundred years without any political power, Muhammadanism, from the time of the Hijra, was not a merely religious, but a politico-religious system; so that it is almost impossible to say what results are attributable to the religious element, and what to the political power of Islam. But such a comparison is perfectly feasible for the short period from Muhammad's entering upon the work of a prophet in Mecca to his assuming the additional function of a temporal ruler in Madina. During this period, generally estimated at thirteen years, the chief exponent of Islam was the person of its founder. Christianity also has such a period in which its chief exponent was its own founder: this was the time of Christ's public ministry, lasting for about three years. Now what was the respective result of the three years' preaching of Christ, and of the thirteen years' preaching of Muhammad? In Luke vi. 13 we read that out of a larger number of disciples Jesus chose twelve apostles; in Luke x. 1, that on another occasion He could send seventy disciples to preach the gospel. In Matt. xxi. 46, we are told that the reason why His enemies, the chief priests and Pharisees, abstained from laying hands on Him, was their 'fear of the multitude who took Him for a prophet'; and in John vii. 40, 41, that, on hearing His sayings, the people said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet', while others said, 'This is the Christ'. In Acts i.

15, an assembly of one hundred and twenty disciples is mentioned, and in 1 Cor. xv. 6, we are informed, that on one occasion during the forty days between His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven, He was seen by above five hundred brethren, or believing Christians, at once.

From Arabic historians, such as the Katibu'l-Waqidi, Ibn Hisham, Tabari, Ibn Sa'd, and others, we learn, on the other hand, that the first converts of Muhammad were his own wife Khadija, his adopted son Zaid, his nephew 'Ali, his intimate friend Abu Bakr, and several slaves who appear to have derived benefit from Abu Bakr's riches; that up to 'Umar's adoption of Islam in the house of Arqam, or after Muhammad had been trying to spread his religion for about six or seven years, his converts amounted only to about fifty (namely, forty or forty-five men with ten or eleven women);¹ that, when they fled to Abyssinia from the persecution in Mecca, their number, some time later, rose to one hundred and one (namely eighty-three men and eighteen women), which would seem to comprise all the converts of Mecca, up to the Hijra, inasmuch as the Katibu'l-Waqidi states the number of the Meccan fugitives who assisted at the battle of Badr, nineteen months later, to have been eighty-three; and that the converts of Madina, at the time of the Hijra, consisted of seventy-three men and two women. These data cannot leave it doubtful

¹ See *The Life of Muhammad* (C. L. S.), pp. 40-4.

in whose favour the result is, if we compare the success of Muhammad and the success of Christ, both taken simply in their character of founders and propagators of a religion, independent of worldly means and power: the one, after thirteen years of labour, could count about one hundred and eighty converts, including both men and women; and the other, after three years of labour, at least five hundred converted men, besides the women.

After this short period the proportion in the respective spread of Christianity and Islam changed; but this change was effected by means proving, no doubt, that the Muslims were daring and successful warriors, but by no means that their religion, as such, has more power to subdue the hearts of men than the religion of Christ.

For three hundred years after the death of Christ the religion which He had founded was fiercely persecuted, first by the unbelieving Jews, and afterwards by the formidable power of the heathen empire of Rome. This vast empire comprised almost the whole of the then known world; its emperors' sway extended from the British Isles to India, and from Scandinavia to the Sahara of Africa. In this mighty empire the Christian religion was prohibited, and consequently its progress opposed by the most formidable worldly power then in existence. Church historians record ten sanguinary persecutions, instituted by the Roman Government against all who

professed their faith in Christ; yet in spite of all this opposition and all these persecutions, during which thousands of Christians, old and young men and women, died a martyr's death, Christianity spread far and wide; and it often happened that the patience, the fervent prayers, the heroic courage and triumphal joys of these martyrs, in the face of death, were the means of converting even their heathen executioners, so that it became a common saying among the Christians, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. The Christians' faith and patience proved stronger than all the worldly power of the Roman empire. After three centuries of oppression and persecution, Christianity, without once stooping to take up the sword of rebellion, or opposing force by force, had spread so irresistibly by its own inherent power, that thousands of Christians were found even in the legions of the Roman army, or in the palaces of governors; and their number everywhere had so multiplied that when the first emperor, Constantine, the builder of Stambul, became a Christian, he found that the professors of the hitherto persecuted faith were a more powerful support than the heathen. There can be no doubt that at the end of those persecutions, or at the beginning of Constantine's reign, the Christians in the Roman empire amounted to several millions,¹ and according to the most

¹ A historian so little favourable to Christianity as Gibbon considers it possible that they may have amounted to six millions.

trustworthy ancient records they were already found scattered over the countries of India, Persia, Parthia, Bactria, Media, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Africa, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, and England.

It is true, that after the flight of Muhammad to Madina his followers soon increased in Arabia, and after his death his religion began to spread rapidly over many countries, so that the Muslims could soon be numbered by thousands and millions. But no one acquainted with the history of those days could say that this rapid spread of Muhammadanism was effected solely by its spiritual power over the hearts of men; on the contrary, it is notorious that no tribe or nation has ever embraced Islam without having either been first conquered, which was generally the case, or otherwise affected by its political power. In what degree Muhammad, from the beginning of his residence in Madina, combined with the prophetic office the rank of an Arab Emir, or military chief, is evident from the fact, that during the eighteen months intervening between the Hijra and the famous battle of Badr, he had organized with his followers no less than seven marauding expeditions, intended to plunder mercantile caravans on their way to or from Mecca, and that three of these expeditions he had headed in person.¹ If we bear in mind how,

¹ See *Ghazwas* and *Sariyas* (C.L.S.) for a full account of these expeditions.

from the most ancient times, the numerous independent tribes of Arabia delighted in war and plunder, we can easily conceive, that when the said marauding expeditions, and especially the spoils and ransom after the battle of Badr, had once convinced them that the new prophet intended not only to lead them to a paradise beyond the grave, but was also the man to conduct them to the earthly paradise of victory and plunder, this latter prospect of itself had sufficient charm to induce many to join the new religion. At the death of Muhammad, only nine years after the Hijra, all Arabia had succumbed to the sword of the Muslims, and submitted, though at first very reluctantly, to their religion. The warlike tribes who had before been living in perpetual feuds between themselves, and accustomed to pillage and plunder, were then for the first time united under one head or leader, to whom they had to yield both religious and military obedience. What wonder then that, invited at once by the poverty of their home and the injunctions of a religion in keeping with the strong marauding instincts that had always characterized their race, while the neighbouring empires of Rome and Persia, weakened by a long series of destructive wars against each other, lay before them a tempting bait in their untold wealth and boundless luxury—what wonder, after all this, that we find the Arab armies, under the first energetic Khalifas, pouring forth from

their native deserts, like an irresistible mountain torrent, and conquering in rapid succession all the surrounding countries! As far as the conquests of these armies extended, so far Islamism was made the religion of the state; and although the conquered people were, in most cases, not actually forced to embrace the religion of the conquerors, yet they were put under so many disabilities, and had frequently to suffer such cruel oppressions, while the means of keeping up their faith and learning were greatly curtailed (e.g. as early as the reign of the Khalifa 'Umar 4000 Christian churches are reported to have been destroyed), that it is not very surprising if thousands of worldly-minded, ignorant, and down-trodden people could be found ready, during the first period of confusion and fright, and afterwards from time to time to purchase the privileges and power of the ruling class, by parting with the religion of their fathers. So it came to pass that the armies of Muslim warriors, proved successful missionaries, or propagators of their religion, and that in course of time, after many countries had been subjected to Muhammadan rulers and laws, their converts amounted to millions and tens of millions.

But these many and great victories of the Muslim armies, and the consequent wide spread of Islam, for which they had thus to pave the way, cannot prove the divine character of the religion of the

Qur'an. They are by no means miraculous. General history makes us acquainted with similar and even greater military exploits; e.g. Alexander the Great, who was an idolater, and started from a country much smaller than Arabia, subjugated in nine years almost as large a territory as the Khalifas in ninety, and wherever he went he spread the Greek language and manners with remarkable success.

Besides, let it be observed, that although the Muslims exercised for successive centuries a vast amount of power to subserve the interests and spread of their religion, yet they did not so far succeed with the Christians under their dominion as the Christians had succeeded with the heathen; for whilst in Europe not a single community remains adhering to its original heathenism, the Christians still living in Muhammadan countries, such as Turkey, Syria, Persia, and Egypt, amount to many millions. It is therefore an established fact, and not a mere opinion on which people may differ, that whilst the number of Christians so rapidly increased as now vastly to surpass that of the Jews, the number of Muslims, far from in like degree exceeding that of the Christians, is very much less.

It is likewise a fact of history, that scarcely had the Jews rejected Christianity, when those fearful judgements broke in upon their nation, which deprived them of their fatherland, and scattered them, as poor despised exiles, all over the world.

But if we inquire of history whether the rejection of Islam by the Christians was visited with still greater, or only with similar judgements, the answer is, that though, in countries conquered by Muhammadan armies, and where many worldly-minded Christians gave up their religion for that of the conquerors, those who remained faithful to the gospel had to suffer the loss of many earthly goods; yet those Christian lands which entirely rejected the religion of the Qur'an and some of which even defeated the invading Muslim armies, were not only unvisited for this with national judgements, but continued to prosper even more than before. The Jews, since their rejection of Christ, have never been able to form a commonwealth of their own; but the Christian nations who rejected the creed of Muhammad could not only maintain their independence, in spite of vast Muslim armies sent forth for their subjugation; but their population and power has so signally increased, by the blessing of God, that they now possess the greater part of the habitable world, and exercise a more or less powerful influence over every region of the earth. It can now be said, without exaggeration, that the Christians stand highest in the scale of nations, and that the providence of God has already invested them with power over the whole earth. It is a fact worth pondering, that Christianity began with humble individuals, who had no power, apart from the energy of their

convictions; that for three hundred years its doctrines were propagated amidst cruel persecutions, by the faith, the prayer, the teaching, the sufferings, and the death of an army of martyrs; and that, nevertheless, it now sits upon the most powerful thrones of the world; whilst Muhammadanism, from the beginning aimed at secular conquests, was spread for a time by vast armies of warriors, and has now lost the greater part of the power it once possessed.

A comparison of the internal state and condition of the Muhammadan and Christian lands is no less suggestive of grave truths. It cannot be doubted that the true religion, by the diffusion of purity, honesty, equity, and the higher happiness of communion with God by a living faith and spiritual worship, must greatly help to elevate a people, and to promote its general prosperity. We have now to apply this standard to the two religions in question; for if Christianity has ceased to be the true faith since the rise of Islam, as most Muslims assert, we must naturally expect to find Muhammadan countries distinguished by the highest degree of prosperity, and the Christian world almost entirely without it. But what are the actual facts in this respect? Arabia is the birth-place of Islam, where it has had undisturbed sway since the days of its founder. The rich spoil of many countries was brought to that land by the victorious armies of the

first Khalifas.¹ The Beduin sons of Arabia were for a time the rulers of some of the richest nations in the world. But these riches and this power were lost again, almost as quickly as they had been acquired; and the Arabs, instead of becoming a civilized, prosperous people, under the influence of Islam, are still, after enjoying for twelve centuries all the benefits of their religion, the same semi-barbarous, ignorant, and marauding Beduin tribes they were before Muhammad was born; not so civilized as some even of the heathen nations. The other countries in which the Muhammadan rule and religion were established shortly after the prophet's death, and where they have prevailed ever since, are; Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa. At the time when these countries were subjugated by the Muslim armies they abounded with towns and villages, the land was well cultivated, and the population, while generally prosperous, belonged to the most civilized nations of the day. But under the sway of Islam this degree of prosperity and civilization, so far from increasing, has diminished so lamentably, that now those lands are little better than vast deserts, where, in some parts, the traveller can walk for days together without coming to a town, or even a village, and the soil is so little cultivated, that extensive districts, once densely

¹ See *The Khulafa' u'r-Rashidun* (C.L.S.)

inhabited, are now abandoned to the herds of roaming Beduins or Turkomans, and the population is not only greatly reduced in number, but impoverished in an equal degree, and exists in a condition but little above actual barbarism. How different the effects produced by Christianity, where it has been embraced! If we except Italy and Greece, in which a heathen civilization prevailed, the whole of Europe, when Christianity was first offered to it, was in a barbarous or (to say the least) semi-barbarous condition. In England, people still clothed themselves in the skins of animals, and the Germans were so savage that women went forth with their husbands to battle, and sometimes might be seen driving them back into the fight with reproaches and even whips, if they began to flee. But the gospel was stronger than these indomitable sons and daughters of nature: the love of God in Christ gradually softened and subdued them. All the nations of Europe, one after another, cast away their idols, and worshipped the only true God, revealed to them in His Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind; and this new faith proved to them a fountain of blessings, both temporal and spiritual, so that, in their subsequent experience, the truth of the divine word was amply fulfilled, that 'Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come' (I Tim. iv. 8).

Under the beneficial and ennobling influence of Christianity not only has the population of Europe so immensely increased, but the different European nations are all of them vastly more civilized, better educated, and wealthier than before; and it is so well known as to be almost superfluous to add, that for many generations past Christian Europe has unquestionably been at the head of the nations of the earth, in point of civilization, learning, power, and influence. History therefore brings before our eyes the undeniable fact that Islam failed not only to elevate the nations upon whom it was imposed beyond the level of the Christianity of those early days, but that it had not intrinsic strength enough to prevent them from sinking below the point at which it first met them; while, on the contrary, Christian lands that refused to submit to its yoke, so far from being punished by God for this by the withdrawal of their national blessings, have gone on improving and prospering till they have left the Muslim nations far behind them in civilization, wealth, and power.

If the assertion were correct that, since the appearance of Islam, Christianity has ceased to be the true religion, and that now it is God's will that all men, Christians and Jews as well as pagans, should embrace the doctrines of the Qur'an, we should naturally expect to find the superseded religion of Christ in a state of decay, without

spiritual life or energy, and destitute of all tokens of divine blessing, and the religion of Muhammad, if not still in the bloom of youth, at least in the health and vigour of manhood, and still spreading amongst civilized peoples, by God's blessing, either in the track of victorious armies as at the first, or by the gentler but surer method of presenting to the world examples of the happiness, prosperity, and greatness at which nations can arrive under its influence. But how much the reverse of all this is the actual state of things! It is true, the Muhammadan nations in the interior of Africa, namely, the Bornuese, the Mandengas, and the Phulas or Phelatas, invited by the weak and defenceless condition of the surrounding negro tribes, still make conquests, and after subduing a tribe of pagans, impose upon those that remain the creed of Islam;¹ but, keeping in view the whole of the Muhammadan world, this fitful and far off activity reminds one only of those green branches sometimes seen on trees already and for long decayed at the core from age. Those countries which form the proper centre and heart of Muhammadanism, and are still the seat of its political power, namely, Turkey, Persia, and the North of Africa, have long ago ceased to send forth armies for the purpose of

¹ Since Africa has come under the dominating influence of the Christian Powers, the Islamic propaganda is often carried on by peaceful methods. See Sell's *The Religious Orders of Islam* (S.P.C.K., Madras: Simpkins, London.)

subduing fresh nations to the faith. Not merely has the tide of Muhammadan political conquest ceased to advance; it has for long been steadily receding, as the page of history amply shows, leaving some of the noblest countries, once owning the Muslim sway, as, e.g. Spain, the whole of the North African coast, almost all the European provinces of Turkey, Greece, India, etc. under the dominion of Christian Governments. Moreover, it is well known, and the confession is often heard from the mouths of Muhammadans themselves, that hundreds and thousands who bear the name, especially amongst the great, the educated, and the rich, have intellectually lost all faith in Islam, and either lean towards Christianity, or have become the pitiable prey of utter atheism.

