

MAY 1917

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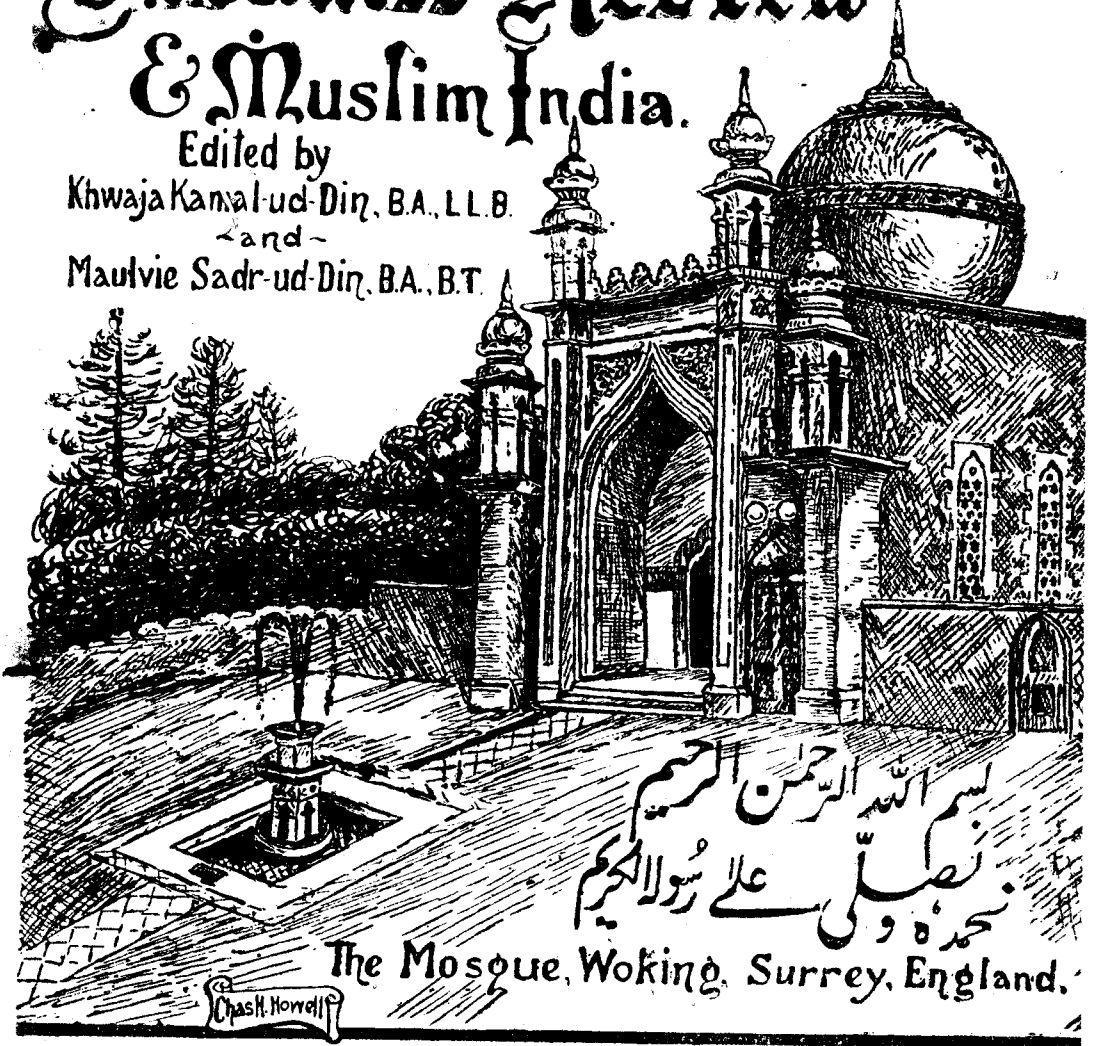
Islamic Review & Muslim India.

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The Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

Chas. H. Howell

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ISLAMIC REVIEW

AND

MUSLIM INDIA

VOL. V]

MAY 1917

[No. 5

THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

The Arabic Text in beautiful writing, with English translation, and commentary, of the Holy Qur-án by Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., will be out very shortly, and the names of purchasers are now booked by the Manager, The Mosque, Woking (Surrey). The Holy Book will run to about 1,300 pages, will be printed on first-class India paper, and will be well bound. The whole text is printed and is with the book-binder.

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NOTE

Owing to our inability to conform to the conditions on which the engravers are prepared to execute our work, in consequence of the control of copper by the Government, we are compelled for the present to postpone the production of the frontispiece in the *Review*.

CHRIST, A GOD ?

THE world was not without its notion of God and His attributes before the advent of Christ. Man's conception of God came to Him either through Divine revelation or through His work as revealed in Nature ; and these indices of Divine character induced man to believe Him an Almighty God, Omnipotent, All-powerful ; Conqueror and not to be conquered ; Destroyer of the wicked, and Vanquisher of, and not to be vanquished by, His enemies. But it is a great shock to find in the Son of Mary something damaging to our deeply-rooted sublime notion of Divine dignity. A God in man, but caught and bound by the Jews, Lord of the Universe and evincing fear and anxiety to save his life, which it is believed he came voluntarily to sacrifice ; he is smitten and abused ; he is scurrilously subjected to coarse jokes and inhuman derisions, compelled reluctantly to drink the mortal "cup." Did he not try to hide himself when he heard of the Jewish conspiracy against his life ? It may be said that it was perhaps owing to the human element in him, but after the event called the Resurrection, he had overcome death and had got a "celestial life." He had no reason to evince fear and hide himself again, but he did. This is what an Eastern mind unfortunately cannot conceive of God—and hence his disbelief in the divinity of Christ.

There is, however, an explanation to it. Patience they say is a Divine moral quality, and required manifestation, and it got its full epiphany in Jesus. I admit that God is patient. We see Divine meekness in allowing wickedness to take the uppermost hand ; sin to become rampant and evil to prevail sometimes, but we see God vindicated in the final destruction of iniquity and unrighteousness. It is in the Light of this Divine victory that the former passiveness becomes a providential Patience and radiates with its full lustre ; otherwise the suffering of every helpless creature like Jesus will appear a Divine manifestation. Dumb nature even bears witness to the truth, where unhealthy matter sometimes finds luxuriant growth simply to be annihilated by the self-assertive cosmic energy. God showed His forbearance and patience, but was His indestructible nature and power of destroying others vindicated in the life of Christ ? The world has seen many martyrs for the

right cause besides Jesus. They suffered like him and evinced similar patience. Was God revealed in them all? There ought to be some line of demarcation between man as a man, and God as a man. It is rather in the destruction of His enemies by His own Hand than in His self-destruction, and that also expedited by the wicked enemies, that God should be glorified. Had His enemies seen their destruction at the hand of Jesus, the Glory of God would have seen redemption. Their subsequent annihilation, if any, proves nothing. The enemies of every martyr to truth besides Christ met the same fate after them. They could not survive for a long lifetime, and truth gained its supremacy in their discomfiture in every case other than Jesus. The Hindu philosopher has, however, conceived a more dignified and sublimer idea of Deity than a theologian in the West. If God took a human birth in the manger once at Bethlehem, He was born more than half a dozen times in the Brahmanical soil, but under environments more befitting His Divine grandeur. It is the prevalence of sin, no doubt, which causes His appearance in every case in Indian Mythology, but He comes to destroy the wicked and the unrighteous, and establish His Kingdom in India, while in the street of Galilee He falls a helpless victim to them. Naturally, the first of the two is preferable and more consonant with His exalted position, but His possession of tender passive morality cannot be ignored. To my mind both His appearances, in India and in Bethlehem, are not free from defect. His complete epiphany would be in a case which combines all His moral attributes. He should appear at a time when sin is at its climax: He should come in a humble position like Jesus, He should fight in the cause of truth like Krishna, and He should finally come over victorious like Ramchandra. This is what is required of a God in man, and if it be possible that God reveals Himself in man, it is Muhammad and not any other worthy member of the noble race of prophets who satisfies all these requirements. But "I am only a man like you"—so says the noble Prophet in the words of the Qur-án.

BUT it is not the Orient alone who sees the incongruity of Godhead and humanity in Jesus. The Occident, with all its polytheistic tendencies, saw the same when the novel dogma of the "Incarnate Nature of Christ" received its inception at the Council of Nice, and the divinity of Christ was established on the ruins of Arianism.

¹ Apollinaris.

[Continued on p. 188.]

WHAT IS RELIGION ?

THE number of religions prevailing in the world is, and has been, very large. Even such religions as have acquired a permanent position in the world are not small. Very often one religion differs from the other diametrically in matters of ritual and ceremonies. Sometimes they differ even in ideals and the very conception about religion. Those religions which have a close kinship with one another and have come from the same stock also differ—and differ in important respects. With the solitary exception of one, the rest condemn each other. Some religions have large followers, yet they are condemned by those which have very small following.

