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“ Born in New Zealand some weeks after my father’s death—brought to England soon after—educated at private schools. Being the only child, I was left much to my own devices; became an omnivorous reader as a schoolboy, acquired Sale’s Koran and was much struck with it— at that early age I could see through and was thoroughly disgusted with the hypocrisy of those *professing* Christianity and their leaders. Of recent years have studied the Koran a great deal -therein is ‘ a plain direction ’ for everyone; it is logic and no mysticism —the best commentary on the Koran is -It requires none (read it with an unbiased mind all ye who wish for instruction).”

AHMAD A. ALLAN.”

[See *overleaf*.

In one of his letters which he sent along with his " Declaration Form " Mr. Allan wrote to say:—

" It must not be taken that I am ' renegading ' from any creed, for, as a child, I received no particular religious instruction at school; the scriptures and the Gospel were just used as a daily reading lesson, and not taught otherwise. I mention this, as I know converts often are looked upon with suspicion and contempt, particularly by the Osmanlis.

" I will also send you a photo of myself when I can get one taken. *I have not been photographed since a boy as I had an idea that it was rather against the law (Shariat).* From what you tell me of the ' Hanafi ' School, I should surmise it rather more liberal than others. It is no doubt good, *provided it be not carried too far.*

" Sir, in my case, as I have mentioned, I never followed any particular creed. I think, when a child, I used to be occasionally sent to church for respectability's sake, but had a furious and instinctive dislike for its rituals, not being able to understand anything that I used to hear there."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مُحَمَّدٌ وَصَلَّى عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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No. 10

WHY I BECAME A MUSLIM

By ALI AHMAD KNUD HOLMBOE

[Mr. Holmboe is a Dane, and a journalist of established repute in his country. He is the author of a good many books, a recent one being *Ørkenen Brænder* (published by C. A. Reitzels Forlag, Copenhagen, 1931). The book was well received by the Danish Press and exposes the claim of the Europeans who profess to hold sway over Eastern countries under the pretence of "teaching culture and civilizing the barbarians." We shall have, in one of our next issues, the pleasure of introducing the writer of this article by means of a photo of him.

Our readers will be interested to know that Mr. Holmboe is in Amman, Transjordan, waiting for the *visa* to proceed to the Hedjaz to participate in the Hajj during the year 1932.—
ED. I.R.]

It was in El Kuds that I received my first impression of the beauty of Islam. What I had known before about this religion was only what is being taught in schools nearly all over Europe—that Muhammad was but a plagiarist of Christianity and Judaism, and that the faith he founded was a wild and barbarous faith which had for its aim the massacre of poor Christians, especially those in Armenia.

When I visited Jerusalem about five years ago I had been

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through the religious evolution common to Europeans. As a result of the school-Christianity, with its teaching about Jesus as our saviour and his death on the Cross for our redemption, I became a doubter very early in life. I made the mistake, which is not uncommon, of connecting the word "Christianity" with religion, and for a long time my ideas about life were completely negative.

A sincere human being, perhaps every human being, cannot exist indefinitely without religion, without an ethical foundation for his conduct. I sought the Truth, and was impressed by the musical beauty and the art which I found in the Roman Catholic Church.

And about this time I came to Jerusalem.

It was Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Golgotha, which is situated at the summit of a narrow staircase, is divided between the Greek and the Roman Catholic priests, and the great Easter mass was about to take place. People from all over the world had come to see the mass on Golgotha itself.

Then it began, and speedily developed into a violent tussle between the Greek and Roman priests. Prelates clothed in velour and silk were quarrelling like angry old women; chairs were thrown about, and the words used were worse than those heard in any market-place. In one corner a peasant from the Carpathians was telling his Rosary. In a glass receptacle on the wall was placed a smiling Madonna. She wore a bracelet-watch shining with diamonds, and a few years ago had been decorated with the French Croix de Guerre.

At that moment I understood that Christianity in all the aspects in which I knew it had very little in common with true religion, that spirit which like a red streak goes through all religions; and that the man "Christ," whom they have made a gold-bedecked deity, would not have been a Christian if he had lived to-day.

I was all but in despair. Once more I was sunk in the deepest doubt, the most poignant anxiety. I went out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and into the Mosque of 'Omar, which stands where once stood the Temple of Solomon. In

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the Mosque of 'Omar there was absolute quietude: no priests celebrating the mass or preaching or changing bread and wine into God, no music to hypnotize and lead the heart away from clear understanding.

I placed myself in a corner and saw how Muslim after Muslim quietly came in, left his shoes near the entrance, knelt with his face turned towards Mecca and said his prayer. Here was no artistically sculptured Christ; here man was alone with Almighty God, from Whom a little light is reflected in the hearts of all.