But if we turn to those who still honestly believe in the Qur'an—and their number is not small—what proofs do they afford, by their lives and acts, that their religion is more divine, or produces more holiness, righteousness, and charity among men, than any other? What can the Muslims show at all coming up to the fruits of the Christian religion, as seen in so many thousands of hospitals for all kinds of diseases, so many excellent schools for the young of both sexes and every grade of life, not even excepting the blind, the deaf and dumb; while for the poor who cannot work, shelter, food, and clothing are legally provided, both in towns and villages; not to speak

of vast numbers of voluntary societies for mutual aid and support among the working classes, and the equally numerous associations gathered from the higher for visiting the poor, the sick, and dying with words of comfort, or the ungodly and careless with needful advice or warning?

If Islam is now the only true religion, and the only one to enjoy the approval and blessing of God, how is it that it does not spread in Christian lands? How is it that the true Muslims have not love and zeal enough to send millions of Qur'ans, with thousands of Imams, Khojahs, and 'Ulamas, to all Christian countries, to make known their religion? If Christianity is no longer true, and no longer enjoys God's blessing, why is it not thereby rendered unfruitful? Why does it still spread in every part of the world, amongst idolaters, Jews, and Muslims, so that at this moment the new converts can be counted by hundreds of thousands?

The facts already mentioned, and a number more that might be named, rather seem to indicate, with unmistakable clearness, that though Christianity is six hundred years older than Islam, the former is still in the vigorous health and matured power of manhood, and the latter, for some time past, stricken with the languor and infirmities of old age.

VII

ARE MUHAMMAD AND ISLAM FORETOLD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AS CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY HAVE BEEN IN THE OLD?

WE have found above (see p. 6) that it was a token of the truth and divine origin of the Christian religion that the temporary nature of the Mosaic dispensation was proclaimed in the Old Testament itself, and the coming of a higher and more enduring religion foretold. Now every one must allow that it would likewise form a strong argument in favour of Muhammadanism, if passages could be found in the New Testament which either showed that Christianity was also a partial and temporary system, or directed our hopes to another Prophet and Saviour to come. This is so evident, even to Muhammadans, that they have actually attempted to strengthen their position by maintaining that the coming of Muhammad was foretold in the gospel. But, upon examination, we find that this assertion is based upon wholly untenable ground. The assertion occurs already in the Qur'an, namely, in the following general manner: I write it down for those . . . who shall follow the Apostle, the unlettered Prophet, whom they shall find described with them in the Law and Gospel' [Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 156-7], and in the more explicit manner in the words: 'Jesus, the son of Mary, said, O children of

Israel, I am God's Apostle to you to confirm the Law which was given before me, and to announce an Apostle that shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.' [Suratu's-Saff (lxi) 6]. In reference to the first passage, which finds a description of Muhammad already in the Old Testament, it suffices to say that there is indeed a prophet or servant of God foretold, but that he is uniformly represented as springing from the people of Israel, and that no one who has eyes to read what is written can find in the whole Old Testament a single passage speaking of a Prophet who is to arise from among the Arabs. According to the second passage, Christ has not only announced the coming of another apostle after him, but has even foretold his name. Now if we read the New Testament through from beginning to end, we find not a single verse capable of bearing such a construction, and we should be left to suppose that the Qur'an must refer to a book which is not the gospel, but which may have erroneously or perfidiously professed to be so, if the Muhammadan doctors did not tell us that it refers to those words in which Christ promised to His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, from His Father in heaven, namely, John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7. But the Greek term rendered 'Comforter' is derived from a verb signifying 'to call upon some one, to induce him to come and bring help, or to cause him to leave off

anxiety and be of good cheer'; and, consequently, has nothing to do with the Arabic root 'hamada' or 'hammada', to praise; so that, if in the days of Muhammad there should have been an Arabic manuscript of the gospel in which the term 'paraclete' was rendered by 'ahmad' (a supposition which has never been proved), this would have been a wrong translation, arising either from want of knowledge or good faith.¹

Independently, however, of this, another circumstance at once decides that these promises can never have referred to Muhammad; for in Acts i. 4-5, we read that the Holy Ghost, or Paraclete, was to come to the apostles 'not many days hence', and that till then they were 'not to depart from Jerusalem.' But every one knows that the Apostles received the Holy Ghost ten days after Christ's ascension (see Acts ii), and that they had all been long dead when Muhammad arose, six hundred years later.

Not only does the gospel contain no prophecy of the coming of an ahmad, or any one else, to supersede Christ, but it claims for itself so absolute a character as the only true light, and the only right way to God, that there is no room left for any rival system to fill, and no possibility of a higher religion yet to come. Accordingly, we read in Matt. xi, that when John the Baptist, on a certain occasion, sent a deputation

¹ See *The Faith of Islam* (3rd ed.), p. 15.

to Christ to ask Him, 'Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another?' He, instead of encouraging any such hopes of a future prophet, plainly told them, 'Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.' And soon after He added, 'All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' On another occasion He said, 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged: He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil' (John iii. 16-19). And, again, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but

shall have the light of life' (John viii. 12). And again, 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me' (John vi. 51, 54-7). So likewise St. Paul writes, in 1 Tim. ii. 5-6, 'For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times.' And again, in 2 Cor. v. 17-19, 'Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' And St. Peter testified of Him to the Jews, saying, 'He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none

other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved' (Acts iv. 11-12).

By the side of such declarations as these, it is indeed natural to find prophecies like that in Matt. xxiv. 11, 'Many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray'; but it would be impossible to imagine any messenger who could do, or be, more for us than is here predicted of Christ. For the Son Himself having come and made known the Father, it is self-evident that higher revelation by a mere servant is for ever superseded. It is because Jesus Christ is revealed in the gospel as the spiritual sun, or the light of the world, and as the only Saviour of mankind, that no other new revelation can be expected after Him, and that the whole Christian dispensation, or the period from Christ's life upon earth to His coming again to judgement, is called 'the last time', or 'the last days', and 'the end of the world'. So we read in 1 Cor. x. 11, 'Now these things . . . were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come,' and in 1 John ii. 18, 'Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists;' and in Heb. i. 1, 2, 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through

whom also he made the worlds;' and St. Peter writes to the believers, 'Ye were redeemed . . . with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake' (1 Pet. i. 19, 20). It is therefore plain beyond contradiction, that whatever may be the foundations of Islam, it does not rest either on any particular prophecy in the gospel respecting Muhammad and his teaching, or on any deficiency in the Christian religion which it was required to supply.

If, in order to escape this conclusion, any Muhammadans, unacquainted with the history of the New Testament text, should assert that our version of the gospel is not the original one, but has been corrupted by the Christians after Muhammad's appearance, in order thus to suppress one of the most important testimonies to his divine commission, it only remains to say, in reply, that a number of learned Muhammadans, e.g. Imam Muhammad, Isma'il Bukhari, Shah Wali Allah, Imam Fakhru'd, Din Razi, and others, down to the learned Syed Ahmad, our own Indian contemporary, have already expressed their conviction that the gospel now in circulation is still the same as that used before the days of Muhammad; that from the ancient manuscripts still preserved in the great libraries of Christian

lands, this is so evident as to require no further proof; and that, consequently, it is unfair of Muhammadans still to bring forward this old assertion that the sacred writings have been corrupted, unless they establish the charge by positive proofs, to do which, if they can, we would here publicly challenge them. For so long as they fail to prove this charge, it is only just to pass it over as baseless and unworthy of notice.

VIII

MUHAMMAD AND ISLAM, INSTEAD OF ORIGINATING IN CHRISTENDOM, AS
CHRISTIANITY HAD CAST ITS FIRST ROOTS AMONG THE ISRAELITES,
SPRANG FROM THE MIDST OF IDOLATERS IN ARABIA

THERE can be no doubt that 'the whole earth is the Lord's' (Psalm xxiv. 1), and that 'He can do whatsoever He pleaseth' (Psalm cxv. 3); but it is no less incontestable, that for all He does He has the best and wisest of reasons. We have already recognized the divine wisdom of first sending the Law of Moses to Israel, in preparation for the perfect and more spiritual religion of Christ (ante p. 9); and it must appear perfectly consistent with the supreme wisdom of God to have introduced the Saviour when and where He was expected, and to have laid the first foundation of the church of the future where the ground had been carefully prepared for it. So, likewise, if God had willed to supersede

Christianity, we should have been led, both by analogy and the nature of the case, to expect that this higher development should unfold itself in the bosom of Christendom, where alone it could find a congenial soil ready for its reception. Yet there is no more patent fact in history than that the founder of Islam was neither born nor brought up in a Christian land, not even amidst a Jewish community, but amongst the Arabs who were ignorant idolaters, and who had collected no fewer than three hundred and sixty idols, as Arab tradition says, in their national sanctuary, the Ka'ba. It is also perfectly well known to those acquainted with the Arabic history of those days, that when Muhammad began to claim the authority of a prophet, and to preach his new religion, the people of Mecca were so little prepared for it that they ridiculed him as a fool, and were so violently opposed to his pretensions that the new religion would have been destroyed in the bud, but for the protection and influence of Abu Talib and his powerful family, in the first instance; while afterwards it knew how to take advantage of the subsisting feuds and jealousies between the rival cities of Madina and Mecca, and the secular weapons thus placed at its disposal. This free use of carnal means in support of the new religion is itself a plain proof either that Islam is not so spiritual a religion as Christianity; or, if it is, that Arabia was by no means prepared

for its reception when it first appeared; for were it otherwise, those carnal weapons would have been unnecessary, and it could have spread as quietly and peaceably as Christianity had done before. How, then, can it appear compatible with God's infinite wisdom and immutability, to send a higher religion than Christianity, and yet depart from all precedent, by raising up the last and greatest of all prophets from amongst the idolatrous Arabs, whilst for more than two thousand years before, namely, since the days of Abraham, He had chosen all His prophets, without exception, from amongst the Israelites, so that even Christ was of the seed of Abraham after the flesh? (See Suratu'l-Jathiya (xlv) and Suratu'l-'Ankabut (xxix)).

Is not this single circumstance, that if Muhammad be a prophet, he is the sole prophet originating amidst polytheism, sufficient to raise doubts in every thinking mind, as to the divine character of his mission? Can we at all wonder, if the more intelligent Muhammadans reason thus: 'If Muhammad had to bring a higher revelation than Christ, why, then, did he not appear in some Christian land, where the way would have been somewhat prepared for him, rather than in idolatrous Arabia, where he could only convert the people to his doctrines by first subjugating them politically? Or, if it had been possible to bring the highest revelation to idolaters at once, without first preparing them by

the law and the gospel, why then did the all-merciful God not send Islam six hundred years sooner, instead of Christianity, or two thousand years earlier still, instead of the law? why keep it back from mankind for so long a time, if it might just as well have been announced so much earlier?' If such questions arise in the mind of thinking Muhammadans, it would seem that they could hardly help arriving at conclusions hostile to the divine mission of the founder of the religion in which they have been brought up.

IX

CAN THE CLAIMS OF MUHAMMAD AS THE FOUNDER OF A NEW RELIGION BE ESTABLISHED BY THE PROOF OF MIRACLES?

TURNING now to the subject of miracles, we still find Muhammad's claim to a divine mission resting, to say the least, upon a most doubtful foundation. It has already been mentioned (ante p. 11) that Moses and Jesus performed miracles, in order to give the people a rational conviction that they were sent from God; for it is evident that without such a test, any unprincipled man might pretend that he was a special messenger from heaven, and men would have no means whereby to distinguish when God spoke by a prophet, and when He did not. Now, if we apply this test to Muhammad, it will be impossible to concede that his claim to a prophetic mission is as

clearly established as that of Jesus or Moses. It is indeed true, that if we were to believe the traditions of the Muslims, a vast number of miracles took place to establish the apostleship of Muhammad. But even granting the validity of these, we could not be altogether satisfied; for we should still be struck with remarkable discrepancies in the Muhammadan miracles, as contrasted with those of Jesus Christ and the prophets, rendering it difficult to believe the wonders in both cases could have equally proceeded from God. If we are told, e.g. that at Muhammad's request a tree came to him, ploughing up the ground before it, and said in a loud voice, 'I bear testimony that there is but one God, and that thou art His Prophet;' that, on other occasions, animals, mountains, stones, and a bunch of dates, similarly testified of him; or that any dress, short or long, which he put on, would always exactly fit, and the like; we have a class of miracles so puerile and fantastic, and differing so widely from 'the signs and wonders' of the preceding prophets, that we cannot but feel a certain degree of suspicion. How favourably the conduct of Jesus Christ contrasts with such a display of the supernatural, who did all His wonders with the direct and beneficent object of delivering men from pain, sorrow, and sin; and who, according to Matt. iv. 1-11, refused to convert stones into bread to satisfy His own want; and when solicited to make a display of His supernatural power before the

people, by alighting from a pinnacle of the temple, replied to the tempter, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'

But besides this, there are other grave doubts attaching to the miracles ascribed to Muhammad; and it is, in truth, highly probable that he never performed a single one. The fact which must lead any candid inquirer with almost irresistible force to such a conclusion is this, that Muhammad himself never appealed to his power of working miracles in proof of his prophetic mission; but, on the contrary, admits in the Qur'an that he possessed no such power, in language sufficiently plain. Now from all we know of Muhammad, it is indubitably clear that he was entirely free from any rationalistic tendency to explain away miraculous things by natural causes; but that, on the contrary, he was by no means disinclined to regard in the light of a miracle that which was quite natural. So, e.g. he does not hesitate repeatedly to speak of the language of the Qur'an as something miraculous, and altogether beyond the reach of mere men [Suratu Yunas (x) 38-9] It is certain, therefore, that if Muhammad had ever done any miracles, he would have referred to them in proof of his apostleship; and this all the more, as for a long time the most thoughtful and influential among the Arabs doubted his prophetic mission, and repeatedly challenged him to prove it by miracles. The Qur'an itself alludes to these challenges in the

words 'They (i.e. the unbelievers) say, By no means will we believe on thee till thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth, or till thou have a garden of palm-trees and grapes, and thou cause gushing rivers to burst forth in its midst; or thou make the heaven to fall on us, as thou hast given out, in pieces; or thou bring God and the angels to vouch for thee' [Suratu Bani Isra'il (xvii) 92-4]. Compare also [Suratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 30]. Now, how does Muhammad meet these demands? Does he say: 'I will do the miracles you require?' or can he reply: 'It is unnecessary to perform the miracles you demand, for I have already done so many that the superhuman power at my command can no longer be reasonably questioned?' By no means; his reply cannot be regarded by the impartial otherwise than as an admission that he possessed no power of working miracles, though demanding belief in his pretensions. The following is the reply which, according to the Qur'an, was given to the above-mentioned challenges: 'Praise be to the Lord! Am I more than a man, an Apostle? And what hindereth men from believing, when the guidance hath come to them, but that they say, Hath God sent a man as an Apostle?' [Suratu Bani Isra'il (xvii) 95-6.] In full agreement with this we read in Suratu'l-An'am (vi) 109, that Muhammad replied to those who swore by God a solemn oath that they would believe in him if a sign were shown

them: 'Signs are in the power of God alone; but He teacheth you not thereby, because, even if they were wrought, you would not believe.' And in [Suratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 8], after the unbelievers are made to say: 'If a sign from his Lord be not sent down to him we will not believe,' Muhammad is thus comforted for not being a worker of miracles: Say I am only the plain spoken warner [Suratu'l-Hijr (xv) 89].¹

From these quotations and other similar passages, it appears with sufficient clearness, that if ever Muhammad performed a miracle, the Qur'an does not record it, but, on the contrary, represents him as not possessed of any miraculous power. Now, bearing in mind that it was on this very ground his claim to a divine mission was repudiated by the more thinking of his countrymen; that, unlike the earlier prophets, miracles formed no part of his credentials, while yet an intention runs all through the Qur'an to represent him as the last and greatest of prophets, it is self-evident he is called a warner or preacher only, because, in reality, he was nothing more. But if this representation of the Qur'an be true—and who can doubt it?—then it follows of necessity that the miracles ascribed to him by tradition rest on no basis of historical fact, but had their origin in the affectionate remembrance with

¹ See Sell's *Historical Development of the Qur'an* (3rd ed., S.P.C.K.), pp. 32-3.

which all Muslims regarded the memory of so extraordinary and gifted a man. As, in the eyes of all true Muslims, Muhammad is the greatest of prophets, and they knew that former prophets had attested their mission by signs and wonders, it must have appeared to them a matter of course, that he, in virtue of his pre-eminence, should also exercise supernatural powers; and as whatever tended to exalt him was universally approved, it was an easy task for the glowing imagination and ardent affections of the early Muslims to fill up the void left by history. This seems the only reasonable way in which to reconcile the otherwise contradictory statements of the Qur'an and the assertions of tradition. If, then, on the ground of the document enjoying the highest authority among the Muslims—the Qur'an itself—the conclusion forces itself upon us that Muhammad has never performed any miracle whatever, we must allow that his claims are not supported by that proof which places the divine mission of Moses and Jesus Christ so completely beyond all suspicion—the proof of miracles; and that the absence of it most seriously compromises the Prophet of Arabia in the opinion of every candid mind; while the doubts which are thus occasioned are rather increased than diminished by the zeal with which Muslim tradition¹ has laboured to make up for the silence of history.