It is all these diversities which make it very difficult to define religion. What is religion ? is a question not easy to answer. In fact, it is always difficult to give exact logical definitions. The subject of religion has been made so complex that it is very difficult indeed to give a logical definition of the term. By religion is generally meant that particular formalism or belief which commonly is understood to be the cardinal point of their religion by its followers. Hence all those religions which do not possess that particular characteristic are considered to be false. The general belief is that there is only one true religion. The claims of other religions are untenable. That one true religion in his opinion is no other than that religion which a particular person follows himself. Those who profess their faith in any other religion are heathens, because their religion is no religion. Great benefactors of humanity, if they do not happen to profess a particular faith, and if they do not stick to a special formalism, are condemned to everlasting perdition.

Ask a Brahman what is religion, and he will say that it is only Hinduism that expresses the meaning of religion. Buddhists say the same about their religion. Zoroastrians the same about theirs. Jews are, if anything, more strict. They divided the whole of humanity into only two sections—one the Israelites, who alone possess a religion—the only religion—Judaism; the other Gentiles, who had no religion. Jesus Christ was supposed by some Christians to have come down to remove the limitations of Jews and Gentiles, but unfortunately to-day Christians have limited most the meaning of religion.

To them any person who is not a Christian—a Christian in that strictly rigid sense of the term which they give to it—is the follower of no religion—he is a heathen. Religion and Christianity have been made synonymous terms. What is religion? Christianity. There is distinct proof in the New Testament itself that Jesus Christ accepted all the Hebrew prophets as divine messengers. He accepted even the Mosaic law. He commanded his followers to keep the commandments, yet to-day his followers condemn the rest of the people, excepting a few Christians, to eternal perdition. No other religion, they say, can claim to be a true religion except Christianity. Religion to them means to worship Christ as a part of the Deity, to believe in the cleansing power of his blood, and so forth. Even a belief in the divine mission of Christ is not enough. To be religious one must believe in his deity. Why? Because this was the belief of their fathers and mothers, and if their fathers and mothers defined religion as Christianity they must also do the same. It is no use arguing with them that if it was necessary to stick to the religion of our parents, how did Christianity come to be believed in by the people of Europe. The religion of Europe was paganism. Remote ancestors of Europeans believed in paganism. It is a delusion to think that Christianity is a European religion. It is arrogance to believe that Christianity alone comes under the definition of religion, because it is “white” man’s religion. Christ was born in Asia. He was a “coloured” man. Europe may pretend to have evolved its own social system, its own political ideas, its own civilization, but it cannot pretend to have evolved or even developed any religious system of its own. God is universal, so religion should also be universal. To take a narrow view of religion is to do a great disservice to religion, particularly so in these days of scepticism and agnosticism. Arrogance is always bad, religious arrogance is worse. The meaning of religion should not be confined to the limits of any single faith, whatever it may be.

In “Islam and Socialism” we find the following meanings of religion :

By religion is meant that moralizing factor which carries man above the narrow limits of materialism and egoism and gives him a pleasure in living not only for his own good but for that of others. By religion is meant that inner force which

separates what is animal and carnal in man from what there is godly and altruistic in him—which makes him feel the difference between the feelings of satisfaction when he has satiated his own hunger and the feelings of inward happiness when he has relieved the suffering of his fellow-being—nay, that of even an animal, a bird, or an ant. By religion is meant that power which restrains people from committing any crime or sin even in the darkest and loneliest place, concealed from society and individuals. By religion is meant that impelling power which makes one do good to others without any expectation of return ; that strong sense of right and wrong which perfects morality. By religion is meant that relation which exists between the Creator and the created and which intuitively makes the created soar aloft in actions and aspirations to imitate the Creator in His All-Lofty Attributes and Power, as Maulana Rumi—the great Sufi poet—has said :—

Khalké ma bar surate khud kard Haq.

Wasfé ma as wasf oo girad sabaq.

(God created us after His own image and we take inspiration from His attributes for our ideals.) By religion is meant that discriminating intellect which demarcates the position of man in the economy of the world and makes him realize the responsibility that rests upon the shoulders of the Creator's Vicegerent on the earth and the relations that he should have with his fellow-being. To a scientist and naturalist there is but little difference between man and animal, and according to that eminent Indian scientist, Professor Bose, even between man and plant so far as responsiveness to vibration is concerned. The greatest materialist of the age, Haeckel, has declared material monism to be the rule in the creation, yet there is clearly a difference between man and other creatures ; there is an inexplicable, undefinable, yet plainly manifest consciousness in man which is distinctly his own ; the teaching of that consciousness is religion, and it is that very consciousness which enables man to deal with other men with sympathy, magnanimity, and love.

It is not any particular formalism that constitutes religion.

In the words of the Qur-án :—

“There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or towards the West, but he is pious who believeth in God and the Last day, the

angels, the scriptures, and the Prophets, who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred and to the orphans and the needy and the way-farer and those who ask for, and for the redemption of captives, who observeth prayer and giveth alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have covenanted, and who are patient in adversity and hardship and in times of trouble. These are they who are straight, these are they who are pious."

In the words of Muhammad religiousness is, "To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured."

AL-VARISI.

[ISLAMIC REVIEW.—"Equip yourself with the attributes of God," says the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and this is the highest goal a man should aspire to if he is made after the image of God. Be faithful (Muslim) to your own nature and the Divine impressions thereupon. This is the true religion and religion from God, so says the Qur-án, The Holy Book and the Prophet thus inspire the learned author of "Socialism and Islam" to say about religion what we read in the beautiful words of the above quotation; and we doubt very much if any religion other than Islam fulfils these requirements. We are in need of some laws given to us from the Author of our nature that may help us to convert our highest potentialities into actualities. The millennium mentioned in the book of Revelation and "the garden 'neath which the river flows" as mentioned in the Qur-án, while giving the description of the Paradise refer to the same perfect stage of human evolution when all our God-given faculties will become full-fledged, and our nature will mirror in it the attributes of God. Then and only then man becomes the true image of God. But how to reach that stage of human perfection, how to make those Divine impressions engraved on the tablet of our nature a reality, and to make the Divine flame in us ablaze, is the question of questions that a true religion had to solve. God gave us a pure and sinless nature, and therefore we never stood in need of any redemption, but we needed evolution, and Revelation from God came to help us to achieve that goal; so the Qur-án says in its very beginning when enlightening us as to the object which Revelation from God came to fulfil, "And who believe in what has been sent down to thee [Muhummad] and in what hath been sent down before thee, and full faith have they in the life to come; these are

guided by their Creator, Cherisher and Evolver, and they will become full-fledged." This can be *the only and exclusive object of Divine Revelation*. But do the sacred Scriptures in the hands of various religions besides Islam perform it? They could have done so if they could have kept their genuineness, and no other book but the Qur-án can claim the same.]

IMMORALITY AND DISEASE

IT is a happy sign of the times that the conscience of the legislators in this country seems to have awakened to the immoralities prevailing in the large towns, and particularly in London. Letters have appeared in the papers showing the terrible condition of certain streets. Prosecutions have also been taken recourse to, and a Bill is before the Legislature to amend the Criminal Law of the country in a way so as to prevent immorality and disease.

The cause of the immoralities and diseases is the intercourse of the two sexes, and it is now under consideration to make the law as regards solicitation more strict and to increase the penalties for keeping a disorderly house. Indecent advertisements are also being stopped, and any communication knowingly of venereal disease is going to be made penal.

But the question is whether it is possible to make people moral by legislation. Dr. H. Wilson says: "If every known prostitute could be interned to-day, there are vicious men always manufacturing new ones. While the masculine demand persists, it is folly to think that the supply can be cut off." He further says: "Radical dealing requires something more than repression and punishment, for these alone can never be effective." And he admits: "Adults who intend to come together for vicious purposes cannot be prevented by any measure short of absolute separation of the two sexes. All that the law can do in regard to such men and women is to insist that they must respect public decency, and further, that in their attempts to find each other they must not be allowed to annoy and insult respectable people. This should apply equally to men and women."

Now I would certainly ask the Christian priests and pastors, bishops and archbishops, what is the good of a religion if it

cannot even regulate the morals of the people, and if we have to go to lay legislators for even the moral laws? It is the duty of religion to improve the conscience of men to such an extent as to make them moral, and to lay down such rules and laws under its own authority as will help in improving human conscience. The simple commandment, "Commit not adultery," is not sufficient to instil chastity and to prevent sexual immorality.