This made a most profound impression upon me, and my ideas about Islam began to change. A few days later I went to my good friend, the Muslim teacher Adel Gabre, in El Kuds, and borrowed an English translation of the Holy Qur-án. It was the version by Rodwell and I found it difficult to understand.

I did not know then that the Arabic Qur-án cannot be translated by philologists, that only he who in truth is able to understand its limitless beauty may faintly reflect this in a translation. Muhammad was a Bedouin, unable to read or write, but so impressed was he by the Divine inspirations which he received that he was forced to communicate what he saw to the whole world. He sang verse after verse of the Book, which was dictated to him under Divine Inspiration.

Then I began to study Arabic, and this led me to Islam.

Xauen, in Spanish Morocco, is situated on a mountain, and here one day, when I was tired of civilization and its hollow surface-life, I went to a Mosque. There was only a carpet of straw on the floor and at first I was alone. Then an old man came in. His clothes were ragged and he seemed sick, but his face was like a light. He looked at me for a moment, then he came to where I was sitting, gave me his hand and said, "You are not from here? Why do you come to the Mosque?"

I answered that I did not know myself, but that I found peace in the Mosque, and I asked him to tell me something about Islam.

"Do you know what God is?" he asked.

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I shook my head.

"If you imagined," he said, "that all the ethical ideals of humanity had reached perfection this would only form a small part of God. The sight of God has crushed the hearts of the prophets and the angels, when they understood a little part only of His all-might. What is your religion?"

I replied, "I have none."

He looked at me very seriously, took my hand and continued: "Very few foreigners understand Islam—especially among you who come from Europe, with your ideas of civilization and material progress as the only things worth living for. Our great philosopher, El Ghazālī, says that in every human being there are the incarnations of a dog, a swine, an angel, and a devil."

"What is an angel?" I asked.

"An angel," he said, "is the bright element in your soul. An angel is the picture of God in your heart. If you have veiled this picture, you cannot see God, God cannot be proved. God is—you see Him or you see Him not. And if you walk in the wrong way, you walk in darkness away from God. But," he continued, "everybody has something of the angel in his heart. Therefore everybody has a duty not to develop the swine or the dog in himself. The angel—the incarnation of light,—imprisoned with a swine or a dog. This is what we call hell, the greatest misery of all. Therefore you must find the straight road to God, the way whereby you may be able to approach nearer to His Majesty. This road is Islam."

"But why not Christianity or Hinduism or Theosophy, or any other of all the many religions of the world?" I asked.

The old man smiled. "All religions contain something of the truth—something of Islam. But Christianity is going farther and farther from God, because it has made the prophet Jesus God. And it has placed the priest between man and God. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be with him!) does not teach, as is said, too, in the Qur-án, any new religion. Muhammad is only taking the essential from already existing religions, which are leading man far from God. In Islam the road to

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God is our only dogma. We have no priests, we have no pictures in our Mosques. How can you express God by a picture? We can but pray to Him and Him alone."

"Who, then, was Muhammad?" I asked.

"Only a prophet like Jesus, Moses, Abraham, Buddha, and a thousand others; one of the elect, who saw the greatness of God and had to proclaim it to the whole world. Christianity is leading men away from God, it takes from men all responsibility by teaching that Christ is the saviour and that he died for our sake. Muhammad does not teach any such thing, and says that Jesus, too, never claimed for himself that he was God. Often in the Qur-án is it said, 'I am only a man like you.' Islam tells us that each man, for himself, has the duty of developing his soul. He must pray five times a day, so that the picture of God and of the road to God must remain with full clearness in his soul. Therefore intoxicants are prohibited; therefore he must fast one month of the year to keep his body a healthy place for his soul. The difference between Islam and all other religions is that other religions say that through faith you may act; Islam says, rather, that through action faith must be born."

A few months later I was converted to Islam, the religion which I shall follow, if God will, until I die. In the Libyan desert last year I went through eleven dreadful days without food and with very little water. My belief was not shaken. A little later I witnessed the horrible outrages committed by the Italians against our Muslim brethren in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and for the first time in my life I felt ashamed of being a European.

It is my hope and belief that Islam has a future, especially in Northern Europe, where people to-day are sighing for a religion which will give them more than Christianity, which has failed in every respect, and that the religion of the future will be Islam and nothing else. Islam alone, in spite of Bolshevism, Socialism, and all other modern ideas for the happiness of mankind, is able to make every individual completely happy, and for this reason society, though to-day more corrupt than ever, is still worth living in.