¹ i.e. Al-Ahadith.

X

IS THE TEACHING OF ISLAM AS SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE GOSPEL AS THE
TEACHING OF THE GOSPEL IS TO THAT OF THE MOSAIC LAW?

FATAL as that which has already been advanced must appear to the pretension of Islam as the last and highest stage in the development of the true religion, the points we have still to consider would alone suffice to decide the question; for it is now our duty to examine the revelation or teaching of Islam itself, and to compare it with the revelation or teaching of the religion which it professes to supersede, in order to ascertain whether it really contains a new, a better, and higher revelation.

Every one knows that the value of an assertion depends entirely upon the solidity and strength of its proof. All reasonable men act upon this principle in matters of everyday life. If, e.g. a man were to assert that he had invented a new musket, so greatly preferable to all now in use, that those might be safely dispensed with as antiquated and unfit for retention side by side with the new invention, what would governments do whose desire it is to put the best weapons into the hands of their soldiers? Would they at once adopt the pretended new and superior one, on the claim of the inventor, and convert those they had forthwith into old iron? Certainly not. We all know that in such a case the

government would say, We must first examine your musket, and compare it with those now in use, to ascertain whether it is better or not. And such a course is the only reasonable one. Now, if they found on examination that the supposed new and superior weapon had indeed a beautifully carved shaft and a glittering barrel, but was only a flint matchlock after all, somewhat different from those formerly used indeed, but neither shooting as far nor as accurately as the present Enfield rifles, would they not say to the inventor, 'It is impossible for us to adopt your invention, for what we possess already is better than what you offer?' So, likewise, if it be asserted that Islam is a higher form of the true religion than Christianity, it is neither wise nor just at once to accept the assertion without proof. The first duty evidently is to examine whether the teaching of the Qur'an is really higher, nobler, and better than that of the Bible, and only if found to be so would it be right to give up Christianity and embrace Islam; but if it turned out the reverse were true, it would be as wrong to give up the gospel for the Qur'an, as it would be foolish in a soldier to exchange the efficient rifle of the present day for the matchlock of a century ago. But should any Muslims say, 'This argument does not exactly apply to our case, as it is not for us now to ask whether we ought to embrace Islam, having done so long ago,' such an objection has no force; for if it had been right

at any time to have embraced the gospel instead of the Qur'an, it must be right now to give up the Qur'an and embrace the gospel. The principles acted on in daily life again bear out this statement. When the Sublime Porte learned that the other nations of Europe no longer used matchlocks, but a much more efficient weapon, it did not say, 'Because we have now been using matchlocks for several centuries, we cannot change them, for they are much better than the bows and arrows which we used before.' But what did the Sublime Porte do? Every one knows, that after having convinced itself of the superiority of the weapons now used in Christian countries, it was wise enough to make the most strenuous exertions to get rid of the old matchlocks, and supply their place with the superior weapon of friendly Christian neighbours. Every rational Osmanli must approve this course taken by his government; therefore, if consistent with himself, he must also acknowledge, that if now, after a careful and thoughtful examination, the Muslims find the religion of the gospel superior to that of the Qur'an, they ought to give up the latter and embrace the former, although many bygone generations had not light and experience enough to recognize this duty. There can be no doubt, that for the present generation of Muhammadans also it is of the utmost importance to know clearly whether the Qur'an really is what they believe and the Christians deny,

namely, a higher development of divine truths than the gospel. But this is not possible, so long as they only read the Qur'an or Muhammadan writings; and it must be clear as daylight that every Muslim who wishes to arrive at the truth on this momentous question will have carefully to examine the gospel, and, if he can, other Christian writings. The comparison we are now going to institute between the doctrines of the Qur'an and the gospel, as already made between the gospel and the law (see p. 13), will, we trust, help the Muslim reader to obtain a correct view of the relative position of Muhammadanism and Christianity, and to ascertain which of the two represents the higher stage of revealed truth.

1. The Doctrine of God.

We have found above, where we considered the relation between the law and the gospel (see p. 13), that the belief in which both Muslims and Christians agree is well founded, namely, that the gospel contains a higher relation of God's truth than the law. This belief was fully borne out and justified by a comparison of the respective teaching of the two books on a number of important subjects. The first of these was the doctrine of God; and on this head we noticed particularly two heads on which the superiority of the one over the other was manifest, namely, first, that whilst the law regarded God chiefly as the almighty and omniscient Creator of the world, or the righteous and merciful Lord of

man, or the divine King (by special covenant) of the people of Israel, the gospel regarded Him especially as a loving Father, who seeks to lead His children in the path of righteousness and happiness; and secondly, that whilst the law only dimly foreshadows, the gospel clearly reveals, God, the eternally One, in an adorable Trinity of Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equally interested in our salvation, and having actually accomplished it. Now if the Qur'an is really a higher revelation than the Gospel, it must necessarily throw a still fuller and brighter light upon all these points. But, alas! if we examine its pages, how sadly are our expectations disappointed!

Instead of finding additional proofs and more striking illustrations of God's paternal love towards man, that sweetest, most touching and comforting name of Father is not even once mentioned among the ninety-nine appellations which the Muslims find given him in the Qur'an. We are constantly exhorted to remember that God is the righteous judge and requiter of man's deserts, and that He is infinitely exalted above us and every other creature; and we are told over and over again, on almost every page, that God alone is almighty, and knoweth everything, even the secrets of our inmost heart; nor is the praise of God's kindness and mercy at all neglected. All these, and similar statements found in the Qur'an, are quite true; but they contain nothing

new, nothing that is not already known from the gospel, yea, nothing that is not already found even in the Psalms and the law. To mention only one particular: the omnipresence and omniscience of God is so beautifully and touchingly described in Psalm cxxxix, that in the whole Qur'an there is not a single passage describing it with more, or even equal force and beauty. The actual fact of the case, then, is this, that the Qur'an, instead of revealing the love of God towards man, and His paternal dealings with him more fully than the gospel, does not reveal it as clearly and fully by far, nay, it abhors the idea of a Father; and that, therefore, it cannot have been intended by God to supersede the gospel; and its appearance, after the gospel, is therefore a strange anomaly.

So with regard to the doctrine of the 'Trinity in Unity', it is notorious that the Qur'an, instead of revealing it more fully than the gospel, does not throw any light upon it, but rejects it altogether as opposed to its notions of the Divine Being, and consequently falls back, not upon the standpoint of the Old Testament, where this doctrine had at least been dimly foreshadowed, but on the standpoint of a mere natural religion which is entirely ignorant of the inner life of God, and only knows Him from His works, as the Creator, the Preserver, the Ruler, and the Judge. If the Qur'an insists with such force upon the doctrine of the Unity, as to assert it on almost every

page, it insists upon a doctrine which is perfectly orthodox, and which every true believer holds fast against the errors of polytheism; but this doctrine is not new, not one of which the world would be destitute without the Qur'an; for it is already taught in the Old and New Testaments with a distinctness and authority to which nothing can be added by all the repetitions of the Qur'an. While, therefore, asserting with great emphasis that 'there is no god but God', the Qur'an only placed itself upon common ground with the Torah and the New Testament: by rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, indicated in the one, and clearly taught in the other, it receded from the height of revelation already attained before the time of the Arabian prophet. This is a fact so unquestionable, that every Muslim who carefully compares the Qur'an and the Bible must allow it. But the consequence inevitably resulting from it is in the highest degree prejudicial to the Qur'an, as a book of God; for although it is quite natural that God should at an early time reveal His truth only partially, or as far as the people were prepared for it, and at a later time more fully, because they were then ready for more; yet it is neither natural nor credible, that, after having once revealed His truth clearly and fully to mankind in one book, He should again reveal it to them dimly and partially in another. This is as little probable as that a teacher, after having taught his scholars to read fluently, would

again send them back to the alphabet. But God is certainly the best and wisest of teachers; we can therefore leave it safely to the judgement of every candid Musalman to decide whether the Qur'an can be a revelation from God to mankind, seeing that it reveals less than was already revealed before it in the gospel.

As the Qur'an knows nothing of a 'Trinity in Unity', it must naturally also fall short of the teaching of the gospel respecting the accomplishment of man's salvation and regeneration by the three Persons of the blessed Trinity. Besides many other passages of a similar character, we read in the gospel as follows: 'Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life' (See Tit. iii. 5-7). Here we read the important truth which no human mind could have discovered, and could only have been received by divine revelation, that man is not saved by his own works, but by the mercy of God; that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, i.e. that by His merits and death we obtain forgiveness of sins, and are justified before God; that we must be born again and renewed by the Holy Spirit; and that only thus we can hope to inherit eternal life and glory. Two

important, and apparently contradictory truths are here brought into beautiful harmony, namely, on the one hand that man is not saved by his own good works, but that God alone, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, saves man, and brings him to eternal blessedness; and on the other hand, that a man thus saved by grace alone must yet not lead a life of carelessness and sin, because purity, veracity, love, and all virtues naturally result from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as good fruit naturally grows upon good trees. Now if we ask what further light the Qur'an throws upon these important subjects, the answer is, that it knows nothing whatever of a Father in heaven who 'so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' that it knows nothing of a divine Saviour who took upon Himself our flesh, that in a perfectly human life He might defeat Satan in all his temptations; and that by His meritorious death He might become a sacrifice for our sins, and deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage; and that it knows nothing of the abiding Comforter or Holy Spirit who fills the hearts of believers with light, joy, and peace, and enables them to live a life of holiness and usefulness in this world, and to become meet for the blessedness and glory of the world to come. Instead of pointing out this divine way of salvation more clearly than the gospel, the

Qur'an leaves man again to the hopeless task of meriting salvation by his own works, such as public prayers, alms, fasting and pilgrimages, and thereby places itself upon a level with many heathen religions, e.g. with Brahmanism and Buddhism, which recommend the very same means to obtain eternal happiness. It is therefore a fact of which there can be no doubt with the well-informed, that the doctrine of God and His relation to man, especially in man's salvation, not only receives no further development in the Qur'an, but that the development to which it had already attained in the gospel is given up, and a return made to views which had been entertained for centuries before Christ came into the world. From this it must appear evident to every one who is not blinded by prejudice, that on whatever else the claim of Islam may rest to being the highest and last revelation, it cannot be its doctrine of God.

2. The Service and Worship of God.

Above, where we compared the Jewish and the Christian religion (*ante* p. 18), we found that the latter was superior to the former because it disjoined, the service of God from many outward ceremonies and burdensome rules concerning times and places, thus making it a service 'in spirit and in truth', and because it insists upon a living faith in the divinely-appointed Saviour, instead of those ritual observances, and upon a complete renewal or regeneration of heart and life. Here, therefore, it becomes our duty to

ask, what is the teaching of Islam upon these subjects? and how does that teaching justify the assertion of the Muhammadans, that their religion is more developed and elevated than that of Jesus Christ? What, then, is the brighter light in which the Qur'an sets forth the doctrine of faith in the Saviour of sinners, and the doctrine of regeneration? And what is the more effectual help it affords to obtain that faith and to experience that regeneration? Alas for the answer we must give to these questions! Whilst we are told in the gospel, that already before the birth of the Messiah the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph, saying, 'and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins' (Matt. i. 21); the Qur'an not only observes a complete silence on the subject of Jesus Christ being the Saviour of sinners, but it even asserts that He was a Prophet, and nothing more, e.g. in Suratu'l-Ma'ida (v) 79: 'The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle; other apostles have flourished before Him.'

Now if man's present state were only one of ignorance and error, it might suffice to have a mere apostle or prophet to teach him the truth; but as he is by nature not only ignorant and erring, but also in bondage to sin and Satan, a mere teacher is not enough, and if he would not be lost eternally, he must have a Saviour. This want of man is fully met by the gospel because it points out Jesus Christ

as both a Prophet and Saviour sent from God. But as the Qur'an only speaks of prophets, and not of a Saviour, we would seem justified in concluding either that it was not fully aware of man's actual necessities, or, being aware of them, did not supply the means for their removal; and in either case its doctrines on this head would be less satisfactory than those of the gospel.

So likewise with regard to the doctrine of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, upon which so much stress is laid throughout the gospel, and of which Jesus Christ said, 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3), the Qur'an not only throws no further light upon it, but it does not so much as even refer to it. Yet every one who has a judgement in spiritual things must see that such a regeneration or renewal of heart and life, according to the will of God, must be a much more acceptable service to Him than the performance of ever so many external rites, whilst the heart is not truly turned to Him. Yea, we know from God's own word that He attaches no value to formal prayers and religious observances, when the heart is given up to sin; for thus He addressed the Jews of old through the Prophet Isaiah, 'Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your

appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow' (Isa. i. 13-17). Nevertheless, the Qur'an lays the chief stress upon man's confession of the doctrine of the Unity, and upon the observance of a number of religious ceremonies, as if such a confession and such an observance could save a man from condemnation, and procure for him eternal blessedness; whilst it cannot be hid from the thoughtful observer that it is quite possible to be loud in the confession of the Unity, and punctual in the observance of religious forms, and yet remain inwardly estranged from God, and addicted to grievous sins.

The gospel chiefly urges us to glorify God by sincere repentance and genuine faith in the Saviour of sinners, no less than by earnestly seeking the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, and worshipping the only true God in spirit and in truth. While the gospel thus emancipates the believer from those many outward forms and religious ceremonies which were in use among the Jews in the days of Jesus (see e.g. Mark vii. 3, 4), and makes

His worship a truly reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1), the Qur'an returns again to many of these elementary forms and outward usages which are characteristic of a less elevated and spiritual religion.