A way to keep people moral—a moral code from God Himself—is required. Man-made laws do not carry sufficient weight with human conscience. It might be possible to stop "public indecency" by parliamentary legislation; but will that be sufficient? Will it stop disease? Will it make people really and truly moral? No. To make people really moral and to prevent sexual disease, it is necessary to bring such an agency into work as will check the most private indecency; also, which will set up a detective on every person, not from Scotland Yard but from the police court of one's own soul. Unless human conscience itself is made sensitive, immorality can never be really removed.

Even as to those means which human nature demands to be employed to keep it straight, secular laws cannot go far enough. It is quite true, "Adults who intend to come together for vicious purposes cannot be prevented by any measure short of absolute separation of the two sexes." But can any legislator in Europe undertake to enact a law securing "absolute separation of the two sexes"? It cannot be denied that that would be the only sure preventive of immorality. But that is impracticable to-day, simply because Christianity left the improving of morals to "Cæsar" instead of taking it up itself as a religious duty.

Little boys and girls in Sunday classes are taught that if they believe in the blood of Christ that is quite enough for them to secure their salvation—that the back of Christ is broad enough to bear the burden of all Christians, so that they may indulge in as much sin and immorality as they like. Presumably those people who have to look to the well-being of the Christian countries are not so very Christian as to consider the "sacrifice" of Christ sufficient for the good of the whole people. So now by secular legislation they try to make up the defects of their faith. The duty of seeing to the morals of the people also falls upon them, because it has been ignored by

the prevailing religion. More than thirteen centuries ago, however, one Divine Book—the Qur-án—took upon itself the legislation to prevent immorality and disease, and because it was a Divine law it succeeded in its object. Up to this day the morals of Muslim nations are not in the hands of the lay legislators. The Divine Book guides in every path. Al-Qur-án is full of moral and social laws, and those laws are sure preventives of immoralities, because they have been laid with due regard to human nature.

It was Muhammad's privilege as a man to act as a moral teacher for the whole of humanity and for all ages. It was his privilege as a prophet to secure the obedience to his laws of one-third of the population of this globe.

To-day, Muslim nations are as free from the curse of alcoholism as Muslim countries are free from the pest of indecent women, from immoralities and sexual diseases.

A man in Europe can well ask what good is Christ to him to-day, whether he was a man or a god, when he has left him no practical guidance even as to his morals. He should sooner reverence and even worship those legislators who are trying to free his country from alcoholism, immorality, and disease rather than Christ.

But every Muslim feels that not he alone but the whole of humanity is indebted even to-day for those laws which Muhammad, may all the peace and blessing and triumph be with him and for him and his people, left behind permanently and unalterably, whose beneficence is recognized more day by day as the world progresses.

Quranic social laws will be fully discussed in my book "Woman," in the part "Woman under Islam." Here I will quote only a few injunctions from the Holy Qur-án, which, and which alone, can secure perfect purity of sexual relations, and can be the best preventives of immorality and disease.

The Qur-án says in the chapter entitled "Al-nur," the Light, verses 30 and 31 :—

Qul lil mominína yaghuddú min absárihim wa yahfazú furújaham Sálika azkálahum innallaha khabírun bima yasnaún.

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts ; that is purer for them ; surely Allah is aware of what they do."

Wa qul lilmomináti yaghdúdna min absárihinna wa yahfazna furújahunna wa la yubdína zínatahunna illa ma zaharaminha wal yadribna bikhumrihinna alá juyúbihinna wa la yubdína zinatahunna illa libaulatihinna au abáihinna au abái buulatihinna au abnai baulatihinna au ikhwánihinna au bani ikhwánihinna au bani ikhwátihinna au nisáihinna au ma malakat aimánuhunna awittabiína ghairi oolilirbati minarrijali awittifillazi na lam yazharu ala aurátinnisáí•wa la yadribna biarjiluhinna liyulama ma yukhfína min, zinatihinna wa túbú ilallahi jamian ayyuhalмоминúna laallakum tuflihún.

“ And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts, and not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the father of their husbands or their sons, or the sons of their husbands or their brothers or their brother's son or their sister's son or their women, or those whom their right hand possess or the male servants not having need (of women) or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women ; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known, and turn to Allah all of you, O believers ! so that you may be successful.”

Those persons who have to deal with the European and so-called Christian societies of to-day will see how very wise the legislation of the Holy Qur-án was, and how it shows a masterly knowledge of the weaknesses of human nature. If they were free to accept the Divine legislation they would surely have done so. The Quranic law stops every opportunity of solicitation. It prevents venereal disease by stopping the occasions of adultery and fornication, etc. It separates the two sexes in a very judicious way, and lays down the rules of conduct for both men and women. It must be noted that the total separation of the two sexes has not been aimed at. It is only free and unrestricted intercourse of the two sexes which has been stopped.

Legislators of to-day might succeed in diminishing solicitation in Waterloo Road or Leicester Square, but what of those solicitations which go on every evening in luxurious drawing-rooms and ball-rooms, possibly not in blunt and un-

artistic words of mouth, but by half-nude dresses, passion-exciting dances, inebriated eyes, etc.?

The utmost that lay legislators can aim at is to diminish public indecency among poor people. It is beyond their power to stop totally public indecency. Private indecency is altogether beyond their reach, and I have no doubt that their legislation to stop the communication of venereal disease will utterly fail. Perhaps it will give rise to greater mischief in other respects.

It is only the all-powerful hand of religion that can secure moral purity and health. But which religion? Surely no idealistic faith can secure moral purity by mere dogmas, nor can such religion secure moral purity which is founded only on mere belief, howsoever high that belief may be.

To secure moral purity and health, that religion is required which regulates the actions as well as the thoughts of people of every grade of society, of every class, country, and race. The world does not want such a religion, a book, a prophet, a "son of God," or God Himself, that does not guide humanity on the paths of rectitude and of morality, that does not teach humanity to secure moral purity and health, that does not show the way how to develop human conscience and how to elevate human society. To lay down sound maxims of life is not enough. The ways and means of securing a healthy and moral life must be shown to guide humanity on the right path. Those means and ways should not be beyond human reach. It is Islam alone that boldly chalks out those ways and means, so it is Muhammad alone who should be taken as a guide in all the paths of life. Let all the legislators, administrators, reformers—all humanity go to him. He will guide them all.

AL-QIDWAI.

The faith of the Catholics trembled on the edge of a precipice where it was impossible to recede, dangerous to stand, dreadful to fall; and the manifold inconveniences of their creed were aggravated by the sublime character of their theology. They hesitated to pronounce that God Himself, the second person of an equal and consubstantial trinity, was manifested in the flesh; that a being who pervades the universe was confined in the womb of Mary; that his eternal duration had been marked by the days, and months, and years of human existence; that the Almighty had been scourged and crucified; that his impossible essence had felt pain and anguish; that his omniscience was not exempt from ignorance; and that the source of life and immortality expired on Mount Calvary.

Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

ON RECOVERY FROM SEVERE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ILLNESS

ALMIGHTY GOD, as Thou hast often permitted Thy servants to be sore afflicted in the flames of suffering and adversity, so we believe that Thou canst ever bring them back purer and more noble from their terrible ordeal. Despair should never seize our hearts or brains, because if we believe in Thee and Thee alone the only God, we know that Thy all-protecting providence is ever ready to carry us back from crooked paths of life into the straight way which leads to Thee.

In Thy blessed guidance I recognize the immensity of Thy mercy and Thy love and the complete answer to my unceasing prayers for Thy Divine direction and guidance. I have been as one in the mire of sorrow, but my soul has been maintained throughout by Thy loving support and has never been lost in the oblivion of evil. Preserve me from future errors and sickness, and so direct my footsteps that they wander not from the path Thou hast chosen for me. Amen.

Tho' erring footsteps leave their trace

When from Thy paths we stray,

Thou canst forgive and eke efface

Each slip which mars our way.

Thou gav'st the devil power awhile

To grind my soul in dust ;

But never can his influence vile

Deprive me of my trust.

O may the flames thro' which I've past

Make me more true and pure.

These thorns and trials shall at last

But strengthen to endure.

When devils mean—too strong for me—

Enmeshed me for a time,

Thy hand alone didst set me free

And proved that I am Thine.

With humble, willing steps I follow Thee

Back to the path of life and love.

Bruised but not beaten in the stormy sea

Which trains us for our Home Above.—H.

PEACE OF THE SOUL

THIS world-wide conflagration which we term War turns our thoughts to more sublime sentiments. Peace, peace, is spoken and debated everywhere.

War has been from the Stone Age a vast preoccupation of man, and heartrending accounts are recorded as if, in the letters of human blood throughout history, wars are waged, peace declared and kept for a time, but the spirit of blood "survived in the belligerents like smouldering embers." It may be concluded from all that we see and hear to-day that war is inevitable.

It is a phenomenon of the survival of the fittest, as the unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations affirms.