BRIEF NOTES ON THE QUR-ÂN : THE LAST SEVEN CHAPTERS

By AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMALU 'D-DIN

ALTHOUGH the chapters in the Holy Book were not inserted in the chronological order of their revelation, their ultimate arrangement was under Divine guidance, according to their subject-matter. The last seven chapters are a proof of this.

The Holy Prophet had been assured of complete success at the very beginning of his mission, when the fire of ruthless opposition had been kindled about him. All these chapters, with the exception of the third, entitled "The Victory," were revealed in the earliest days of his Prophethood, while this particular chapter has been regarded by some as the last in revelation, seeing that the Holy Prophet died eighty days after it was received.

The Prophet had once met with humiliating treatment in the plains of Mina, a place some six miles from Mecca. That was in the days of his persecution. He was forced to flee to Medina, and ten years after his flight he happened to come to the same place with no less than 146,000 companions. After celebrating his last pilgrimage he arrived at this spot, and stood on a hillock in Mina. He saw signs of victory and success all around him. Among those present he could see thousands of his enemies, and many of his most ruthless persecutors, but by that time they had all become devoted to his cause. His eyes were filled with tears of joy since he found Islam established everywhere and his country purged of all idolatry. It was in the course of this journey that the chapter referred to was revealed. Its purport was to announce the fulfilment of the prophecies of success made in the earliest revelations. For example, the first chapter of the series gave good tidings to the effect that his efforts to establish the right cause would achieve a unique success, while his opponents would perish miserably. The second chapter, entitled "The Unbeliever," made a clearer prophecy of what has been mentioned. It asserts that both parties—the followers of the Prophet and his enemies, will reap the fruits of their respective actions—the former in the guise of success and the latter

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of failure. The third and fourth chapters refer to the fulfilment of these predictions. Then comes the fifth chapter. It speaks of the Prophet's sole mission, which was to establish belief in the Unity of God throughout the whole world; and this, in fact, is the fundamental principle of all success and prosperity in life. Without doubt, it depends, to a great extent, upon our own exertions, as is pointed out by the Holy Book, but there are certain evil agencies which, pernicious as they are to the cause of our success, often work against us without our knowledge. They are, in fact, out of our control. We have no other alternative wherewith to escape them but the Mercy of God. These evils have been specified in the last two chapters.

SUCCESS IN LIFE

THE ABUNDANCE OF GOOD

- (1) " Surely We have given you abundance of good.
- (2) " Therefore pray to your Rabb (Creator, Nourisher and Maintainer) and make sacrifice.
- (3) " Surely your enemy is cut off."—Holy Qur-ân, cviii. 1-3.

True success lies in two things: firstly, in possessing all that is good, and secondly, in the total removal of all agencies which, in any way, counteract or oppose our way to it. Such agencies are our real enemies. The sacred quotations mention both; and it also shows us how to achieve them. They are prayer and sacrifice. According to the Qur-ân, prayer repeatedly said is only by way of reminder of our duties to ourselves. It recalls to us two things: firstly, that we have to shun evil and indecency, and secondly, that we have to acquire all that is good, including the wealth of the world.

Anything that harms human interest is evil in Islam, while what is beneficial is virtue, but sometimes things that can be lawfully possessed are inimical to the higher aims of life. The attainment of the latter involves our parting with what we possess, though we might have attained those possessions by strenuous work. The surrender of such things amounts to sacrifice; and good becomes evil if it stands in the way of something higher.

The above verses make up the shortest chapter in the Qur-ân. But they epitomize its whole teaching. Success in life

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is our chief aim and the chapter shows us a royal road to that success, which is the avoidance of all that is harmful and the attainment of all that is good; and the sacrifice of the latter, if it endangers our ultimate success.

FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

THE UNBELIEVERS

- (1) " Say: O unbelievers!
- (2) " I do not worship that which you worship,
- (3) " Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship:
- (4) " Nor am I going to worship that which you worship,
- (5) " Nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship:
- (6) " For you is your religion (and its recompense) and for me is my religion (and recompense)."—Holy Qur-án, cix. 1-6.

The concluding verses speak of the freedom of religious opinions which everyone should possess. If the chapter were revealed in the days of the Prophet's persecution, a clearer pronouncement on the subject came in another revelation when the Prophet was at the height of his power. " There is no compulsion in religion " is the final verdict on the subject which we read in the second chapter, verse 256. Whether the Muslims be in adversity or prosperity the Qur-án would ask them to allow every other person to worship God in the way he pleases. No other religion has preached freedom of conscience so clearly. The chapter also shows the Prophet's perseverance and the boldness of his convictions. He was persecuted on all sides and was the victim of every kind of tyranny, but he constantly declared that in no case would he leave the religion of Allah and adopt another faith.