This is well illustrated by the ceremonial observances with which Muslim prayer is inseparably connected. The Muhammadan doctors enumerate no less than twelve requisites to a true and acceptable prayer, and maintain that if any one of these is wanting, the whole prayer is useless, and rejected by God. But if we examine their directions, we find that, instead of giving such spiritual injunctions as the New Testament does, by requiring a prayer to be simple, unostentatious, humbly sincere, earnest, fervent, and believing, they refer only to unimportant external accidents.

It may not be amiss to consider these requisites a little more closely. The twelve requisites are divided into seven external conditions, and five internal pillars, or essentials. The former are, the observance of the Qibla, the previous ablutions, the cleaning of the place of prayer, the proper time of beginning, the actual purposing to pray, the body being decently covered, and the beginning the prayer by the exclamation, 'Allah akbar!'

The institution of the Qibla, or the direction in which the Muslims have to turn their faces in prayer, we find thus recorded in Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 139: 'We have seen thee turning thy face towards every

part of heaven; but we will have thee turn to a Qibla which shall please thee. Turn thy face towards the sacred mosque, and wherever ye be, turn your faces towards that part.' This verse not only proves that the observance of a local Qibla in prayer forms part of the religion of Islam; but we can also gather from it that the temple of Mecca had not hitherto been looked upon as such by the Arabs, and that it was not till some time after Muhammad claimed to be a prophet that it was so regarded. The institution itself, therefore, was not of Arabic origin; and it is highly probable Muhammad adopted it from the Jews. This would appear from the circumstance that the Jews, from very ancient times, made the temple at Jerusalem their Qibla, as we may fairly gather from passages such as Psalm v. 7, Isaiah ii. 4, Dan. vi. 10; and still more plainly from the fact that Muhammad himself for many years turned to Jerusalem as his Qibla, a fact recorded by Arabic historians, e.g. Tabari, and also alluded to in Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 136: 'The foolish ones will say, What has turned them from the Qibla which they used?' It may therefore be looked upon as a fact of which little doubt can be entertained, that Muhammad accepted the idea of a Qibla from the Jews; that for a considerable time he agreed with them in turning towards their temple in Jerusalem, though he ended by adopting the shrine of Mecca for his Qibla. But however this may be, one thing is

certain, namely, that with regard to this observance of a Qibla, the religion of the Muslims stands exactly on the same level with that of the Jews, and that the Christian system is in this particular decidedly superior to both, having entirely dropped the observance of a Qibla, as inconsistent with the absolute spirituality of God, and in no way assisting in the worship of Him. Christians act up to the truth once expressed in the Qur'an [Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 109] 'The east and the west are God's: therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God;' and the rejection of a Qibla with them naturally springs from the full recognition of the spirit of this passage in Isaiah lvii. 15: 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'

Next to the Qibla, the ablutions or lustrations are mentioned which the orthodox Muslim has to regard as an essential requisite to acceptable prayer. They are enjoined in the Qur'an in these words: 'O believers, when ye address yourselves to prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbow, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles. And if ye find no water, then take clean sand, and rub your faces and your hands with it' [Suratu'l-Ma'ida (v) 8-9]. If this direction had been given merely to insure

cleanliness among the people, we should not have a word here to say against it; but if it is made an indispensable condition of acceptable prayer, we naturally remember the word of God to the prophet Samuel, which is thus recorded in 1 Sam. xvi. 7: 'For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' But after such a declaration, every thoughtful man may see that lustrations before prayer can at best have a mere symbolical meaning, in no way affecting the prayer itself, or its acceptability to God. It is not even expressly stated that ablutions before prayer were observed by the Jews, although we know that eternal and typical purifications of this kind were common amongst them. (See Num. xix; Lev. xv; Mark vii. 1-4.) Certain it is that Jesus Christ never prescribed any such to his followers as a condition of true prayer; and in what light He would regard such an injunction may be gathered from Matt. xxiii. 25-6: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.' (See also Mark vii. 6-23.) And it is therefore plain that the washing of hands and feet can add nothing to the efficiency of prayer which is necessarily a mental and spiritual exercise: the

Qur'an by insisting upon lustrations before prayer, enjoins a needless outward observance no way helpful to real devotion. It is also worth remembering, that while for the bare-footed Arabs, and other inhabitants of hot countries, it is an easy and pleasant affair to wash their arms and feet frequently during the day, the command would prove exceedingly irksome to more civilized people accustomed to wear shoes and stockings; and as to the inhabitants of northern latitudes, where the snow never melts, and the people are thickly clad from head to foot to keep them from freezing, it would become a hardship endangering health and life, to be obliged partially to undress and wash their hands and feet five times a day, either with water or with sand. We see, then, the objection to these lustrations is two-fold: their purely physical character, after the gospel had already declared that God requires spiritual worship, and their striking want of adaptation to countries and climates differing from Arabia.

The cleaning of the place of prayer is doubtless very proper, like cleanliness in general, and due care for consecrated things; but it can have no more to do with the prayer itself than the washing of the body; and how it should depend upon an external act of this kind must be incomprehensible to any one who remembers that God is a Spirit, and 'dwelleth not in temples made with hands'. Can any one doubt that the earnest prayers of persecuted believers

who had to assemble for divine worship in dark caves or lonely mountain-tops were more acceptable to God than prayers in the finest and cleanest mosque or church, if not proceeding from a devout believing heart?

But as all this is sufficiently clear, we may, without further dwelling on the remaining conditions above mentioned, at once pass on to the five 'internal pillars' or essentials of a true prayer. They are: the standing erect; the rehearsal of portions of the Qur'an and other forms: the bending forward with the whole body; the prostration in which to touch the earth with the forehead; and the sitting on the thighs after prayer. After reading this can the true and spiritual worshipper of God help exclaiming, 'Alas for a religion that can regard such externals as the internal essentials of genuine prayer!' It is true, they are not all expressly insisted upon in the Qur'an, but they are found in the earliest traditions, so that there can be no doubt Muhammad himself prescribed and practised them, as his followers have done ever since. The unspiritual, external character of four out of these five points is so self-evident, that we need not enlarge upon them. The remaining point, namely, the rehearsing, might possibly be of a nature to compensate in some degree for their want of spirituality. But, alas! upon investigation, how far otherwise do we find it! Even this rehearsing bears the impress, not of an elevated and spiritual,

but of a most formal and mechanical religion. To illustrate this, it will be sufficient to advert to the fact, that during the five daily prayers enjoined upon every Muslim, the first Sura of the Qur'an and several other formulas are repeated forty times, the words 'Subhana rabbiya-laala', i.e. 'Praised be the highest Lord', one hundred and twenty times; and the ejaculation, 'Allahuakbar', i.e. 'God is great', two hundred and twenty-one times; whilst the words, 'Subhana rabbiya-l-'azim', i.e. 'Praised be the great Lord', are repeated no less than two hundred and forty times.¹ Human nature must change, before such a practice, carried on day after day, from one year's end to another, can issue in aught else than a most withering and deadening formalism, so that the warning of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Matt. vi. 7-8, becomes truly applicable—'And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.'

Besides prayer, the pilgrimage to the shrine of Mecca has to be regarded by the Muslims as part of their divine service. This we learn from the words: 'The first temple that was founded for mankind was that in Becca, blessed, and a guidance to human

¹ See *The Faith of Islam* (3rd ed.), pp. 294-321 for the ritual of the prayers.

beings. In it are evident signs, even the standing place of Abraham: and he who entereth it is safe. And the pilgrimage to the temple is a service due to God from those who are able to journey thither' [Suratu Ali Imran (iii) 90-1]. The obligation thus laid upon the Muslims corresponds to that once binding on the Jews of visiting the ark of the covenant, and, later, the temple of Jerusalem, three times a year (see Exod. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16). This latter ordinance, respecting the Jews, rested upon the promise given them by God, that he would especially dwell and reveal Himself to them in that chosen sanctuary, as we can gather from Exod. xxv. 22; Num. vii. 89; Deut. xii. 5-14. But at a later period, when God had suffered their nation to be broken up, on account of their many sins (see 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13-19), He made the person of the Lord Jesus Christ a new temple in which to reveal Himself to man (see John ii. 19, 21; iv. 6, 9; Heb. i. 2-3), and poured out His Holy Spirit into the hearts of believers, making them likewise temples of the living God (see Acts ii; 1 Cor. iii. 16-17; 2 Cor. vi. 16). This is the great fulfilment of which His dwelling in Israel's sanctuary was only a type. After this it could not be expected that He should again choose any particular temple, constructed by human hands, in order to make it the place of His special manifestation to mankind. Accordingly the gospel enjoins

no pilgrimage to any place whatsoever, and the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ must hold good to the end of time, which we find written in John iv. 21, 23: 'The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain (i.e. on Gerizim, near Nablus), nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father But the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers.' If, therefore, the religion of Islam again points to a stone-built temple in a special locality, and enjoins people to make pilgrimages thither, in order thus to obtain blessings which cannot be procured elsewhere, it recedes from the high standard of spirituality attained by the Christian religion, and returns to a position which has been long since abandoned.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan may also be mentioned as one of the religious duties enjoined upon the Muslims. It is ordained for them in these terms: 'O believers, a fast is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may fear God. As to the month of Ramadan, in which the Qur'an was sent down to be man's guidance, as soon as any one of you observeth the moon, let him set about the fast; but he who is sick, or upon a journey, shall fast a like number of other days' [Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 179-183]. The clause 'as it was prescribed to those before you', is an intimation that the custom of

fasting was, like many others, adopted from the Israelites. In fact, we learn from Arabic historians, e.g. Tabari, that Muhammad at first observed for a number of years the well-known Jewish fast of the Atonement, which was even called by its Hebrew name 'Ashur', i.e. the tenth, because it always took place on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jews (Lev. xxiii. 27). But when his power increased in Madina, and the breach between him and the Jews grew wider, he superseded the Ashur, by introducing the Ramadan fast. Now the New Testament by no means prohibits fasting; on the contrary, it leaves every one free to fast, if he finds such abstinence necessary in order the better to overcome sinful appetites, or the more efficiently to accomplish spiritual duties (see Matt. iv. 2; vi. 16-17; ix. 15; Acts xiii. 2-3) but in no part of the New Testament is there a command to abstain from food binding on all, either for a single day amongst the Jews, or for a whole month among the Muhammadans. If some Christians, namely, those belonging to the Latin, Greek, and Armenian churches, observe a kind of general fast, they do so from regard to an ancient custom, and not in obedience to any command in the word of God; but the great Church of England, and all other Protestant churches throughout the world, do not impose such a burden equally on the necks of all, but only recommend the practice of sobriety and abstinence in

general, and leave its detailed application to the enlightened conscience of the individual believer. There can be no doubt that a religion giving this latitude to the individual, on matters of an external and subordinate nature, ranks much higher than another which, like Islam, seeks to enforce all things of that kind by strict formal laws. For whatever is done spontaneously, and from pure love to God, partakes of the character of a child's loving obedience to his parents; but what is done from mere submission to an unbending law, is more like the forced obedience of a slave to his master. But it is not merely on this general religious ground that a thinking believer must doubt the propriety of the introduction of the Ramadan fast, after the gospel had set the example of not enforcing such observances by law. There exist also special reasons from which this institution appears to be opposed to the benignity, equity, and wisdom of God, and therefore not likely to have been introduced with His sanction, or now enforced by His approval. Though the Ramadan fast may be kept in many cases without injury to health, yet the observation of the most eminent medical men goes to prove, that, in not a few cases, the daily abstinence from all eating and drinking, and the nightly free indulgence in both for a whole month, especially if the Ramadan falls in summer, is prejudicial to health, and often lays the foundation of serious.

diseases. Would it, therefore, be consistent with the goodness and wisdom of God to enjoin a fast which in many cases destroys health, that best of man's earthly blessings, whilst its moral object of self-restraint might be obtained in other ways not endangering health?

Nor is this all; for we have to consider the question from yet another point of view. It is certain that Christianity claims to be a universal religion, divinely intended for all men, and equally suited to all the nations of the earth. As, therefore, Islam assumes to be a religion superior to Christianity, it ought to be better adapted to the varying circumstances of mankind than the system it seeks to displace. But what is actually the case with regard to the institution in question? Every one at all acquainted with geography knows that within the tropics days and nights are equal all the year round, but that in the temperate and arctic zones their respective lengths vary so much that, e. g. in some localities the day may last four or six times as long as the night, and vice versa. Now as the Muslims have to fast during the Ramadan from sunrise to sunset, it must follow that, whilst they within the tropics had only to fast about twelve hours, those living in higher latitudes (e.g. in Stambul and further north) would have to do the same for sixteen or twenty hours: but how could this be consistent with the perfect equity of God? We know,

moreover, that about the 67th degree north latitude the day lasts about one month, about the 69th two, and about the 73rd three months, i.e. one, two, or three months intervene between a sunrise and the next sunset. Now if the inhabitants of these northern latitudes were to carry out the Muhammadan rule respecting the Ramadan fast, by abstaining from all eating and drinking for only a single such day, the simple consequence would be, death from starvation, long before the time had arrived to say the midday prayer. From this it is clear as noon day that the existing rules of the Ramadan fast are completely inapplicable to a whole portion of the human family, whilst it is a matter of fact, that in those very regions there are already thousands who confess the Christian religion, without finding in it any precept the observance of which would be certain death to them. It is therefore demonstrated, that so far from being in this particular superior to Christianity, Islam could not exist at all in its present form in vast northern countries, from the simple reason that the first Ramadan would cause the death of all its faithful observers. But would it be consistent with the wisdom of God to enforce a law on man so obviously inapplicable to the whole race? Shall we believe that the all-wise God made a mistake by giving a law which in many countries could not be observed; or shall we believe that Muhammad made a mistake

by requiring all believers throughout the world to fast every Ramadan from sunrise to sunset? We confidently leave the answering of these questions to every thinking and right-minded Musalman.

3. The Kingdom of God.

When we considered the relation of Christianity to the Mosaic dispensation in this respect (ante p. 22), we noticed that the advent of Jesus Christ was a most important turning-point in the kingdom of God, which divested it of its preceding national character (involving also the discontinuance of the rite of circumcision) and which manifested it to be a kingdom truly spiritual and universal, addressing itself to man as such, without distinction of race, rank, or sex, and seeking, in a purely spiritual manner, without the use of compulsion or force, simply by precept and example, to rectify and sanctify all his relations to God and to his fellowcreatures. The kingdom of God, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, can exist independently of the political combinations, or the social institutions and domestic habits of any one nation; it can be established in a land without necessarily disturbing its temporal government; it is not of this world, and, unlike all others, it is a kingdom of truth. On account of its truly spiritual and specifically religious character, it is adapted to every condition and every clime in which men are found, neither courting nor refusing the favour of rulers. Its object is not to

extend the power of any one nation in the world, but to promote the glory of God and His reign in the heart of every man, in the bosom of every family, and in the people of every land. All who receive it, and submit to its influence, it cannot fail to unite in the bonds of a holy brotherhood, making them better, wiser, happier men here below, while preparing them for the services and enjoyments of the world to come. Now, if the assertion were correct that Muhammadanism is a higher revelation than Christianity, would it not necessarily have to show us the kingdom of God in a still higher and more spiritual light, in a form more adapted to the circumstances of the nations of the earth, and with still greater power to make men truly happy, wise, and righteous in this world, and to furnish them in death with a brighter hope of immortality and glory? It is well known to all persons really acquainted with both systems and their working, that the actual state of things is far otherwise.