There is no peace in earthly concerns; for the world, with all the opulence of mirth and gaiety, is vacant and lacks in essentials of the soul.

The world being so and we in such bewilderment, shall our souls be suffered to see the pungent contrast and feel the deception?

Let us reflect and take a mental and spiritual retreat.

We turn with disgust from all that is superficial and hollow and enter to seek solace in the spiritual zone. The mind, a highest work of God, His mirror and representative, has guided our spiritual leader and it will guide us also.

The mind, which is our chief distinction, can never be too reverently spoken of; and it is of mind that we wish to speak.

The words of the Holy Qur-án are, "And God calleth to the abode of peace," and surely no abode more desirable than this.

Have you never known a time when in the profound meditation an inward calm, profound as the dead of night, and yet as gorgeous as the full moon, full of joy, but unspoiled by one flashing thought of boisterous passion, has been breathed through your spirit?

This imparts but a glimpse and grandeur of solemnity of a happier world.

Of such character is the peace of the God of the Holy Qur-án.

SYED IKBAL ALI SHAH.

INTERDEPENDENCE OF PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS

PRAYER A DIET—OBJECT OF A PRAYER

(From the Friday Sermons)

O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame (clothing) for beauty: and clothing that guards (against evil), that is the best. This is of the communications of Allah that ye may be mindful.—THE QUR-ÁN, chap. vii. ver. 26.

Say: My Lord has enjoined justice and set upright your faces at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience, as He brought you forth in the beginning so shall you also return.—THE QUR-ÁN, chap. vii. ver. 29.

THROUGHOUT all its teachings Al-Qur-án seems to recognize some sort of relation between the physical and the spiritual conditions of man, and there is not the least doubt that food plays an important part in the formation of character, and the heart and the brain powers are clearly affected by the qualities of the food. Othello was not after all wrong when he remarked: "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains."¹ How wrongly Jesus has been reported to have said: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man."² The evangelical reporter could not have attributed it to the gentle teacher of Galilee had he known that wine-bibbing in Christendom was solely responsible for more than two-thirds of criminality. How fallacious he is in his logic when Jesus says: "Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught?"³ Confucius was, however, not so deficient in his physiology as the reported Jesus of Matthew, chapter xv, when the former said to his disciples "Wine is really a drug that corrupts the bowels, an axe that cuts down nature."⁴ If we become jaundiced and peevish in temper through some wrong in the liver, something going into the mouth has defiled our nature. Eatables and drinks in some cases are not only deleterious to our body, but to our soul as well. But our other physical requirements also affect us morally and spiritually. Gaudy apparels scarcely cover those who are poor in spirit, and a sound mind hardly feels

¹ "Othello," Act II, Scene 3. ² Matt. xv. 11.

³ Ibid. xv. 17. ⁴ ISLAMIC REVIEW, vol. iii. No. 6.

comfortable in shabby clothes. A book from God should, therefore, look to all our needs. But though the Qur-án does not neglect to give direction regarding the physical requirements of man, yet there is even in these an underlying idea of the spiritual elevation of man. A happy welding of the physical and the spiritual we find all through the Book. If there is an unavoidable interdependence of flesh and spirit in us, a book from God should observe the same, and the verses quoted above are a good illustration of it. "*O children of Adam! we have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty, and clothing that guards (against evil), that is best.*" "Clothing at first simply served to cover shame; with further progress men sought to embellish their persons; but there is yet a third kind of clothing, says the Qur-án, which is the best, that is the clothing of piety. It indicates a further step in the progress of man, for virtue is an embellishment of the mind, and when man has seen the good of embellishing his person, he will soon be aware of the necessity of embellishing the mind." ¹ Outward decency when met with respect and courtesy should bring home to us the importance of inward decency. In fact, the former passes for nothing if unaccompanied with the latter. Admiration excited by personal beauty or attention invited by physical adornment is always transitory in nature, but beauty of mind and nobility of heart do exercise an everlasting hold on others' minds. Hence the words of the Qur-án that the clothing of piety is *the* best of all other clothing.

PRAYER A SPIRITUAL DIET.

Similarly in the concluding verse of this section: "O children of Adam! attend to your embellishment at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant." Again an intermixture of injunction appertaining to our physical and spiritual nature. In the same breath it speaks of physical and spiritual sustenance as prayer is the best diet for the soul. If you need something to maintain your body, much more you do need to keep up your spirituality, as spiritual growth is more essential than physical growth. Is not soul more valuable than body? If to minister to the needs of the inner man we need break-

¹ Muhammad Ali's translation.

fast, lunch, afternoon tea, and supper, do we not badly need spiritual refreshment at the same time? A Muslim has to say his prayers simultaneously with his meals. Has not the founder of Christianity emphasized the same thing when he said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? Mark the force of the word "shall." But people do care more for their dinner than they do for prayers. A Muslim has to say prayers five times a day, if not more, and he has to cite some portion of the Qur-án as well every time in his prayer. Thus a Muslim tries to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Is not a Muslim in the sense of the word a better Christian?

And what, after all, is the object of prayer? "And set upright your faces at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience," are the words of the Qur-án in the above quoted section. If we "set upright" our "face at every time of prayer," it indicates to us the necessity of setting upright our mind to Divine commandments and be "sincere to Him in obedience." Our prayer is an absurdity if we fail to appreciate its moral significance. We stand, we bow down, we are on our knees, and we prostrate while in prayer; it is all farce and mockery if we do not stand naked in His august presence, if we do not bow down to His will and if we do not make intellectual prostration before the High Intellect. This is what the word Islam conveys—i.e. a complete resignation to Divine will and an implicit submission to His commandment. We glorify God in our prayers and make mention of some of His attributes, but lip-glorification is fire and smoke. We have to translate our glorifying words into our actions. If we call Him the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, and the Lord to whom we have to account for deeds, and if we say to Him, "Thee we serve, Thee we worship," how can we serve the most compassionate and merciful God, without being ourselves compassionate and merciful to His and our fellow-creatures? Every day a Christian says in his prayers, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"; and will not the will of the most compassionate and loving God be done in earth when compassion, kindness, love, and charity prevail? Our prayer, therefore, is mere mockery and farce if we are not consistent to it through our action.

MONISM

By JOHN PARKINSON.

WE hear a good deal nowadays about Monism. The term permeates all our philosophical literature. When you inquire as to the opinions of a scientist you learn he is a monist. It strikes the imagination; there is an appearance of mystery even if there is nothing mysterious about it. When speaking of socialism somebody said, "We are all socialists," and the same might be said of monism, "We are all monists" of some system or another. The word is derived from the Greek *μόνος*, meaning "alone" or "one" in the sense of being unique. It stands for a somewhat similar idea to the Arabic *Allah*, or God, with the difference that the one is a purely philosophical term, the other a theological. Monism, being a term of philosophy, it stands for the individual's system of philosophy, his concept of the world, his outlook upon the world-order, namely, the whole of reality. It is a unitary conception of that world, meaning that the universe must be looked upon as an indivisible whole, interconnected in every part; that while there are many general truths, they are complementary to each other, not contradictory. They are different aspects of one whole and eternal Truth. We make many generalizations, minor generalizations and higher generalizations wider in their range and broader in their application to life. Those generalizations may or may not be true, but if true they complement each, and cannot be contradictory while they are parts or aspects of one supreme truth which embraces the whole of reality, a correct world-concept—that such phenomena as spirit and matter, soul and body, the universe and God are different, but while different they are not separate from each other and unconnected, but abstract ideas of certain features of Reality, interconnected in one great All.

There is only philosophy, in its method monism. That philosophy has been subdivided by thought, unintentionally, into many philosophies or systems, into as many as there are individual minds. No two persons think exactly alike nor have the same outlook on the universe; so there are many systems, but for the sake of what the late Professor Mach might have called "economy of thought," or convenience of reference, they have been artificially divided into two great

divisions according to similarities and differences—the ontological or spiritualistic philosophies and the materialistic—while each division can be again subdivided into a multitude of minor systems of thought. While for general purposes such division is necessary, no exact dividing line, clearly and cleanly cut, can be drawn. All systems of thought meet and flow into into each other as the rivers of the continent flow into and intermingle with the waters of the ocean. The ocean of thought, flowing from the past through the present and into the future, has many currents, yet no laid-out boundaries; the currents meet and clash and mingle with each other, so that rivers are lost in rivers and brooks in brooks. Eddies occur, ripples on the surface, currents of thought born, flashing for an instant to disappear for ever. Others, stronger in their movement, more correct in their synthesis, flash on down the ages, intermingling with other currents as they go.