The Arabic word for " religion " used in the sixth verse is " Dīn." It has two meanings—Religion and Recompense. Those who take the word " Dīn " in the verse to mean *recompense* read therein a true prophecy. The verse predicts the recompense awaiting the actions of the two parties, the Believers and the Unbelievers, and what followed showed that the Prophet and his followers were successful; while his enemies were practically wiped out.

(To be continued)

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

AT St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong, on the morning of the Sunday following Ash Wednesday, 1931, the Dean (the Very Reverend A. A. Swan) preached the first of his special course of Lent Sermons. To start with, he declared that the Wednesday just past had been a bitter disappointment to him. In an English parish, he said, there would have been a larger number of communicants at the early celebration of the Holy Communion. But he missed those who he might have expected would be beginning Lent rightly, at least as an example to others. The lukewarm interest of Christians in things of such religious importance reminded him of the decadent Christian Church, which, in the sixth or seventh century, made the rise of Islam a possibility. When loyalty to Christ was half-hearted it was no match for loyalty to Muhammad. Though the Dean did not say so in so many words, yet he hinted that the same half-hearted loyalty to the faith was to be observed in these days, and went on to remark that it was through the medium of heretical Christians who denied the Divinity of Christ and his work of redemption. Though the Dean was forced to pay a left-handed compliment to the teachings of Islam, yet he thought that the conception of Godhood in Islam, which was that of Power, could not come up to the Christian conception, where God's "Love" for man is the chief subject of Christian theology. This contrast between Power and Love, the theologians think, produced two different characters in history;

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that is to say, Muhammad and Jesus. One was a personification of Power, while the other was the incarnation of Love. "Muhammad," said the Dean, "was sincere to the last, but he was clearly self-deceived, and his character when placed against the blameless Christ life seems to be very grey. And yet this is the idea of human life set up for the world of Islam. . . . Of course the true Christian is glad to see so much truth in Islam, and there is no doubt that Christendom, when it allowed itself to become unfaithful to its inheritance, had a good deal to learn from Islam; and yet we are persuaded that we have learnt from Our Lord Jesus Christ a higher conception of God and a higher ideal of human life and conduct than Muhammad has to offer. . . ."

In the end the Dean remarked that "Islam made less demand on character than did Christianity, therefore its rewards are not so great." "Muhammad cannot offer to his disciples anything comparable to the satisfaction of heart and mind or the dynamics of character which Jesus Christ offers to his."

Like many other members of his fraternity, the Dean of St. John's seems to possess very little first-hand knowledge of Islam. All his information on the subject seems to have been derived from the writings of those who, without scruple, fought against Islam somewhere towards the end of the Middle Ages, for political or religious reasons. Not only did they misinterpret and misread facts, but they made deliberate misstatements also. They spoke of events in Islam which never occurred in the times of the Holy Prophet or after him. It is not of the misinterpretation or misreading of facts, but of deliberate misrepresentation that we complain of; and it was a few centuries afterwards, Renan, Gibbon, Carlyle, Lane-Poole, Draper, and others detected this gross injustice to Islam. They wrote with all the power at their command in defence of Islam, and exposed the scurrilous nature of its libellers. But at that time the Western nations were entering upon their "forward policy" of bringing the East into subjection. Missionary activity was found to be the most suitable method for attaining political ends, and the Missions, thinking that the old-time libels against Islam would be profitable for their

MUHAMMAD AND JESUS

campaign, produced generations of Tisdalls, Zwemers, and others.

The Dean, however, seems somewhat of an exception to these people. He has some breadth of vision. He admits the excellencies of others. His only shortcoming is that his information is all wrong. I hope that these pages, which he will find quite free from professional Missionary tactics, may help to correct his views on Islam.

I am also confirmed in my opinion as to the Dean's sources of information when I read of his disappointment at the religious indifference evinced by his own people at the beginning of last Lent. He saw then that the number of communicants was greatly reduced and said that matters were different in England, where every parish sent its crowds to church to receive the Holy Communion and spiritual instruction. His information as to the state of English parishes will seem to be as defective and inaccurate as his knowledge of Islam. If I might venture to undeceive Mr. Swan, I would tell him that the condition obtaining all over England in this matter, as well as in most Western countries, is worse than what he has found in the Far East. The vacant pews in the churches on Sundays bear eloquent witness that Western indifference to church religion has reached the frontier of disbelief in the Christian Dispensation. Perhaps the Dean did not read the stirring sermon of the Archbishop of York, in which His Grace stated that the Church *had become* repulsive to the public. The Bishop of London also said that there were forty-nine churches to which forty-nine persons went each Sunday, only to find congregations of four to seven, and not more than twelve in any. Canon Barrow, under the heading "Is English Christianity Dying?" wrote as follows in the *Evening News* (1923): "In this country Christianity is fighting for its existence and losing ground steadily. The Churches no longer influence Englishmen, and with the spread of education they are being deserted by the women." Christian religious edifices with a capacity for containing one hundred saw the number of worshippers reduced to something between thirty and forty in 1924, according to the reports of the local Commissioners in London on the sub-