To begin with the point last mentioned, namely, hope in death, it is admitted that every Christian man sees in the resurrection of Jesus Christ a pledge and guarantee of his own resurrection, and that to him death has so completely lost its terrors, that 'to die' is a 'falling asleep in Jesus' (see 1 Cor. xv; Acts vii. 60; 1 Thess. iv. 14); not a loss, but a most desirable gain (Phil. i. 21; Rev. xiv. 13). Nor do we deny, that although most Muslims

are afraid of death, yet their religion says a great deal to make them desire the next world, and that there have been instances of some who, especially under the excitement of battle, could be heard to exclaim, in the near prospect of death, 'I think I already see the black-eyed Huris of paradise beckoning me to come.' But in this very joy which some may have felt in the prospect of death, there is something which marks their religion as less heavenly and less spiritual than Christianity. The Muslim's joy, where it is found, is based on the expectation of sensual pleasures in the next world; such as splendid clothing, luxurious eating and drinking, and dalliance with a host of tempting Huris, etc.; but the Christian's joy in prospect of death rests on the assurance of coming to his Lord, and enjoying God's presence in a new body, purified from all taint of sin, and made perfect in holiness (see 2 Cor. v. 1-9; Phil. i. 20-3; Rom. viii. 10-25 ; Rev. xxi. 1-7). In the Qur'an we read, 'Theirs shall be Huris, with large dark eyes, like pearls hidden in their shells, in recompense of their past labours Of a rare creation have we created the Huris, and we have made them ever virgins dear to their spouses, of equal age with them, for the people of the right hand, a crowd for the former and a crowd for the latter generations' [Suratu'l-Wagi'a (lvi) 22-3, 34-9] . But in direct contradiction of such carnal views of the kingdom of God in the next

world, we read in the gospel the following declaration of Jesus Christ: 'For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven' i.e. not living together as man and wife, as in this present world (see Matt. xxii. 23-33). It is therefore evident to all, that in this particular the Qur'an has declined from the exalted spiritual views expressed in the gospel, and stunk down to views thoroughly material and earthly.

A similar retrogression may be seen in the retention of circumcision, which, amongst the Jews, was the sign of their belonging to God's people; for its performance is not demanded in the Qur'an yet every one knows that the Muslims still practise it as a religious duty. But, from the Scriptures above quoted (see p. 22), it is abundantly clear that the Christian religion no longer requires the circumcision of the flesh, but in its stead purity of heart and life; and therefore the Muhammadan Sunna, by still insisting upon it, enforces a law of which God has already declared in the gospel that He no longer requires the observance.

But a most striking difference between Christianity and Islam concerns the very nature of the kingdom of God itself. We understand by that term, as already indicated, the peculiar economy God has graciously introduced in this world, and which He himself carries on by His chosen instruments, in order to reclaim mankind from sin, and all the other

consequences of the fall, and to prepare them for heaven. Jesus Himself laid the foundation of this kingdom while He was upon the earth. It formally commenced on the day of Pentecost. And how did He describe its character? He declared it to be a kingdom of truth, and, as such, divine and inward. This we find stated both in the words that came from His own lips, and in the inspired words of His apostles. Consequently, neither Christ nor His apostles ever deposed any earthly king or ruler for refusing to believe the gospel. The New Testament rather commands all men to be obedient to civil magistrates, and even gave these commands at a time when the civil magistrates were not only unbelievers, but persecutors of the faith. Muhammad, on the contrary, at once assailed the governments that would not yield him implicit obedience, and occupied himself the first place both in the mosque and in civil and military councils; so that, from the commencement, Islamism appeared in the character not simply, of a religion, but of a worldly polity. While Jesus Christ distinguished between religion and the state, saying, on one occasion, 'Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's', Muhammad confounded religion and the state, arrogating to himself both the sacredness of a messenger of God and the power of Caesar. A superficial judge might perhaps say that the union of worldly power and religion in

Muhammadanism is a perfection, and the absolutely spiritual character of Christianity the reverse; but in reality the identification of religion and the state in the one system has proved a source of weakness and decay to both, while the distinction of Church and state in the other has turned out a fountain of strength, and a safeguard against decay; for the political aspect of Islam being calculated to attract the worldly-minded who cared more for power and earthly riches than for truth, holiness, and communion with God, it could not fail, as a religious institution, to be of a mixed and impure character from its very origin; whereas the purely spiritual nature of Christianity, its disclaimer of earthly grandeur, its demand of entire self-dedication to God, and the long and bloody persecution it underwent, must have acted from the beginning as a check upon the worldly-minded, so that its first ages reflected in great measure the heavenly purity and elevation of its Founder, by the confession of enemies themselves. This glaring defect of Islam in identifying religion with worldly politics could not but manifest itself in a variety of ways, all of which show, that instead of being more adapted to the religious wants of mankind than Christianity, it is decidedly less so, and consequently not a higher but a lower form of religion. We have now to illustrate some of the evils resulting from the inseparable connexion just named.

The first of these, as considered from a religious point of view, is that Muhammad had to be followed by Khalifas, or successors. Had he been the founder of a religion only, there would have been no need of Khalifas after him, but merely of teachers to propagate his tenets, and of people to practise them; just as the Lord Jesus Christ left no Khalifa to succeed Him, but only a number of preachers and teachers, through whose instrumentality His religion spread far and wide, by its own inherent power as such, and its adaptation to human nature. Jesus Christ, as the Founder of Christianity, could have no successor, because He himself has effected, once for all, a complete salvation for the race, leaving nothing to be done except to receive it with true and living faith; and He needs no successor for the further reason, that having risen from the dead, He is still Himself invisibly present with His Church, and with every individual believer, as the Lord and ruler of their hearts. But, because Muhammad founded not merely a religion but also a worldly empire, which could not exist without a visible head, therefore he had to be succeeded by Khalifas. Muhammad being at the same time the Prophet and Sultan of his followers, his second successor, 'Umar, could consistently assume for his title Amiru'l-Mu'minun i.e. the Commander of the Faithful. Mixed up as religion and politics are in Islam, it cannot be denied that it was fully in accordance with its spirit that the

Khalifas claimed the obedience of subjects from all Muslims, and that the latter should wish to be governed only by the rightful successors of their Prophet. But by doing so the Khalifas and Muhammadans outstepped the limits of religion, and passed into the domain of worldly government, the unavoidable consequence of which was, that they had to participate in the ordinary fate of political institutions. Being then not mere teachers of religion, but secular sovereigns, the Khalifas exposed themselves to the intrigues and hostilities common in the world, but alien to the spirit of true religion, till, ere long, it was not uncommon to see the Muslim world divided into hostile camps, leading to the actual effusion of blood, so that, e.g. in the 'battle of the Camel', only twenty-five years after Muhammad's death, 10,000 Muslims were slain by fellow-believers. It is also well known, that no less than three of the first four Khalifas suffered a violent death, one being stabbed by a Persian wishing to avenge the wrongs of his country, and the two others falling by the hands of Muslims, from political reasons; while the last of these, 'Ali, though the Prophet's nephew and son-in-law, never succeeded in subduing Mu'awiya and the Muhammadans of Syria who rejected his government; and, after his death, his son Hasan found it impossible to succeed his father in the Khalifate, and had to leave it to his rival. It is also notorious that the right of the first four Khalifa's

to the position they occupied was much contested, and separated the Shi'ahs and Sunnis at last into two opposite parties, mutually hating, cursing, and combating each other.¹ That these are serious evils and elements of weakness and decay in Islam from the beginning, and naturally resulting from the mixture of religion and politics in the Qur'anic system, must be evident to every thinking man. It is true that there have also been religious wars among several Christian nations, but these did not arise until centuries after Christ's ascension into heaven, when, in times of prevailing ignorance, the true faith, as taught in the gospel, was little understood and practised.

Another evil, springing from the same fruitful source of mischief, manifested itself particularly with regard to the non-Muslims. While the Christians are taught in the gospel to look with pity on unbelievers as unfortunate wanderers from the right way of God, who ought to be kindly invited to come to the one heavenly Father, by true repentance and a living faith in Jesus Christ whom He has sent to redeem them, the Muhammadans are directed by their religion to regard all non-Muhammadans, not only as infidels, but political enemies, whom they must try to convert and subjugate by force. Accordingly we read: 'Fight, then, against the unbelievers till strife be at an end,

¹ For a full account, see *The Four Rightly-Guided Khalifas* (C. L. S.) (ED.)

and the religion be all of it God's' [Suratu'l-Anfal (viii) 40]; and again, in v. 66, 'O prophet, stir up the faithful to the fight. Twenty of you who stand firm shall vanquish two hundred: and if there be a hundred of you, they shall vanquish a thousand of the infidels, for they are a people devoid of understanding.' That the purport of these and similar passages in the Qur'an is really this, that the Muslims were to compel, by force of arms, to obedience to their prophet, when nations refused it, can be gathered from the summons sent by Muhammad, in the seventh year of the Hijra, to the sovereigns of the surrounding empires to submit to his authority, and the devastating wars by which the Muhammadans afterwards actually sought to enforce obedience to that summons, as well as from words spoken not long before His death, according to the statement of Waqidi's secretary: 'There shall not cease from the midst of my people a party engaged in wars for the truth, even until Antichrist appear.' These injunctions were not lost upon the Muslims. General history tells us how they strove to carry them out, and how many countries were in consequence deluged with the horrors and miseries of war, in the name of religion. Nor were the sufferings of a country over, when it had passed through the fires of a Muhammadan conquest. If the conquered people persevered in refusing to adopt a religion brought to them by a conquering army, instead of self-denying, loving

teachers, they were subjected to many troublesome and humiliating conditions. Not one country is known where the Muslims, after conquering it, treated the inhabitants who were of another faith, as their fellow-citizens, with equal civil rights and duties. On the contrary, they were always dealt with as an inferior, conquered race, who had to look up to the Muslims as their masters. This practice was carried to such an extent, that, even in official documents, contemptuous and insulting appellations used to be applied to them. So it became abundantly manifest that the unnatural combination of religion and politics in Muhammadanism not only deprived the religious element of its spirituality and purity, but also prevented the Muhammadan governments from doing full justice to that first and plainest of the duties of a government, namely, to treat all their subjects with equality before the law, without respect of persons, and to seek to benefit them all alike. It is a real pleasure on this occasion to notice that in the largest of the existing Muslim states, i.e. in Turkey, the use of offensive terms in official documents, respecting subjects of another faith, has now for some years been forbidden,¹ and the latter are now very nearly treated by those in authority in the same way as the Muslims; but it is well known that this praiseworthy advance of a Muhammadan government in the path of justice and equity is by no means

¹ Written in 1865, the date of the first edition of this book.

owing to the teaching of the Qur'an, or the spirit of Islam, but to the wisdom with which the latest illustrious Sultans allowed themselves to be induced to benefit their realm by important reforms, adopted from the more advanced Christian governments of Europe. At all events this much is certain from what has been stated, that the mixture of religion and politics in Muhammadanism, originating the sanguinary wars, and organizing the vast armies that spread it, brought untold misery upon the nations to which it was offered, and that it caused the degradation and oppression to a deplorable extent of any people once subjected to Muhammadan sway. Christianity on the other hand, being a pure religion, was from the commencement intended to spread only by the peaceful means of persuasion and holy example; so much so, that if the government of any Christian land were to send forth an army to compel Muhammadans or idolaters to embrace Christianity, such conduct would be equally repugnant to the teaching of Christ, and the feelings of every true Christian. Now in spite of this difference, it is demonstrated that the latter has already, and is now, spreading far more rapidly throughout the world than the former. If, therefore, it is a fact of indisputable certainty, not only that Christianity spreads more steadily and more widely in the world than Islam, but also that it confers its benefits upon those who embrace it, without causing bloodshed,

oppression, or insult to those who do not, whilst Islam, from its very nature, is bound to make war against those who reject it, or, where it has the power, to keep them in humiliating subjection, in order to confer its benefits, such as they are, upon its professors; then it must be easy for every unprejudiced mind to discern which of the two religions in question can claim pre-eminence on the score of benevolence, or on the score of the adaptation of its nature and constitution to the requirements of mankind.

But whilst it is certain that the politico-religious constitution of Muhammadanism is calculated to prove injurious to non-Muslims, it can by no means be proved that it is an unqualified benefit to the Muslims themselves. On the contrary, even for them it has some disadvantages which are but too obvious. For as Islam makes no distinction between civil and religious laws, but derives them both equally from one source, its author; it follows that a thoroughly Muhammadan government must enforce the observance of religious ordinances with the same rigour of the law, as the fulfilment of ordinary civil duties. But this must prove a great snare and danger to true morality amongst the Muslims; for it is plain beyond contradiction that a religious observance is only acceptable to God if it proceeds from religious motives, i.e. from obedience or love to God; and that if it proceeds from contrary motives, it has only the form of religion, not its essence, and, in fact,

becomes hypocrisy. Now if a Muslim, e.g. wishes not to fast in Ramadan, because he believes that God does not require it of him, but if he fasts nevertheless, from fear of being sent about the town on a donkey, with its tail in his hand, the religious observance which he performs is no longer a service to God, but a hypocritical act; and thus Islam, by enforcing religious practices with the threat of civil punishments, has become to him a cause of hypocrisy, i.e. of sin. So likewise a Muhammadan may become convinced that Islam is not the true religion, and may therefore wish to embrace another which he considers to be the true one; but finding that such an act, though it concerns no one but his own soul and God, would yet be regarded as a civil crime punishable with death, he outwardly remains a Musalman, though against his will, but gives his heart and affections to another religion. Now has not such a man also been led into hypocrisy by the strange laws of Islam? What use can there be in forcing a man to remain in a religion against his will? It is plain that such a law is not in conformity with God's own dealings; for He does not force any man to embrace or retain a religion against his will, but addresses him with arguments and motives calculated to influence that will—arguments, the validity of which man's own understanding, if rightly used, is able to perceive, and motives, the force of which man's heart is capable of appreciating. We indeed

find once the wise and equitable injunction of the Qur'an, 'Let there be no compulsion in religion' [Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 257]; but this remains quite isolated, and is deprived of all influence by others of an entirely opposite character.¹ Here it is not surprising that, in spite of such an isolated word of moderation, Muhammadanism wherever it was in power never tolerated religious liberty, but oppressed as much and as long as it could all other religions; and it is no secret that down to our own times the orthodox Musalmans, who have kept aloof from the more humane influences of Christianity, have always considered it a sacred duty to kill any one of their number who dared to embrace another religion. How very different from this is the whole spirit of the gospel, and how instructive what we read in John vi. 66-8; namely, that on one occasion, when some of the disciples of Christ had taken offence at the truths He uttered, and left Him, He addressed these words to His twelve Apostles: 'Would ye also go away?' Whereupon one of them answered in the name of all the rest: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' It is again a great pleasure to state, that in this particular also the government of Turkey has of late years risen above old prejudices, and taken a decided step towards Christian liberality, by proclaiming perfect liberty to

¹ For a critical study of this verse, showing its limited nature, see Sell, *The Historical Development of the Qur'an*, pp. 229-30. (ED.)

all their subjects to embrace and exercise whatever religion they think best; an enlightened course, deserving the commendation not only of every Muslim, but of every man.