There is a current or system of philosophy which has sometimes been placed in the first division mentioned, sometimes in the second—it appears to me to be a distinct school. It embraces certain fundamental ideas of both divisions and professes to reconcile their differences, accepting the truths from each and cancelling their errors. To give it a distinguishing name we may call it Positive Monism. It is in method and general determinates the same philosophy as taught by the Buddha long before the present era, so it is not new, but was cradled and nurtured in the East centuries ago. It has been modified in details by the doctrines of modern science. It is that philosophy of which I propose to give an outline here, as it is not so well known as the various schools belonging to philosophies of ontology and materialism, so rampant in Christendom before the war, whatever effect it may have in changing them.

Ontology is the old Idealism. Taking the thinking subject as its starting-point, it descends from subjective thought to the world of phenomena, evolving the latter out of the former. To this school belong the spiritualists of to-day and the Sufi mystics of the various centuries, different branches of the same offshoot; in its highest aspect a yearning towards a higher psychic plane, an attempt, as it were, to kiss the hem of the sublime, to touch the verge of the infinite, or at least what seems to the contemplator the infinite, until there appeared to

the devotee but one Reality—God. God was, and nothing was but God. The world of phenomena, with its eternal changes, became a mirage, a reflection of being on "not-being"; to many even an illusion, hiding from the ordinary eye the Real which existed behind or beyond it. So the world became the reflection of God in the mirror of Not-Being. Only by intuition, by the inward Light of self-illumination and inspiration through contemplation, might the thinker cast aside illusion, behold the Real, and become one with God. Says Jellal-ud-Din :—

"With thy sweet soul this soul of mine
Hath mixed as water doth with wine.
Who can the wine and water part,
Or me and thee when we combine?
Thou art become my greater self;
Small bounds no more can me confine.
Thou hast my being taken on;
And shall not I now take on thine?"

Materialism, on the other hand, takes its standing-ground on matter, and claims subjective thought or spirit, namely, pure form, as a function of matter. The one, ontology, starts with mind as a base, the other, materialism, starts with matter as a base, from which they rise to a certain concept of the world. With that guidance we may turn to the other system of thought.

Positive Monism is stated as the philosophy which recognizes the *oneness* of all existence. As its leading exponent says: "The phenomena of nature are the facts of Reality; there is no unconditioned, no absolute existence behind them, and the idea of anything unknowable is inadmissible." It will be recognized that such a position is completely antagonistic to the philosophy of materialism as it appears in the materialism of Herbert Spencer. It is founded on the facts or suppositions, according to the reader's view-point, which follow.

Knowledge has its root in sensation. Sensation is a psychical phenomenon, a process brought about by the interactions taking place between the organism and its surroundings or environment. All matter must contain the elements of feeling, so that in certain forms it responds more readily to irritations of the surrounding medium. This is evident from the activity of the human body, by the process of breathing,

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three are inseparable in reality, though, for convenience in reasoning, we abstract them in thought.

Of the three the most important is form. It is from the likenesses and the differences of form that we are enabled to comprehend phenomena, and methodically arrange them. It is by the application of the laws of form, their methodical generalization, that we are enabled to construct new combinations, and lay down rules of universal validity. The universe in its totality is imperishable. We cannot create new matter nor new force. We can construct new combinations, create new forms. The continual change of form, the destruction of old forms, and the creation of new ones is the most important feature of physical and also psychological phenomena. As Buddha says :—

“Look about you and contemplate life ;
Everything is transient and nothing endures.
There is birth and death, growth and decay ;
There is combination and separation.
The world is full of changes and transformations.
All is Sansâra.”

The difference between nebula and nebula, between nebula and star, between star and star, and star and planet, is but a difference of form ; one vast series gliding on from stage to stage ; one vast whole without a single break in the continuity. A million million forms in gradual transition.

No form is immortal—it is but transitory in its phase. One form is but the embryo from which another form springs. Every animal and plant, every clod of earth and rock and cloud and flaming star and whirling planet is but a special form evolved through a long succession of preceding forms, and still in a continual transition from stage to stage. Organization and intelligence are but the result of special forms. By a methodical arrangement of the order of the succession or series of forms man is enabled to construct new forms, and so progress becomes possible. Man himself is but the product of the order of the universe, the so-called law of form, and by the application of the same law he is enabled to generalize and deduct ideas and form ideals that will serve as a basis for conduct and a philosophy for the service of the race. It is form that gives the universe its regularity and its beauty ; and that makes it intelligible in its most minute details. Things are such because of their form. It is true

appreciation of the laws of form that gives to man the power of genius. We see it in the artist as he paints with matchless workmanship the glory of an evening sky or morning dawn ; we see it beneath the chisel of the sculptor as, with the hand of a master, he cleaves the marble until it seems endowed with life, and breath appears to tremble on the lips, and light to flash from the eyes of the cold dead stone. In the language of the poet, it breaks upon us in all its grandeur, until the bosom heaves responsive to the rhythm ; and the eye grows dim or glows with fervour according to the sadness or the fury of the passion of the song. The engineer and architect make use of the self-same law when they design bridges to span great cañons or mighty rivers, or lay plans for cities or for gorgeous halls.

Such is a brief outline of the Positive Monistic Philosophy, one of the many systems mankind has created in his endeavour to reach the light, attain the truth, and reach the goal. Like all other systems of thought built by human effort and intelligence, I do not suppose it is infallible, but like them contains both truth and error. We do not know everything, and I am not sure it would be good for us if we did. It is beyond the power of the individual mind to grasp all the details of the world-order, survey all phenomena, estimate their exact qualities, and ascertain their exact relationship. We move slowly from point to point, gathering a gem here and jewel there, but missing more than we collect. Yet it is only by an examination of all systems and by comparing them that we can estimate their value, and derive some knowledge of the truths underlying the movements of the universe. What one man misses another man may see. What is hidden from one mind may be revealed unto another. So it is our duty to search with faith and with diligence ; adding our quota to the experience of humanity, making our addition to that great mansion of knowledge which is, or ought to be, the pride and the abiding glory of our race.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

HOW TRUTH TO BE DISCERNED

WHEN the question of the best agency to provide for the good of man is in view, the mind instinctively wanders to those sources of human happiness which ensure man's worldly well-being. From worldly well-being is understood the consensus of all those elements which make for human uplift in all the various branches of his activity. They include politics, the pursuit of arts, of war and peace, as much as those sides of human conduct which lead to his moral well-being.

These sources are either Divine or human. In the former case, they take the form of the manifestations of those verities, which have stood the test of time and reason. These manifestations, of which the records exist, have always been distinguished from the product of every other agency in being of so universal an application as to defy all barriers of race, colour, and usage. This is the one great testimony of their origin in the great centre of all law. But perhaps they would differ in their individual character, assuming the form of this creed in one age, and reappearing in a different guise to meet the requirements of changed environments and times. It would call into play man's highest intelligence to discern the purest gem out of a whole mine of what passes for revelation, so persistent has been the effort of man to disfigure the result of Divine dispensation. But this is not the end. When this stage towards the ultimate goal is reached, the first thought of the devoted seeker is directed to finding out criteria which would eliminate for him the genuine from the unworthy. A mass of arguments might be and have been advanced to determine the divinity of precepts which is our quest, but none other than those founded on the pure reason of man have ever come for universal acceptance. And this for obvious reason. Reason, whether Divine or human, broadly based as it is on a free and independent discernment of truth, at once brings out into bold relief the three most outstanding aspects of the object of our inquiry. The character of the rules, whose obedience is considered to ensure the highest human good, the result accruing therefrom in the light of the degree of their worldly utility, and finally the credentials of the bearers of these messages of Hope and Grace.

There are a hundred and one claimants in the field inviting recognition, but so far only those that have satisfied the standard test of the best human reason have been accorded acceptance—which might either be actual or constructive. Of these claimants two absorb our keen study at the present moment.

What in the way of its intrinsic moral worth, and its fascinating idealism, the Christianity of the Gospel, which, however, is quite distinct from its counterpart, the Christianity of the Church, stands head and shoulders over all other great codes, known to man before the advent of Christ. It comes with a claim similar to one mentioned above. Can it stand the requisite tests, arises the inevitable question.

With all its apparently monotheistic aspect even modern Christianity has found it difficult to shake off the old legacy of the sonship of man, handed down to it through centuries of old traditions. With regard to this aspect of the now popular Christianity, Syed Ameer Ali, in his "Spirit of Islam," has as follows: "Age after age," he says, "everything human has been eliminated from the history of the Great Teacher until his personality is lost in a mass of legends. The New Testament itself, with its 'incubation of a century,' leaves the revered figure clothed in mist. And each day the old idea of an 'Æon born in the bosom of eternity' gathers force until the Council of Nice gives it a shape and consistency, and formulates it into a dogma." This is the exact nature of the cardinal principles upon which the modern Christianity hinges itself. The futility of a doctrine, which is much more of a dogma, when it baffles the most average common sense is obvious. Its next great tenet is the belief in atonement, an equally bewildering claim in a world, in which we are every moment reminded of the "survival of the fittest" through personal exertion. To preach such a doctrine to such a world is as dangerous as it is nugatory of sense. That the whole fabric of a faith is supposed to exist on *such* unstable and obscure basis is nothing short of a very bold and in certain degrees a harmful proposition. Finally, we hardly discern the least signs of that Divinity and its resultant potentiality in the personality of Jesus (on whom be peace). In his own simple and otherwise a noble life, Jesus Christ does not for a moment seem to countenance, much less affirm, his Divinity. That the

birth of the doctrine belongs to a later day than his is evident on the face of it.

Islam, with an amazing originality, boldly challenges any attempt, pretended or real, to set up another peer to God. Divine unity is, therefore, the keystone of the arch of reason, under which Islam takes its stand. Its only claim to our acceptance lies in the high degree of common sense reached by it. Its tenets of regular prayer to the glory of one true God, in its regularized system of legal alms, in its practices of fasting, and a pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam brings out into actuality the highest aspiration of the human soul. But the final point of its surpassing grandeur is clearly reached when we study the effect and the general results of the application of the spirit of Islam in the worldly side of human life. It would exhaust one's patience to follow closely the systematic manner in which the Ecclesiasts of the Church of Christ militant have from time to time nipped all attempts at independent thinking, and application of human genius for the creation of the best results, in the bud. The religious schisms, which crept into the ranks of Christianity and for which the jealousies of the rival Christian potentates of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires were partly responsible, rent asunder the bonds of law and order, some of which were the creation of the earlier pagan rulers of Rome and Greece. Not satisfied with their purely religious rôle, the officers of the Church assumed a general control of the activities of human life, and burnt on the stake any one or anything not in conformity with their notions of Christianity. It was very late after the sixteenth century that the minds of Christian communities of the West were emancipated from this Church thralldom, that any real progress, in the creation of which, unhappily, not only the Church has no share, but is besides quite opposed to its spirit, was made. The modern European civilization is essentially the product of the age of Rationalism, which is a direct protest against the Christian belief. Consequently from a utilitarian standpoint, which is practically the criterion of every movement intended for the good of man, Christianity has very little in it to recommend itself.

If we seek, on the other hand, in the same attitude the sources of those elements which stand for the worldly well-being in Islam, we have a brilliant record running into centuries of its glorious achievements, of its followers in the realms of arts and

sciences. Ever since the inception of Islam in such a country as Arabia was, we have a wonderful and gradual development of the Arab genius under the fostering inspiration of Islam in all departments of human progress. To the Arabs and others who came under the influence of Islam it meant emancipation from the traditions of barbarity and ignorance, which in its turn led to the exploitation of each and every field of art and science. From Busrah, Baghdad, and Damascus in the East, to Ceuta, Tangier, Fez, and Morocco in the West, and Cordova, Seville, and Granada in the farther West, we have a noble galaxy of those renowned centres of Islamic learning, where flourished all that was best in the world.

"Under the Ommeyyads," says Syed Ameer Ali, "we see the Muslims pressing through a period of probation, preparing themselves for the great task they were called upon to undertake. Under Abbaside we find them the repositories of the knowledge of the world. Every part of the globe is ransacked by the agents of the Caliphs for the hoarded wealth of antiquity ; these are brought to the capital and laid before an admiring and appreciative public. . . . From the shores of the Atlantic eastward to the Indian Ocean, far away even to the Pacific, resounded the voice of philosophy and learning under Muslim guidance and Muslim inspiration." Through centuries of the revival of learning under Muslims in different parts of the world we see in the creed of the Qur-án the only zealous ally of intellectual freedom. With such a glorious achievement at its back, we find Islam to satisfy the highest test of human good. The life of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (on whom be peace) illustrated through actual example the best way of human conduct. Historical record is silent as to the presence of similar traits in the character of any other teacher of mankind or his message. With such palpable evidences of the beautiful character of the Prophet of Islam, the wonderfully energizing message he brought, and above all the essentially rationalistic trend of the teaching of that message, we cannot help exclaiming that Islam indicates the last word in the codes which have been sent down for the guidance of man.

WOMAN UNDER ISLAM

By SHAIKH M. H. KIDWAI

*Continued from page 161, ISLAMIC REVIEW, Vol. V.
Number 4 (April).*

Maulvi Muhammad Ali says in his English translation of the Qur-án : " The comparison of woman to the tilth is simply to show that it is she who brings up the child, and through whom is made the character of the man, and to show that the real object of conjugal relations is not the satisfaction of carnal desires. As it is the ground on which the growth of the plant depends, so it is the mother on whom depends the growth of the man and the building up of his character. This shows the importance of woman in the marital relation and in society."

" Your wives are a tilth for you " (Al-Baqara, v. 223).

The Final Testament, or the Last Gospel, has entered in all the social affairs of humanity, and laid down rules for all the aspects of life.

Islam, unlike Buddhism and Christianity, discouraged monasticism and celibacy.

" But as to the monastic life, they [the Christians] invented it themselves. We did not prescribe aught but seeking the will of Allah, and this they observed not as it ought to have been observed " (Al-Hadid, sec. 4, v. 27).

Al-Qur-án says that the two sexes have been created by the Almighty and All-wise Creator for the object of mutual union and love.

" And one of His signs it is that He hath created wives for you of your own species that you may secure comfort from them, and hath put love and tenderness between you. Herein truly are signs for those who reflect." (Al-Rūm, sec. 3, v. 20).

The object of marriage given by Islam is " Purity, not Passion " (Al-Nisá, sec. 4, v. 24).

And the advice of the Qur-án to the husbands is, " But associate kindly with them wives " (Al-Nisá, sec. 3, v. 19).

The Qur-án forbade making false promise of marriage to woman. " But promise them not in secret, unless ye speak honourable words " (Al-Baqara, sec. 30, v. 235).

Islam allows women to inherit their relations. " Man shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relatives leave,

and women shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether there is little or much of it : a stated portion " (Al-Nisá, v. 7).

Under French law only children, whether male or female, inherit their parents.

The mutual position of the two sexes has been thus described in the Qur-án :—

"The faithful of both sexes are mutual friends : they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil : they observe prayer, and pay the legal alms, and they obey Allah and His Apostle. On these will Allah have mercy : verily Allah is Mighty, Wise."

It equalizes their rights thus : "To her the same what is due from her."

It protects chaste women from being scandalized, and punishes the slanderers.

"And those who asperse chaste women, and then bring not four witnesses, scourge them with eighty stripes, and believe not their testimony for ever ; and these, they are wicked doers" (Sura xxiv. 4).

In the case of any misunderstanding between husband and wife the Qur-án encourages arbitration and reconciliation :—

"And if ye fear a breach between the two (man and wife), then send a judge from his people and a judge from her people : if they desire a reconciliation God will arrange between them ; verily God is Knowing, informed" (Sura iv. 35).

Islam ordains high respect for parents.

"God hath ordained that ye worship none but Him, and that ye show kindness to your parents, whether one or both of them attain to old age with thee ; and say not unto them 'Fie,' neither reproach them, but with respectful speech address them both, deferring humbly to them out of tenderness, and say : 'Lord, have compassion on them both, even as they reared me when I was a little one.'"

But it has drawn greater attention to motherhood.

"We have enjoined on man to show kindness unto his parents. With pain his mother beareth him, with pain she bringeth him forth."

One other unique point as regards the respect of woman in Islam is that it has allowed a Muslim to marry a woman of other religions that have "Books" like Judaism and Christianity.

The Jews never recognized a mixed marriage. To them

Gentiles are hardly human. At one time, under Christian law, if any Christian married a Jewess both were to be killed. But Islam allows a Muslim man to marry a Judaic or Christian woman.

"This day are ye allowed to eat such things as are good, and food of those to whom scriptures are given is allowed as lawful unto you and your food is allowed as lawful unto them; and ye are also allowed modest women, that are believers, and modest women of those who have received the scripture before you, when ye shall have assigned them their dower, to live chastely, neither fornicating, nor taking them for concubines."

The point to be noted is that the Qur-án does not want its followers to make any distinction between a Muslim wife and a non-Muslim; therefore it has mentioned the marriage with believing women in the same verse in which it has given permission to marry non-Muslim women, otherwise the mention of the first in this verse was not needed at all.

A woman or a wife, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, should be treated with respect and affection. If a Mussalman marries a non-Muslim woman he has been ordered to provide for his non-Muslim wife her church to say her prayers and keep all the ceremonies according to her own religion. It is a husband's duty to spend the money to provide these facilities. His home would have to include a synagogue or a church for the convenience of his wife, and to satisfy the dictates of her conscience if she is a Jewess or a Christian.