Now, as the mixture of religion and politics in Islam proves injurious both to Muslims and non-Muslims, so it is also calculated, under certain circumstances, to impede its own progress, or even to endanger its very existence. The pages of history show, that as soon as Muhammad had entered upon a career of conquests the number of his followers rapidly increased; and after he had once been able to enrich them by the frequent distribution of valuable spoil, many instances occurred of different Arabic tribes sending embassies to the new Amir-prophet, to declare their willing submission to him. This rapid spread of Islam also continued during the reign of the early Khalifas, whose armies conquered many countries in quick succession; and it has afterwards been renewed from time to time in various countries, under Muslim sovereigns, who were more than usually powerful and victorious. It was perfectly natural that such should be the effect; for as Muhammadanism is not merely a religion, but at the same time an earthly empire, the power and success of the latter appeared to many as a proof of the truth of the former. On the supposition that Islam is the last and highest stage in the development of the kingdom of God, as yet granted to the

world, and containing both a divinely-inspired religion and a divinely-inspired polity, it is unquestionably logical and consistent to expect that it should not only, as a religion, contain the sublimest truth, but also, as a polity, secure the greatest amount of military victories, temporal power, and earthly prosperity. Therefore, as long as the Muhammadan world was distinguished by its victories and power, and enriched by the booty of other countries, it could hardly be otherwise than that every Musalman saw proof of the religious truth of Islam in this tangible success of its worldly polity, which was an essential part of it. But, assuming the legitimacy and fairness of this chain of argument, does not its cogency and force continue when the premises have become such as to lead to an entirely opposite conclusion? If in times past the Muslims argued 'Our religion must be from God because we can see with our eyes that our polity, which forms an inseparable part of it, answers so well, and makes us more powerful than all the surrounding nations,' can they now consistently, avoid arguing in a similar manner, by saying: 'How can we any longer put implicit confidence in our religion, since it is a palpable fact that our polity, which forms part of it, has so signally failed, that many countries, once swayed by it, have passed into Christian hands; that more than thirty millions of Muslims have now to pay tribute to Christian governments; and that

Muhammadan Turkey has found it absolutely necessary, in order to be able to exist at all, to introduce important reforms in opposition to the political principles of Islam? The inseparable connexion between religion and politics in Islam naturally suggests this mode of reasoning to every thoughtful Muhammadan, and wherever it is entered upon it cannot but lead to conclusions inimical to the system of the Arabian Prophet, more especially in those regions where the political power has entirely passed from the Muslims into other hands. The grave facts which, on the subject in question, present themselves to the reflection of every Musalman, are these: that Muhammadanism, on the one hand, is by principle, and actually from its commencement, not a mere religion, but a system into which religion and politics, or things spiritual and temporal, are so closely united and almost identified, that the failure of the one cannot but shake confidence in the other; whereas Christianity, on the other hand, expressly declares, that its object in the present era of the world is by no means to set up a visible earthly kingdom, but simply to deliver man from the ruinous power of sin and Satan, and to restore him to blessed communion with God; but that, notwithstanding all this, i.e., notwithstanding that Islam expressly aims at earthly dominion and the subjugation of the non-Muhammadan nations, and notwithstanding that Christianity is purely a religion, and

for three hundred years spread without any political power, amidst cruel persecutions, God, in His all-wise providence, has yet so diminished the worldly power of the Muslim nations, and so marvellously increased the general prosperity and political power of the nations professing Christianity, that there are a number of Christian lands, e. g. England, America, France, Prussia, Austria, Italy, and Russia, each one of which is more civilized, more generally educated, and politically more powerful, than the Osmanli empire, which, of all remaining Muhammadan states, is, without contradiction, the most civilized, the best educated, and the most powerful.

The facts referred to having shown that the politico-religious system of Islam, as compared with the pure religion of Christianity, has proved a failure, so far as the Muhammadan nations themselves and mankind in general are concerned, we have now to draw attention to another point in which Muhammadanism is likewise inferior to Christianity. The gospel, as has been already noticed, shows us the kingdom of God, or the true religion. in its most spiritual and universal character, no less applicable to, than intended for, the whole human race, and not encumbered by the trammels of any particular nationality. But what the Qur'an presents to us as the highest and last stage of the kingdom of God in this world wears again an unmistakable national character, and is burdened with

a load of external forms which must not only retard its propagation, but actually prevent its establishment over the entire globe. Having already had occasion to show how the external forms of Islam deprive it of a truly universal character, or render it inapplicable to all the various nations of the earth (see p. 93), we may here confine ourselves to two points—the extensive introduction of the Arabic language wherever Muhammadanism becomes the religion of a people, and the injunction to take a pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina as a religious duty.

To begin with the latter, i. e. the pilgrimage to Mecca, it is a fact known to every one acquainted with Arabic history, that the Arabs observed this national custom for many centuries before Muhammad. The different tribes had agreed, when still given to idolatry, to assemble every year as one nation before their national sanctuary at Mecca, during which time all their feuds were suspended, and they could meet in brotherly concord as members of one great nation. No one can deny, that from a national point of view this was a wise and useful arrangement, the observance of which by a people of more or less nomadic habits involved no very considerable sacrifice. But when this institution was also adopted, though with some modifications, into the religion of Muhammad, claiming a mission to all the nations of the earth, it became

liable to two serious objections. In the first place it must be readily conceded, that whilst there was no insuperable obstacle in the way of Arabs visiting Mecca, with their multitudes of camels and horses, yet at present, since there are Muhammadans in Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India, Algiers, Morocco, and other remote parts of Africa, it cannot but be difficult for the less wealthy, and almost impossible for the poor, to afford the time and money required for so long a pilgrimage; and if Islam were to spread to still more distant lands, it would, in proportion, become less possible for the inhabitants to fulfil this demand of their faith, and reap the benefits held out by it. Where then, in a religion claiming universality, is the wisdom of an injunction, or the benefit of a promise which must remain beyond the reach of a very large proportion of Musalmans, in spite of their most earnest desires? In the second place, this obligation on Muslims to visit Mecca and Madina once at least in their life, shows that these are still to be regarded as the proper centre of the entire Muhammadan world, to which they must turn in veneration, and from which they must be more or less influenced, or, in other words, it indicates a design and tendency in Islam to preserve as much as possible its original Arabic character, in whatever country it may be professed. There would be no harm in such a tendency if Islam pretended only to be the religion of the

Arabic tribes; but asserting a mission for all other nations as well, and yet retaining the peculiar Arabic impress, it cannot fail to do great violence to the other races over which it gains power. The Arabic nationality being so prominently brought forward, the others, equally God's creatures, must in proportion be undervalued and slighted. To what extent this can be done can easily be seen from the existing state of things: e.g. although Arabia, at the present moment, has not even political independence, but is subjected to the Osmanlis, yet these latter, being Muhammadans, are enjoined by their religion to regard Mecca and Madina as more sacred than their own capital Stambul, and to take a long pilgrimage to Arabia, as if this were more pleasing to God than if they remained in their own native land to serve Him. How different Christianity in this respect, having no provincial or local garb, but equally at home in every town and country, in virtue of its own divine and essentially spiritual character.

The other point above referred to as likewise showing how little Islam was able to shake off the trammels of the nationality amidst which it arose, and to adapt itself to the various exigencies of mankind, is its servile dependence on the Arabic language, which must to some extent be adopted by every nation embracing Islam. To prove this, nothing more is required than to examine the

languages of Muhammadan nations, e.g. the Turkish, the Persian, and the Hindostani, all of which had to accept more or less from the Arabic. But the chief ground upon which Muhammadanism must be charged with tyranny over the languages of its non-Arabic professors is this, that it requires them to read the Qur'an and to perform the public services in the Arabic language only, instead of using their own for that purpose. This tyrannous practice unduly raises the language of the Arabs, and invests it with an air of unique authority and sacredness, while degrading all others as unhallowed and profane. Arabic must, therefore, be the language of theology and devotion wherever the religion of Muhammad prevails. None can be a true disciple who does not learn so much of it as to be able to join in the public prayers, and none can read the book on which his religion is based except through the same medium. Hence it is patent to all, that, so far as language is concerned, Islam has retained a mere national, i.e. an Arabic character, and that, consequently its spread involves to a great extent also that of the Arabic language. Every one must perceive that this cannot fail to act as a hindrance to the propagation of Islam in a quiet and spontaneous way, and that it is a decided and serious defect in a religion claiming a universal destiny. How could it be expected, e.g. that the great nations who now pray to God, and read His word, in English,

German, French, or Russian, should ever feel disposed to learn Arabic, in order to do much more imperfectly, in a foreign language, than which they can already do in their own? Surely it must be easy for every nation that has embraced the religion of Arabia to find out, by actual experience, that the compulsory use of a foreign language where their own vernacular might be employed, is a hindrance and not a help to devotion and growth in religious knowledge. To take one instance only: how many thousand Osmanlis are there not the least understanding the Arabic prayers which they have to repeat, or the Suras read to them from an Arabic Qur'an? and how many more thousands there are who understand them only imperfectly, and could derive much more benefit from them if they might repeat them in Turkish? No thinking man can hesitate to pronounce it more useful and natural for a nation to pray to God and read His word in its own language, that everybody understands, than in one which few understand well, many only imperfectly, and the vast majority not at all. Nor can it be less easy for any one to decide which is most suitable to become the universal religion—Christianity, with its gospel already translated and circulating in several hundred languages; or Islam, with its Qur'an in the one language of the Arabs? Which must appear to the judgement of every thoughtful man to be most in accordance with the benignity

and wisdom of God, to send the gospel of man's salvation to every nation in their own tongue, or to send them an Arabic Qur'an, which no one can understand out of Arabia, without first spending years in its study? Can any one suppose that the time will come when all the nations—we will not say of the whole world, but merely of Europe—will learn so much Arabic that they may perform their prayers and read the Qur'an in that language? Surely no man, and no Musalman, who knows the world, will believe this, unless, perhaps, some whose veneration for the Arabic leads them even to believe that 'no doubt Arabic is the language of heaven'. The conclusion, therefore, at which a reflecting and sincere Muhammadan must arrive, when comparing the national Arabic character of Islam with the spiritual and universal nature of Christianity, can hardly fail to be any other than this, that the former, instead of being a higher development of the true religion, falls far short of the lofty, spiritual, and universal adaptation of the latter.

4. Retaliation.

We have already remarked (p. 24) how far the gospel advances beyond the law in its requirement of a spirit of love, forbearance, and forgiveness in the private conduct of individuals. As it is impossible to conceive nobler and more spiritual principles of action between man and man, we cannot but wonder that Islam, instead of presenting a higher

standard in this particular than Christianity, falls back to the level—we will not say, of the Mosaic law—but of that law as misunderstood by the Jews. The retention and sanction by Muhammad of the right of private revenge appears from the following passages of the Qur'an: 'Whosoever shall be slain wrongfully, to his heir have we given powers; but let him not outstep bounds in putting the man-slayer to death, for he too, in his turn, will be assisted and avenged' [Suratu Bani Isra'il (xvii) 35] . And again, 'O believers, retaliation for blood-shedding is prescribed to you: the free man for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the woman for the woman; but he to whom his brother shall make any remission is to be dealt with equitably, and to him should he pay a fine with liberality' [Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 173] . And it is to be observed that the Qur'an has not, like the Torah, taken sufficient steps to check the abuse to which such an enactment is plainly liable. Many Muslim tribes think themselves entitled by the Qur'an not merely to punish an actual murderer, but also to exact vengeance on any member of his family or tribe, so that, in the name of their religion, they slay the innocent for the guilty. Against such an abuse of the law of retaliation the Torah had expressly guarded, by enjoining, in Deut. xxiv. 16, 'The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own

sin.' Besides retaliation in case of murder, the Qur'an seems also to approve of private revenge for any minor injuries, in the following passage, 'And whoever, in making exact reprisal for injury done him, shall again be wronged, God will assuredly aid him' [Suratu'l-Hajj (xxii) 59] . Such teaching cannot but foster a harsh and vindictive spirit towards one another, instead of that noble spirit of kindly forbearance and love recommended in the gospel. Whilst, therefore, in regard to the duty we owe our fellow-men, the gospel is characterized by pure love; and the Torah by strict justice, the Qur'an seems to expose itself in some measure to the charge of injustice and cruelty. This appears to be felt, and tacitly admitted, by Muslims themselves; for even, professedly Muhammadan Governments, such, e.g. as that of the Osmanlis, do not think of carrying out such cruel laws as those prescribed in the following verses of the Qur'an: 'The recompense of those who war against God and His apostle, and go about to commit disorders on the earth, shall be, that they shall be slain, or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or be banished the land' [Suratu'l-Ma'ida (v) 39]. And again in verse forty-two: 'As for the thief, whether man or woman, cut ye off their hands in recompense for their doing.'

5. Slavery.

We have seen above (p. 26) that the Old Testament tolerated and recognized slavery, although it

considerably mitigated its hardships, and placed the slaves under the protection of the public laws, whilst we found the whole spirit and tendencies of Christianity to be opposed to it, and calculated, wherever it can exercise its legitimate influence, to bring about its entire abolition. Here, therefore, we have to ask the question: 'Does Islam assume a diviner, i.e. more generous and benevolent aspect as regards that most degraded class of men, the slaves, than Christianity?' History answers 'No,' emphatically: on the contrary, it is a fact that to this moment slavery remains undisturbed in every country under Muhammadan rule, Muslims buying and selling not only non-Muslims, but even their brethren in the Faith, especially the Negroes, as they buy and sell cattle; and that never yet has the religion of the Qur'an produced in any place an amount of philanthropy and generosity sufficient to effect the general emancipation of slaves, whilst in none of the great empires of Christian Europe is domestic slavery tolerated, or would the public spirit suffer human beings to be sold like brutes; and throughout the vast dominions of England, comprising about one-fifth of the human race, a law is in force, that, as soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground, that moment he becomes a free man. So different has been the respective influence of Muhammadanism and Christianity in regard to slavery; and all this is the natural fruit of the

principles and tendencies they respectively bring to bear on social relations in general. It is true the Qur'an contains some passages similar to those found in the Old Testament, in which humanity and even liberality towards slaves are recommended; but even in this respect there are one or two particulars which stamp the teaching of the Qur'an as inferior even to that of the Torah. The Qur'an expressly leaves the virtue of all female slaves, even of the married ones, to the mercy of their master, whilst the Torah gives no such license. It cannot but be regarded as a great hardship and cruelty to the female slaves to declare them unprotected in what every right-minded woman prizes most, her feminine virtue. That this is done by the Qur'an will be seen from the following questions: 'The believers are continent, except as regards their wives, or the slaves whom their right-hands possess; for in respect of them they shall be blameless' [Suratu'l-Mu'arij (lxx) 29-30]. Again 'Forbidden to you are married women, except those who are in your hands as slaves' [Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 28]. So likewise, whilst it was ordered in the Torah that every Hebrew slave should only have to serve his master six years, and in the seventh he should go out free (Exod. xxi. 2); and whilst it was further provided that any master who killed his slave was to be 'surely punished' (Exod. xxi. 20); and if he inflicted any bodily injury upon any of them, he was bound to give

them their liberty in return (Exod. xxi. 2b-7); there is no such safeguard found in the Qur'an; and the result is, that masters can exercise cruelties towards their slaves in Muhammadan countries for which they would have been punished by the law of Moses. It, then, is a fact beyond contradiction, that slaves are less protected by the Qur'anic than the Mosaic code; it is a fact that slavery still exists all over the Muhammadan world, and that in no single Muslim country has it ever been abolished; and it is a fact that in the whole of Christian Europe slavery is only known as a thing of the past, and that every living man is free, whilst Christian England, actuated by the spirit of the gospel, has conferred the blessing of liberty upon all the millions formerly kept in bondage throughout her immense possessions in every part of the world. Hence every man of common sense must perceive that, with regard to slaves and slavery, Islam, so far from being more just, humane, and merciful than Christianity, is quite the reverse, not even reaching the Mosaic standard.