If the question of the custody of children arises, the Muslim father will not be allowed to have it in preference to his non-Muslim wife.

So scrupulous has been Islam in paying regard to the susceptibilities of woman, that it has disallowed the marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man.

A Mussalman is religiously bound to respect the religious scruples and sentiments of his Jewish or Christian wife, because he is religiously bound to respect Moses and Christ both, and because his own religious book allows him to take a Jewish or Christian wife. But if a Muslim woman were allowed to be married to a non-Muslim man, whether a Jew or a Christian, then, because neither of them had any respect for Muhammad or Islam, and because the religion of neither of them allowed a mixed marriage, they could never be expected to respect the

scruples and susceptibilities of the Muslim girl. And Islam's respect for woman being too high to allow any disregard to the sacred scruples and sentiments of woman, it forbade a Muslim woman to be married to any non-Muslim.

As Muhammad's own words and his own life were the best commentary upon the divinely inspired Last Testament or the Final Gospel, i.e. the Holy Qur-án, we shall see what he himself had to say about woman and how he treated members of that sex. Muhammad has said :—

“The best of you is he who behaves best to his household.

“Women are the twin-halves of men.

“The world and all things in it are valuable ; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous wife.

“When a woman observes the five times of prayer, and fasts the month of Ramzan, and is chaste, and is not disobedient to her husband, then tell her to enter Paradise by whichever door she likes.”

The Great Apostle abhors the idea of beating women :

“Those men who beat their wives do not behave well. He is not of my way who teaches a woman to stray.

“He is of the most perfect Muslims whose disposition is most liked by his own family.

“That is the best of Muslims whose disposition is best ; and the best of you are they who behave best to their wives.

“The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce.

“God enjoins upon you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters, and aunts.

“The rights of women are sacred. See that women are maintained in the rights granted to them.

“A virtuous wife is a man's best treasure.

“Do not prevent your women from coming to the Mosque.”

(“Sayings of Muhammad,” by Suhrawardy.)

On one occasion Omar asked the Prophet what were the things specially to be sought in this world. He answered : “A tongue occupied in the remembrance of God, a grateful heart, and a believing wife.”

Al-Ghazzali writes that the Prophet, when he found the weight of his revelations bear too heavily upon him, touched his wife Ayesha and said : “Speak to me, O Ayesha, speak to me!” This he did that, from that familiar human touch he might receive strength to support fresh revelations.

On another occasion the Prophet said : " To give one's wife the money she requires is more important than to give alms." And again : " Suppose a man spends one dinar in religious war, another in rescuing a slave, a third in charity, and gives the fourth to his wife, the giving of this last surpasses in merit all the others put together."

A man should not eat anything, especially good, by himself without sharing it with his wife. They should better take their meals together, as the Prophet has said : " When husband and wife eat their meals together, God sends His blessing upon them and the angels pray for them."

On another occasion the Prophet said : " He who bears the ill-humour of his wife patiently will earn as much merit as Job did by the patient endurance of his trials." And again : " He who deserts his wife and children is like a runaway slave ; till he returns to them, none of his fasts or prayers will be accepted by God."

In advocating marriage the Prophet said that the prayers of children profit their parents when the latter are dead, and children who die before their parents intercede for them on the Day of Judgment. When a child is told to enter heaven it weeps and says, " I will not enter in without my father and mother." One day the Prophet took hold of a man's sleeve and drew him violently towards himself, saying, " Even thus shall children draw their parents into heaven." He added : " Children crowd together at the gate of heaven, and cry out for their fathers and mothers, till those of the latter who are outside are told to enter in and join their children."

The farewell address of Muhammad, his Sermon of the Mount, contained the following instructions among others :—

" You husbands have rights, and you wives you have rights. Husbands, love your wives and cherish them. You have taken them as your wives under the security of God. Treat them well.

" As to your slaves—male and female—feed them with what you eat yourself and clothe them with what you wear. If you cannot keep them, or they commit any fault, discharge them. They are God's people, like unto you, and you are to be kind to them."

On his deathbed he said : " Continue in your prayers and treat your wives well."

MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS; OR, THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

By Professor N. STEPHEN

"I would not live for ever,
I would not—if I could ;
But I need not fret about it,
For I could not if I would."

ANON.

SO sang a quaint old rhymster many years old. He refers, of course, to the life of this world only ; but in this quaint old doggerel lies the whole philosophy of life, which is, briefly : What you cannot alter, don't worry about !

Some reader may say, then why waste any more words on the subject ? I reply in the words of Wendell Holmes, "It is a very poor thought that will not bear enlarging." And to my thinking this is a very rich thought, much of which, like veins of precious metals, lies beneath the mere surface of fact, and can only be extracted by reading between the lines.

It is true the fact stated is beyond dispute ; but what does it amount to after all—just this, a mere black and white outline of what may be made a finished picture, with all its beauty of perspective, of tint, and colour fully and plainly visible. "Facts," says Holmes, "are the brute beasts of the intellectual domain," and there is one thing certain, they destroy all chance for any pleasant fancy. Try some day a conversation made up of the mere bald statement of facts. You will find it, of necessity, both short and uninteresting. Facts are the foundation and strength of thought, and on them all thought of value must be built, just as bread is the best foundation for food. But, to quote Holmes again, "Because bread is good and wholesome and nourishing and necessary, shall you thrust a crumb into my windpipe while I am talking ? . . . *Is not my thought the abstract of ten thousand crumbs of truth ?*"¹ For truth read fact ; the words are really interchangeable. Further, if you would know just what kind of men and women can be turned out on facts alone may I suggest a thoughtful reading of "Hard Times," by Charles Dickens, or read Shakespeare's "Othello." In the light of this criticism, the failure of all Iago's plans is due to this : he built on facts, but left

¹ Italics are mine.—N.S.

out of consideration the power of sentiment ; which, after all, is a most powerful factor in the lives of most, if not all, human beings.

I will be conceited enough to write, "Let us be wiser," and having one fact to start with use it to suggest other facts and sentiments, other thoughts and ideas, on "The Philosophy of Life."

Let us first define the terms as they are to be used in this article, or we may find the critics on our track ; for life is a vague term, having to varying minds varying meanings, to some even embracing all time that has been, that is, or that is to be. But for our purpose at present life is the period of time between man's birth and death, his entrance into and his passing out from this world, together with those acts or works done therein, which makes up man's history. What is man's history? A Russian poet has asked the question and given as good a reply as I know of.

"What is man's history? Born, living, dying ;
Leaving the still shore for the troubled wave ;
Struggling with storm winds over shipwrecks flying ;
And casting anchor in the silent grave."¹

Now, what is philosophy? Briefly it is wisdom. If tradition is right the word originated thus : Pythagoras, being too modest, or unwilling to accept from his followers the title, "Father of Wisdom," coined the word thus : *Philos*=a Lover, *Sophos*=Wisdom—*Philos-sophias*=Lover of Wisdom, by which title he chose to be known.

What then is the greatest wisdom of life? Surely this : To make the best of it ; to use fully the things that we have, and not to fret for those we have not and cannot get. Here is true philosophy :—

"For every evil under the sun
There is a remedy, or there is none ;
If there is one, try to find it ;
If there is not, then never mind it."

Just a word of caution as we pass. Do not say "Kismet" too soon. Beware of making the mistake of sitting down and letting things slide without an effort or a care, and wrongly

¹ I think I have used this quotation before ; but it is good enough to excuse its repetition,—N. S.

calling such weakness "submission to the will of God." It is true, for instance, to say, "God tempers the wind to the shorn sheep," but, as Billings added, "*Man* must take care not to shear it too close." We must do our part first; it is no use trying to cross a river by sitting on the bank. God never meant man to sit down and do nothing to help himself. If He had He would have made us much less complex creatures than we are and more like the oyster, which just stops where it is put. But God the Merciful, the All-Powerful, has given to man the ability, the talent, to help himself over many, I may say most, of the rough places of life and expects him to use it. His first, his chiefest, duty lies in this. "If there is a remedy *try to find it.*" Only after this comes the wisdom of the second part of the line, "*If there is none*—never mind it." Don't worry; just accept it as the will of God, who doeth all things well.

Life at best is brief and a puzzle which we cannot always unravel. In fact, as one of our Lancashire poets has put it (the whole poem is in the dialect, but I have noted the local words):

"This life's such a queer bit of travel,
 A marlock¹ wi' sun and wi' shade.
 And then on a bowster² of gravel
 They lay us i' bed with a spade.
 But it's no use peawtin'³ or fratchin'⁴
 As the whirlgig⁵ is twirling around.
 Have at it again, and keep scratchin'⁶
 As long as your head's above ground."

WAUGH.

Accept this for your motto: "Never despair, never repine." These two nevers can secure for you much happiness, and will be like a rift of blue in the darkest cloud of your life.