6. Polygamy and divorce.

This is the last point of comparison between the teaching of the Old and New Testament which we have considered above (see p. 28), and in which we have found the latter superior to the former; for whilst the law of Moses did not forbid polygamy by any legal enactment, and expressly tolerated divorce,

the gospel of Jesus Christ is directly opposed to both divorce and polygamy, and emancipates the woman in general from those restrictions which are inimical to her position as a free-born child of God. Here it is our duty to examine the question whether, in this respect, Islam proceeds still farther in the course marked out by the gospel, as it ought to do, if it were a still higher revelation, or whether it disappoints such expectations.

As regards polygamy, the Qur'an instead of disavowing it still more strongly than Christianity, stops short even of the indirect disapproval of it which we find in the law of Moses, and completely departs, on this point, from all the previous teaching of revealed religion, by expressly sanctioning it; for we read: 'And if ye fear lest ye should deal unfairly with orphans, then marry of other women who please you, two, or three, or four; and if ye fear lest you should act equitably, then one, or the slaves whom ye have acquired ' [Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 3]. While thus every Muslim, who is so disposed and has the means, may lawfully marry as many as four wives at a time, and may, besides, cohabit with as many female slaves as he chooses, without marrying them, Muhammad was not satisfied for his own person with even so great a license, but took to himself more than ten wives, besides the slaves; and his doing so is expressly sanctioned in the Qur'an as one of the special prerogatives

of the prophet, in these words: 'O prophet, we allow thee thy wives whom thou hast dowered, and the slaves whom thy right-hand possesses out of the booty which God has granted thee, and the daughters of thy uncle and of thy paternal and maternal aunts who fled with thee (to Madina), and any believing woman who has given herself up to the prophet, if the prophet desired to wed her; a privilege far the above the rest of the faithful' [Suratu'l-Ahzab (xxxiii) 49]. Such being the teaching of the Qur'an, and the practice of the Arabian prophet, we cannot wonder that to the present day polygamy is considered as a lawful institution in all Muhammadan countries, indulged in by Muslims who do not mind the domestic inconveniences and expense it entails; and that female slavery is continued, not only for the sake of labour, but also for the gratification of the carnal lusts of masters. But such a state cannot be pleasing in the sight of a just and holy God; for it is destructive of true, divinely-appointed matrimony, and can only exist where woman is regarded not as God has intended her, namely, man's rational companion, a help meet for him, but only as an inferior minister to his carnal desires. Polygamy is incompatible with true marriage, inasmuch as it frustrates one of the chief objects for which God has instituted it, by preventing perfect union between husband and wife, and rendering healthy family-life impossible.

The normal idea of matrimony supposes a perfect union, in which husband and wife mutually live for each other: but if a man has several wives, all of whom have to regard him as their only husband, and to bear him unswerving fealty, how can he reciprocate this devotion, seeing that he cannot belong wholly to more than one? In polygamy there cannot be a perfect matrimonial alliance, or an equal surrender of husband and wife to one another; for whilst each wife is expected to devote herself wholly to the husband, the husband, being only one, cannot give himself wholly to each one of several wives, and consequently he is not a true and real husband to any of them. The union between husband and wife being thus incomplete, how could we expect it to produce a united and healthy family life? The house of a man living in polygamy cannot form one united family at all, but as many defective families as there are wives. Each wife of a polygamist, with her children, has her own separate family interests, differing from those of her husband, and those of every one of his other wives. Hence the common experience, to which even the harem of the Arabian prophet itself proved no exception [see *Suratu't-Tahrim* (lxvi) 1-5], that wherever there is more than one wife, there must also be endless feuds and jealousies. ¹It is therefore not surprising, that, in spite of the sanction of their

¹ See *The Life of Muhammad* (C.L.S.), pp. 199-202. (ED.)

religion, comparatively few of the richer Muslims, especially in Turkey, indulge in marrying more than one wife, and the poor very rarely; a fact which clearly proves that polygamy is an unnatural institution, unsuited to the actual circumstances of human society. Nor can it be denied that it is degrading to the female sex; for it rests upon the admission that one woman is inadequate to the duty and dignity of conjugal companionship, and that a man consults his happiness more by having two, three, or four wives. There can be little doubt, that if women in Muhammadan countries were more enlightened and educated, they would scorn to accept so degrading a position. It is undeniable that Islam, in sanctioning polygamy, departed at once from the practice of the Christian world during the previous six hundred years, and the normal law of the divine Creator; for nothing is more clearly established by the statistical science of modern times than that the primal law of the Creator, ordaining one woman for one man, remains unaltered; since it is found all over the world that the proportion of male and female births is still about equal. It is evident, then, that no provision has been made by the God of nature for Muhammad's plurality of wives, and that his precepts, and practice on this head are in direct antagonism to natural and revealed law. Hence it follows as a general result, in ordinary circumstances, that where

one Muhammadan has two, three or four wives, there must be a corresponding number of others who cannot marry at all. Defenders of Islam might perhaps assert that the exigency of the case was met by the many victories God had given them over other nations. But in reply to this it must be observed that it does not follow from God's permitting the Muslims to conquer foreign nations, that He did so in order to enable them to fill their harems with female captives. Besides, although it is quite true that, in times past, hundreds of thousands of poor women have been carried into captivity, to become the slaves or wives of their Muslim conquerors, yet it is no less an undeniable fact, that the laws of God in history have so operated, that it has now become an impossibility for Muslim armies to capture and bring home thousands of unfortunate young creatures from conquered non-Muhammadan countries. This change in the political state of the world which Providence has brought about, shows as little intention in history as in nature to provide the Muhammadans with the number of wives allowed them by their religion. It may therefore be regarded as demonstrated by unquestionable facts that the manifest will of God and the Muhammadan laws are diametrically opposed to one another, as regards polygamy.

Divorce which, as we have already seen (p. 28), was only tolerated by the law of Moses, and positively

prohibited by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is expressly sanctioned by the Qur'an of Muhammad. The title of the Suratu't-Talaq (lxv) is 'Divorce', as treating largely on this subject. There we read; 'O Prophet, when ye divorce women, divorce them at their special times; and reckon those times exactly, and fear God your Lord . . . As to such of your wives who have no hope of the recurrence of their times, if ye have doubts in regard to them, then reckon three months, and let the same be the term of those who have not yet had them. And as to those who are with child, their period shall be until they are delivered of their burden. God will make His command easy to him who feareth Him' (verses 1 and 4). In another Sura we find the following declaration, 'Ye may divorce your wives twice. Keep them honourably, or put them away with kindness. But it is not allowed you to appropriate to yourselves aught of what ye have given to them, unless both fear that they cannot keep within the bounds set up by God. And if ye fear that they cannot observe the ordinances of God, no blame shall attach to either of you for what the wife shall herself give for her redemption. And when you divorce your wives, and have waited the prescribed time, hinder them not from marrying their husbands, when they have agreed among themselves in an honourable way. This warning is for him among you who believeth in God and in the last day.

This is most pure for you and most decent. God knoweth, but ye know not' [Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 229, 232] . We shall quote one more verse from the Qur'an on this subject, namely, Suratu'n-Nisa (iv) 24: ' If ye be desirous to exchange one wife for another, and have given the one a talent, make no deduction from it.' These quotations establish it beyond a doubt that the Qur'an legalizes divorce, and the re-marrying of the divorced, and that no weightier reason is required from a man who wants to divorce his wife than his mere wish to do so, the wife herself having no right secured her than that of claiming the sum of money settled upon her by her husband at the time of marrying. If we compare with this unlimited licence granted by the Qur'an the peremptory prohibition of divorce conveyed in the word of the Lord Jesus, 'What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder' (Matt. xix. 6), then we cannot for a moment remain doubtful as to the fact whether the Qur'an is a confirmation and higher development of the doctrines of the Gospel in this respect, or whether the teaching of the Arabian Prophet is diametrically opposed to the declaration of the Messiah. One thing is certain, that God ordained matrimony as early as He created the first human couple, but that He gave them not the slightest intimation that they were at liberty to tear asunder that conjugal tie with which He had united them;

and another thing is no less certain, namely, that, four thousand years afterwards, the Lord Jesus, whom every orthodox Musalman regards as a true prophet sent by God, expressly forbade the dissolution of the marriage tie by man himself; but if, six hundred and ninety years later, another law is propagated, giving every married man full liberty to divorce his wife for any reason he pleases, and to repeat such divorce as often as he chooses, so that cases become possible, as are known to have actually happened amongst the Muslims, of men successively marrying and divorcing twenty, thirty, or more wives then the question naturally suggests itself to every reflecting mind, 'Can such a law likewise have emanated from the unchangeable God?'

It cannot be denied, that, in consequence of the legitimate character with which their law invests divorce, and the great facility it provides for effecting it, divorces have become of amazing frequency among the Muhammadans, incomparably more so than the practice of polygamy; and the evils inseparable from them must therefore have a most baneful effect upon Muslim society. Every one living in a Muhammadan country, especially in large cities, has abundant opportunity to observe how frequently divorce is the source of cruel injustice, and extreme distress to the divorced woman. To mention only one case out of a great many. The writer of this book knows a Muslim

in his neighbourhood who had been married to a woman for thirty years, and had two grown-up sons by her, when he began to dislike her, and to wish for a younger wife. He therefore divorced her, and married a girl younger than his eldest son. As he was in Government service, and had a handsome salary, his wife had been used to all the comforts of life. But the small sum of money she received at her divorce was soon expended, and as she was too old to find another husband, and had no relatives to take her in, she was reduced to the most abject poverty and distress, often having nothing to eat to satisfy her hunger. Cases of similar hardship, resulting from heartless divorce, are so common that probably every Muslim reader will remember some from among his own acquaintances or his own neighbourhood. It is not a rare thing that such poor divorced women give themselves up to a life of sin and profligacy in order to avoid starvation. On the other hand, unprincipled men are enabled by this facility of divorce to indulge their illicit appetite to an almost unlimited extent. Not long ago a Turk was pointed out to me who looked about fifty years old only, and yet I was assured by a learned Imam that this man had already divorced seventy wives, and was just then living with two newly-married ones; so that if he married the first time in his twentieth year, he must have divorced at the rate of more than two

wives annually for thirty successive years. How much soever conduct like this may have the form of legitimacy, according to Muhammadan law, yet before a holy God, and even in the eyes of every strictly moral man, it must appear as a life of fornication and sin.

Apart from such cases of extraordinary distress, or legalized excess of sensuality, resulting from the existing laws of Islam respecting divorce, the whole married state, and society in general, cannot fail to be most injuriously and banefully affected. Every Muhammadan who marries does so with the knowledge that at any time he pleases, he can again dissolve that matrimonial tie, without having to dread any check whatever from law, provided he be prepared to pay the sum of money settled upon his wife at the time of marrying. And every woman marrying a Muslim is aware, that if, at any time, she ceases to please her husband, or he would be better pleased with another, he has the legal right to put her away, and take some one else in stead. This state of things deprives matrimony at the outset of the importance and solemnity it has with those who know that they unite for no less a term than life. To the Muhammadan it is not so, but merely a union for as long or as short a time as he himself pleases; and its dissolution is for him not a matter of conscience and morality, but simply a question of money and convenience. This must be productive of evil in a variety of ways. It is

sure to destroy the unity of aim and interest which ought to characterize husband and wife, as the heads of a family; for the wife having cause to dread, from the commencement, that at some future time her husband may take it into his head, in some evil hour, to divorce her, her aim will naturally be, instead of devoting herself to promote the general prosperity of the family, to secure for herself a separate portion, at the expense of her husband, so that, in case of divorce, she may not be destitute. The husband, knowing this, will probably be disposed to withhold from her that confidence and share in the management of the household which he would gladly accord if he were sure that she had no interests apart from his own. It is not uncommon to hear a Muhammadan ascribe want of success in advancing the interests of his family to the circumstance that his wife, instead of seconding his endeavours, only seeks to obtain as much of his income as she can for herself and her relatives. Wherever such is the case, there is an end of a family union and healthy family life.

The laws and practice in question also exercise an injurious influence on the welfare of children. The mother is greatly tempted to spoil them by over-indulgence, from a mistaken hope of thus gaining and securing their affections so effectually as to retain them even in case of separation by divorce. The father likewise inflicts a cruel wrong

upon his own children by divorcing their mother. For as thenceforth he is not only indifferent, but hostile to her, and she can no longer visit his house, his children are deprived of their mother almost as entirely as if she were dead. They may indeed, now and then, find an opportunity of visiting her, but in most cases this is not approved of, perhaps even prohibited by the father, and the whole spirit of his house tends to alienate them from her who gave them birth. Thus the practice of divorce, where there are children, strongly tends to deaden the tenderest feelings and strongest instincts that God has implanted in the human heart, namely, those that form the maternal and filial bond.

Another evil result of the unlimited authorization of divorce is the strong ground thus afforded for feelings of jealousy between the married parties, and the moral impossibility of the natural and free intercourse between the two sexes, which proves such an advantage to society in general where Christian principles prevail. Whilst in well-regulated Christian society husband and wife are perfectly sure of one another, from the fact that, so long as there is no criminal cause, divorce is an impossibility, married Muhammadans, especially the wives, must be greatly susceptible of jealous surmisings, or disquieting apprehensions, because they are never sure whether the slightest real or imagined coolness in

conjugal affections, or any other incidental occurrence, may not be the first symptom of an impending divorce. Among Christians every married man knows that he can neither add a wife to the one he has, nor exchange her for another, as the Muslims can; and therefore his relation to the female sex in general assumes much of the purity and sacredness of the relationship between brothers and sisters, so that he can have social intercourse with womankind in general, and benefit by their keener observation, their kindlier sympathy, their more refined manners and tastes, with almost the same propriety and freedom he enjoys in conversing with his sisters or with individuals of his own sex. Every married Muhammadan, on the other hand, knows that the fact of his having a wife by no means precludes the possibility of his courting and marrying another, either in addition to the one he has, or after having sent her away. Every Muslim is also aware that the fact of a woman being married does not absolutely prevent her from becoming his wife; for it is possible that he may induce her husband, either by bribery or intimidation, to divorce her; or, the married woman herself; if bent on getting free from her husband, so annoy and irritate him as to bring about a divorce, enabling her to become another man's wife. As every Muhammadan husband and wife are led by their religion to look upon the tie of matrimony as not binding till death, but merely till it is found

convenient and pleasant to dissolve it, the fact of being married does not debar a Musalman from seeking another wife, perhaps even amongst those who are already provided with a husband, but who may be rendered eligible by means of divorce; nor does it prevent a Muslim woman from seeking to win the affections of another man, in the hope that a divorce may enable her to become his wife. The consequence of this is, that in order to save matrimony from becoming practically altogether useless, and sinking down to the level of lawless concubinage, the custom has become necessary among the Muhammadans of most rigidly separating even the married portion of the two sexes, and completely preventing any friendly intercourse between them, so that general society has altogether ceased to consist of men and women, as God originally designed it, and as it still is among Christians, and has been reduced to a company of men only, whilst the poor women are kept shut up in harems, and not permitted to appear out of doors without carefully hiding their faces. This unnatural exclusion of the female sex from society, rendered necessary by the unlimited license of divorce, cannot but prove a great evil, inasmuch as it deprives the society of men not only of a highly agreeable, but also of a most refining element, and inasmuch as it confines one half, and this the more sociable half, of mankind to the bleak monotony of harem-life, cruelly debarring them from

the loftier sphere, the wider horizon, and the more intellectual tone of the society of men. By stopping the excessive facility of divorce, the unsightly and ghastly covering of the face could be safely dispensed with, and womankind restored to society, both to their own inestimable benefit, and that of the stronger sex.