To get the best out of life you must make the best of yourselves and the things you have. Surely this is self-evident philosophy. Yet many people never realize it, or, if they do, ignore it; while some even seem determined to make the worst of themselves. I knew, many years ago, a man who was a typical example of this. An artist, perhaps the greatest Liverpool has produced; but he sacrificed himself, his art, and his life to a love of intoxicating drink. He had every opportunity, every chance, given him to make his life a great success, but he refused them all. He had a picture on the line at the Royal

¹ A play or game. ² A pillow. ³ Sulking. ⁴ Fighting. ⁵ The earth (the globe). ⁶ Working.

Academy exhibition when he was but seventeen years old, and the President referred to it and said, "With such a gift a man might rise to any height. I see in that picture the shadow of a coming president." Later the great art critic, John Ruskin, spoke of him as "the Rembrandt of England," yet when he died the Art magazine¹ could find no better title for his memoir than "The Story of a Failure," while a personal friend wrote of him, "if ever a man's life was a living death, his was." I knew him well, and he was far from the only one I have known in my fairly long life who seemed determined to make the worst of himself and all he had; and I never heard him express a regret or a desire to do any better.

I may be told that, writing as I am for followers of Islam to whom the use of intoxicants is forbidden, this is useless, but I have known some professing Muslims who were not above reproach in this matter. This is not the fault of the faith, but of the fact that they set themselves and their own desires above the teachings of Al-Qur-án, placing self and self-indulgence before even fidelity to their faith. I cannot help thinking myself that Muhammad was never more deeply inspired than when he decreed the total prohibition of strong drink and gambling, which are thus referred to by my friend Mr. Parkinson in your January number: "Another valuable social reformation, the abolition of all forms of gambling, one of the curses of present-day Christendom; another, the total prohibition of strong drink, the most degrading and destructive habit of the West; evils that have for generations been enervating and debauching the manhood and womanhood of Europe."

There are many whose philosophy is little more than self; but the fact is they have no such thing as philosophy (love of wisdom) in their composition; it is all compounded of the capital "I." It may be some of these, being full of conceit themselves, even to the extent of thinking no one else matters, will say, "What a conceited fellow this is, he thinks he knows everything." Well, I am conceited enough to think I know enough to realize just how little of the "mighty whole" I really know, and there is a large measure of philosophy in a limited measure of conceit, for it tends to make a man more

¹ *Magazine of Art*, vol. 5, p. 341, Cassell & Co., 1882.

contented, better tempered, and better worth knowing, for the man who is *absolutely without conceit*, without belief in himself, will never do much in life, never make the best of it, but will degenerate into a discontented, unhappy, fretful grumbler. That great philosopher, Oliver Wendell Holmes, has a passage on this subject better than any I could write. Hear what he says—

“Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean ; it keeps it sweet and renders it endurable. Say, rather, it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl’s plumage which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him, and the wave in which he dips. When once a man has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost all his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.” . . . “The man who thinks *his* wife, *his* baby, *his* house, *his* horse, *his* dog unequalled is almost sure to be a good-humoured person.”

And if that is so, I think I may say that the good-humoured contented man is also the one who can get the most good out of, and so make the best of, life, which again is the truest philosophy.

A friend once said to me, “I think the greatest philosophy is to avoid responsibility, and so do away with anxiety.” I cannot for a moment agree with this view, as I said before,^{*} responsibility is the price of intellect, we cannot rid ourselves of it, therefore wisdom says make the best of it. He is but a poor slave who accepts as his motto, “Do as you are told ; never trouble to think for yourself ; *never originate anything.*” This is mere laziness. The true motto of the philosopher is, “Do your best.” With the final result we have little to do, that is as God wills. We need not fret or repine, our duty done, our responsibility ends, and no man can have a better epitaph than this, “He did what he could.”

Some people there are who are never satisfied with their life. They are always crying, “If I could only go back and begin it all over again, etc.” But even supposing for a moment they would do better, which is at least doubtful, it is impossible. Life has

^{*} See “The Price of Intellect,” ISLAMIC REVIEW for August 1916.

many stages, and we can never return to tread over again those we have passed. Life is a progress, and is ever moving onward, from stage to stage, until we reach the end. So wisdom says be content, make the best of each stage as you reach it—even if it were true, it is but folly to think those we have left behind the best, but it is not true, for there is no stage without its special pleasures and duties ; to which increasing years make us more fitted, till length of days brings desire of rest.

May I ask your thoughtful consideration of the following little poem ; I do not know the author—

“Oh, for one hour of youthful joy !
 Give back my early spring,
 I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy,
 Than reign a grey-beard king.

My listening angel heard the prayer,
 And calmly smiling said :
 If I but touch thy silvered hair,
 Thy hasty wish hath sped.

But is there nothing in thy track
 To bid thee fondly stay,
 While the swift seasons hurry back
 To find the wished-for day ?

Ah, truest soul of womankind,
 Without thee what were life ?
 One bliss I cannot leave behind,
 I'll take my precious wife !

The angel took a sapphire pen,
 And wrote in rainbow dew,
 The man would be a *boy* again,
 And be a *husband* too !

And is there nothing yet unsaid
 Before the change appears ?
 Remember all their gifts have fled
 With the dissolving years.

Why, yes, for memory would recall
 My fond parental joys ;
 I could not bear to leave them all,
 I'll take my girls and boys.

The smiling angel dropt his pen—
 Why, this will never do ;
 The man would be a *boy* again
 And be a *father* too !”

There is the true meaning of living the past over again. We wish to take back with us all the gifts, all the pleasure the years have brought us, not to live our old life, but our old life *plus* all the pleasures we have enjoyed, but *minus* all its pains.

It can never be: those stages of childhood, youth, manhood, those milestones on life's journey may never be repassed. Is there any real cause for regret? The philosophy of life says No. "A life well spent leaves no cause to repent."

But a wasted life—what a subject for thought! A WASTED LIFE. I was looking over a volume of biography a little while ago, "Life Stories of Men," all well known in this England in their day, and the title to one of the chapters was "A WASTED LIFE." The subject is too sad for me to dwell upon here. God, the merciful, grant it may never be said or written of yours or mine, for of all the epitaphs which can be written the saddest of all is "A WASTED LIFE."

Pass we something less sad. For the thought in my mind is that to make the best of life we must not be too pessimistic; it shows little philosophy or wisdom; to be always looking at the dark side of things. One of our Lancashire sayings is, "There's ne'er a cloud beawt^r sunshine at the back on it." Philosophy says look through the cloud to the sunshine beyond. Some people are always thinking *how bad things are*; if instead they would think *how much worse they might be*, they would get quite another aspect of matters, for things are rarely as bad as they might be. I have myself learned this lesson. Whenever you feel inclined to grouse over your own position, think of some one who is worse off still, and you will be pleased to find how much less trying your own little troubles are by comparison.

"Though the times be dark and dreary,
Though the day be long;
Keep your spirits bright and cheery,
'Bide a wee and never weary.'
Is a heartsome song."

J. OXENHAM.

A cheerful heart goes far in a day. Cultivate the spirit of those two words we so often see in a certain advertisement, "DON'T WORRY." "Ne'er go hunting trouble, let trouble hunt

^r Without,

for you." I have often been amused at the amount of worry that is wasted over things which never come to pass. I once heard a comedian (I have forgotten his name) relate a story of an expected legacy in cash which never came to hand. He told how he planned by day and lay awake at night thinking how he would spend it. And the refrain of the story was, "Oh the time and worry I spent on that money I never had."

This is not philosophy, not wisdom, but unwisdom. A crossing of the bridge before you get to the river; it is wise to look a little in advance, *but not too far*, for if we do we shall lose sight of the very things that lie at our feet, and so drop the substance reaching out for the shadow.

You may say this is all very good while things are bright and cheerful; but how when clouds and shadows darken our view? Well, it is a poor philosophy that will not stand clouds, aye, and help us through them, for they come to all at some time; but here is the true philosophy—

"Shadows are but for the moment
Quickly past;
And then the sun the brighter shines
That it was overcast.

No mortal life but has its shadowed time,
Not one.
Life without shadow could not taste the full
Sweet glory of the sun."

J. OXENHAM.

Think of it, our very troubles make greater the pleasures of our peaceful hours; this is true wisdom—life's philosophy.

"It's wise to be humble in prosperous ways,
For trouble may chance to be nee;¹
It's wisdom to struggle with sorrowful days
Till sorrow breeds sensible glee.
He's rich that's contented wi' little, lives well,
And nurses his little to more;
He's well off that's rich, if he nobbut² can feel
He is brother to him that is poor.
And to him that does fair,
Though his living be bare,
Some comfort shall always be sure."

WAUGH.

¹ Nee—near.

² Nobbut—only.

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