It may also be worth mentioning that, as an indirect result of the facility of divorce, and of the complete separation of the sexes, the strange custom has become universally prevalent, that parties entering on the married state are not allowed to have any personal or friendly intercourse, but must individually remain strangers to each other up to the day of marriage. The only way in which they can hear or know any thing of each other before marriage, is through the medium of near relatives and friends. It is therefore impossible to judge for themselves whether their characters and tempers, their habits and tastes, their principles and views of life, or even their personal appearance, are likely to coalesce and prove mutually agreeable. Whilst no man willingly buys a house or horse, without first seeing them for himself, and no woman thinks of purchasing an article of dress or ornament, without first looking at it, yet so great is the tyranny of Muhammadan custom as to require that two persons going to marry shall have no acquaintance with each other, but that in this most weighty matter they shall depend solely

on the information and judgement of others. It cannot be wondered at, therefore, that cases are not rare in which two persons, utterly unacquainted with each other, join in marriage but find out directly afterwards that their characters, tastes and views of life are so uncongenial, or even the personal appearance is so different from what had been expected, that a dissolution of the marriage union is sought almost from the very day they have come together. It is even said, that sometimes, especially in large towns, unprincipled girls induce men to marry them, simply for the sake of the sum of money to be settled upon them in the marriage-contract, and with the intention, from the very first, of so annoying and troubling their husband as to force him to divorce them. Thus we see that the excessive facility of divorce leads to levity in marrying; and marrying without that mutual esteem and love which can flow only from knowledge and sympathy, leads again to a deplorable increase of divorces. Every one must acknowledge that such a state of things cannot but act most injuriously on society in general, and the well-being of individuals in particular.

It is now abundantly evident that the Qur'an, instead of further developing the true religion in regard to matrimony and divorce, stops even far short of the teaching of the gospel and the Mosaic law on the subject. But there is one enactment, in the Qur'anic law which must still be mentioned as a

most striking illustration of its retrograde and deteriorating character. Whilst in the law of Moses it is expressly forbidden for a man who has once divorced his wife to take her back again, under any circumstance, the Qur'an allows him to do so, not only after a first, but also after a second, and, on a most singular condition, even after a third divorce. In the Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 230 we read: 'But if the husband divorce her a third time, it is not lawful for him to take her again, until she shall have married another husband; and if he also divorce her, then shall no blame attach to them if they return to each other, thinking that they can keep within the bounds fixed by God: He maketh them clear to those who have knowledge.' Upon this verse a Muhammadan custom is founded altogether opposed to the chaste spirit of both the Old and New Testament, and which cannot be pronounced otherwise than revolting to every feeling of common delicacy. It consists in this, that if a man, after having thrice divorced his wife, wishes to take her back again, he can only do so by first marrying her to what is called a Mustahill, i.e. a man generally of the lowest character, coarsest manners, and most forbidding appearance, hired for the purpose of going through the marriage-ceremony with the woman, living with her as her husband for one night, and divorcing her again the next day. Whatever the original end of so odious an enactment may have been, it cannot be justified from any

possible point of view, and is doubtless considered by every sober judge as both a most flagrant profanation of the sacred rite of marriage, and a degrading cruelty to the woman, who may possibly be quite innocent, and owe her repeated divorce solely to the angry passion of her husband.

The disability and ignominy of woman's position under Islam has nothing accidental in it, but is founded on the doctrine openly propounded in the Qur'an, of an essential inferiority of woman to man. It is thus expressed: 'Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God has gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make of their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God has of them been careful. But chide those for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them: but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them: verily God is high and great' [Suratu'n-Nisa (iv) 38]. The subordinate and degrading position of woman in Muhammadan society is therefore a natural and inevitable deduction from the Qur'an. We have already referred to the fact, that, according to the same authority, two, three, or even four wives go to form the conjugal equivalent of one husband; and also to the other that it leaves the power of divorce entirely to the will or whim of the husband, independent of the

consent of the wife, and even irrespective of any misconduct on her part, whilst no corresponding right is conceded to her of similarly claiming a divorce. We have also had occasion to notice the rigid exclusion of the female element from general society, as if not good enough for it, an exclusion carried to such an extent as to forbid women to appear in public, unless with their faces carefully concealed, and to shut them up so completely, even in their own houses, in secluded apartments called 'the harem,' that if a Muhammadan gentleman is visited in his house, it looks as if he and his sons were its only occupants, his wife or wives and daughters being hidden away all the while, as if he were ashamed of letting them be seen; and it would actually amount to a breach of etiquette to ask after his wife. It may further be mentioned in illustration of the inferior position the law of the Arabian prophet assigns to woman that, on the death of parents, a daughter inherits only half a son's portion [see Suratu'n-Nisa (iv) 12]; and such a difference being expressly sanctioned by their law, it cannot be surprising that, though the education of the boys is neither as general nor as thorough as would be desirable, yet that of the girls is most sadly and most generally neglected. Even with wives of Pashas, or other high dignitaries, it is by no means a matter of course that they can read or write. Most of those who can boast of some education

are limited in their literary acquirements to the mechanical reading of the Qur'an, and a very few specially favoured ones in great cities may, perhaps, add to this the *ne plus ultra* of some music and a little French or English. Now if mothers have no thorough education themselves, how can they be expected to lay a solid foundation for that of their children; and if women are kept back from the path of knowledge and science, how can they rise above that state of ignorance and tutelage in which they now are? Even in public attendance on religious duties and in regard to the promised enjoyments of the next world, the poor female sex must rest content with an inferior position. It is a fact known to everyone acquainted with the religious customs of the Muhammadans, that in most of their mosques the assembly of worshippers consists ordinarily of men only, the women either neglecting the prescribed forms of prayer altogether, or performing them privately in their own houses; and that even in those mosques where it is customary for women to worship, they are not allowed to do so in the large central space, but are compelled to meet by themselves in side-galleries, where they cannot be seen. This rigid seclusion of women from men, even in public places of worship, appears all the more strange, since, according to the statements of the Qur'an itself, wives will be permitted in the world to come to enter even 'Paradise with their husbands see [Suratu'r-Ra'd

(xiii) 23; Suratu'sh-Shu'ara (xxvi) 56; Suratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 8; Suratu'z-Zukhruf (xliii) 70]. It is true, we must be careful not to infer too much from this latter concession; for in spite of it the Qur'an remains far from admitting that their assumed inferiority to men will disappear even there. On the contrary, it promises rewards and enjoyments to the male sex [see, e.g. Suratu'l-Waqi'a (lvi) 23-4; Suratu'r-Rahman (lv) 56, 70-8], for which women will search in vain in the same book with regard to their own sex.

After all this, we can hardly wonder that men should be admirers of a religion which gives them so great a superiority over the other sex, extending even to the future world; but if women could be found who were Muslims by choice, and not from the mere force of circumstances, this would be strange indeed, and could only be accounted for on the ground that their want of education must prevent them from duly reflecting upon, and fully realizing, the degradation to which they are reduced by Islam, both in the life which now is, and in that which is to come.

CONCLUSION

We have now done with our subject, so far as it was intended to be discussed on the present occasion. Adopting the statements of both Muhammadan and Christian theologians that God did not reveal His true and saving religion at once, but gradually and

at long intervals of time, we applied this principle to the three widely-spread monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Muhammadanism.¹ The professed believers of these three religions all agree in this, that Judaism, or the religion communicated to Moses, and other Israelitish prophets after him, was revealed by God, and consequently was a true religion. Hence it was not thought necessary to adduce proofs in support of the true religion in its Jewish or Israelitish form. But after God had ceased for several hundred years to send prophets to the Jews, a new religion sprung up in Judea, claiming to be the higher development or fulfilment of Judaism, or the true religion in its highest form, and in the absolute sense. That this new religion, i.e. Christianity, was likewise a genuine revelation from God, and ranked higher than Judaism, upon this both Muhammadans and Christians also essentially agree, while the Jews deny it. On this latter account we found it necessary to show what strong reasons the Muhammadans and Christians have for believing that Christianity is a higher stage of the true religion than Judaism. It was not our object to enlarge on that head, in order not to exceed the limits of this present pamphlet. Accordingly we only referred, first, to the wonderful intrinsic life and victorious

¹ It must be remembered that we do not affirm modern Judaism to be the same as the religion that was communicated to Moses. It claims to be the same, but most, if not all, Christians deny the truth of the claim.

power of Christianity, manifested by its rapid spread in the world, notwithstanding the most cruel and protracted persecutions, and without the use of worldly weapons; secondly, to the promises or prophecies contained in the Old Testament itself respecting a coming Messiah, and a higher stage of religion; thirdly, to the fact that Christianity actually sprang from the bosom of the Jewish religion, the ground having there been prepared for it by those prophecies; fourthly, to the well-attested miracles performed by the Author of Christianity in proof of His divine mission; and fifthly, to the actual progress evident in the religious teaching of the New Testament, as compared with that of the Old. This latter point was illustrated by six doctrinal subjects, three of them having particular reference to God and divine things, namely, the revelation of God Himself, His worship, and His kingdom; and the other three to our intercourse with our fellow-men, namely, retaliation, slavery, and the treatment of the female sex, with special regard to polygamy and divorce. Respecting all these six subjects, we found the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ so much more suited to man's deepest wants and loftiest aspirations, so much more spiritual and mature than the law of Moses, that we felt fully justified in regarding them, together with the four preceding subjects of consideration, as conclusive proofs of the belief of both Muslims and Christians, that Christianity is a higher

stage of the one true religion of God than the religion of the ancient Jews.

The next great object of our investigation was the mutual relation between Christianity and Muhammadanism, or the question whether the Qur'an was as much a fulfilment and further development of the gospel, as we had found this to be a fulfilment and further development of the Mosaic law. While all parties, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, agree that the Mosaic or Israelitish religion was a gift from God, and while Christians and Muslims likewise agree in the belief that the Christian religion was a still nobler and greater gift from God, the Muhammadans stand alone in asserting, and the Jews and Christians unite in denying, that Islam is the greatest of all the gifts of God, nobler and higher than both Judaism and Christianity. But without permitting ourselves to be swayed in our investigation by this state of prevailing opinions, we examined the question upon its own merits; for our object was to ascertain whether there really were valid reasons to bear out the Muhammadan assertion. In order, therefore, to avoid all appearance of unfairness or partiality one way or another, we conducted our investigation of the relation between Islam and Christianity on exactly the same points, and in the same order, as we had previously examined the relation between Christianity and Judaism. Thus we had to do, not merely with opinions and doctrines

respecting which different views may be formed by different persons, but with documentary statements, with known facts of history, and with statistics, respecting which there can be no doubt, and from which arguments resulted of irresistible cogency. The tendency of all these arguments, and the result of our whole examination, proved decidedly antagonistic to the claims of Islam, and we were driven by logical necessity to concede, that on not one of these points brought under our consideration did Islam exhibit a real advance or higher development, as compared with Christianity, but in many respects an unquestionable falling back on an inferior and long superseded standpoint. If, therefore, we accept the force of logical reasoning, or think at all on the subject, we cannot help arriving at the conclusion that Islam is not a higher stage of the true religion; and if we were still to profess a belief that it is, such faith must be blind and unmeaning, because without inward assurance or real conviction. Accordingly it must appear, not merely reasonable, but a positive and sacred duty, acknowledged as such by every thinking and right-minded man, openly and unflinchingly to accept the logical result of the preceding honest and close investigations, namely, that Muhammadanism, while holding some essential principles in common with the two preceding systems, is yet inferior to the earlier in several vital points, and immeasurably below the later in nearly all.

While thus frankly enunciating a conclusion from which both reason and conscience leave no escape, we disclaim all desire of detracting the least from the merits which may justly belong to Islam. It must also be distinctly understood that we have hitherto regarded it mainly in the light of a religion; and as it confessedly unites religion and politics, the result now announced cannot be intended to deter any one, be he Muslim or non-Muslim, from examining whether Islam does not carry the palm before the other political systems.

With this explanation, and the frank statement of the result of our preceding investigation, the author of this pamphlet has finished his proper task on the present occasion. Whether Muslim readers will think their work is likewise ended, after accompanying him thus far, is a different question. If they are reflective and earnest men, they will not rest satisfied with a negative result. Being once convinced on this head, they will probably reason further thus: 'If Islam is not a higher religion than Christianity, can it be a divinely revealed religion at all? Is it the least reconcilable with the supreme wisdom and goodness of God that He should once have given to mankind a superior religion by Jesus Christ, and, six hundred years later, an inferior one by Muhammad? Is it more credible that God should, on the latter occasion, send Gabriel as an express messenger from heaven to reveal what had been known to "the

people of the book" hundreds and thousands of years before, or that Muhammad should concoct a religious system from the writings of Christians and Jews, and other sources, and present it to his ignorant and heathen countrymen as a new religion directly revealed from heaven?" Nor does it seem possible that a sincere and thinking Muslim could long weigh such questions in his mind, without forming the resolution: 'I shall no longer remain in uncertainty on this most momentous subject: being constrained by irrefragable proof and evidence to allow that Islam is not a higher religion than Christianity, I shall try whether my mind will not find more light, and my heart more peace, by deciding for Christianity as a higher and purer religion than Islam.' There are a number of Muslims even now, in various countries, who thank God for having been led to take this step. They testify that the faith they have embraced approves itself as nobler and better than the one they have renounced. They wish and pray that all their Muslim brethren may find the same light of mind and peace of heart which they themselves enjoy, and which they have found nowhere than where alone they are to be had, in the religion of Jesus Christ. The writer of these lines, who is not a Christian merely because his parents were so, but because he is convinced that he has found in Christianity the highest revelation of the saving truth and love of God, prays, with thousands and tens of thousands of

his fellow-believers, that God in His infinite mercy may hasten the time when the Muslim nations shall walk with us in the same light of truth, and rejoice with us in the same experience of the saving love of God. We have no selfish motive, and no worldly interest in all this. If thousands of Muhammadans in Turkey, in Egypt, in Syria, in India, and other countries, become true Christians, this will bring us no earthly gain; it will only make themselves better and happier in life, hopeful in death, and blessed in eternity; and this is our only wish and aim—their salvation as well as our own. We remember that we are standing on the brink of eternity, and that before many years are passed, both the writer and the readers of these lines will be summoned before the judgement-seat of God, where all the secrets of the heart are made manifest: how, then, could we dare to invite any one to follow Christ and His religion, without being perfectly assured, from our own inmost experience, that this leads to that peace of mind, and to that blessed communion with God our Maker, which every human being consciously or unconsciously seeks? We know that the Lord Jesus Christ still verifies that blessed word which He addressed to weary souls in the days of His life on earth, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matt xi. 28). We know that His testimony is faithful and true, as if sealed with the seal of God—that

testimony which He bore of His own mediatorship between God and man, when He said: 'I am the Way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me' (John xiv. 6). Therefore we confidently invite every one bearing the name of man, to test in his own person, and by his own experience, the truth of what the Lord once said to a multitude of His followers: 'Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock' (Matt. vii. 24-5).