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ject. Moreover, this decrease in the churchgoing class invited the attention of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, in his presidential address at the Bristol Congress in 1923, ascribed the phenomenon to sectarian differences in Christianity. In a very short time, however, the Archbishop had to change his opinion. At the next Congress he found fault with the clergy under his jurisdiction, who, he thought, did not take enough pains and "burn the midnight oil" to a sufficient extent to prepare sermons attractive enough for their congregations. But he forgot that official Christianity, as it stands, gives very scanty material for an honest man to make sermons on. The Church story is a very brief one: Adam committed sin which condemned his whole race to eternal perdition, but God the Father loved man so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son to redeem it. The Dean would, I am sure, agree with this summing up of Christianity. He himself, unfortunately, evinced the same paucity of ideas in his Lenten Sermon for the same reason. His first sermon takes the same Love of God as the pivot for all that he has said in the various graceful trappings of a pulpit speaker. If I denude his sermon of those trappings there will remain about two lines only to sum up his whole religion. He may himself realize that such a story may be pleasing to infant ears, but yet incapable of inspiring any intelligent listener.

But other factors have come to light in these days which have alienated the Church in the West from her former adherents. The Woking Mission literature, followed by a flood of writing from the Modernists' camp, opened the eyes of the churchgoing population of these islands to the genesis of their religion. The literature has remained unchallenged so far as research work goes, though the Church Press took serious notice of it. Official Christianity has been found to emanate from the cult of Mithraism, and not from the religion of Jesus. Most of the laity now consider it an insult to their intelligence to hold their former beliefs. They have realized that the Church story of Christianity, from beginning to end, was only a faithful reproduction of the stories of several pagan gods; that the original narrative of Jesus was purposely lost

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sight of by the Early Church Fathers, who portrayed the Lord of Christianity purely from the pagan point of view; that they depicted him as the last of the generation of Pagan Christs who were reported to have been born of a Virgin on Christmas night; that they all came, in their respective periods of history, to redeem the condemned human race by their blood, and willingly went to the Cross or were killed on the Friday afternoon immediately preceding Easter Sunday. It has also been established that all these pagan gods were buried and remained for two days in the grave; they rose again on the Easter Sunday morning and ascended to heaven afterwards, with a promise of a second coming in the latter days; and that the pagans used to participate in meals on Sunday in commemoration of their crucified god, believing that they ate his blood and flesh. It has also come to light that, thousands of years before the birth of Jesus, the Egyptians used to worship the Cross on Easter Sunday as a sign of the new Lord, and ate eggs and hot-cross buns, like the Catholics of to-day, at the season when their Lord, they believed, used to give new life to the earth. These are the beliefs of the Church. Besides Easter and Christmas, the pagans celebrated all the festivals which are now observed by the Romish Church. Most of the pagan gods, it is proved, had twelve disciples, and they were destroyed by one of their number. The various names given to Jesus were also the names of those gods. To their great discomfiture, churchgoers have discovered that the cathedrals of the Roman Church are only a replica of buildings consecrated to the worship of Apollo, the Sun-god. The Holy water, the vestry, the position of the altar facing east, the choirs, the acolytes, the monks and the nuns with tonsures in commemoration of the Sun's disc—all come from the same Church of Apollo. It has also been established that Sunday was not God's day but the Roman *Dies Soli*, the day reserved for the worship of the Sun-god. It was to serve his political ends that Constantine placed Jesus on the altar of Apollo, in the fourth century, while retaining every other vestige of pagan worship, and incorporating it into the Church of Jesus. Last of all, and not the least, it has been found that Jesus was not born

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on the 25th of December, but it was the birthday of the Sun as popularly believed in pagan circles. Churchgoers have now found out that they have for centuries been not worshipping Jesus, but the Sun; and the respectable orthodox Christian now thinks himself justified if he spends his Sundays in golf, cricket, or any other sport instead of attending Divine worship. Can a man with any sense of self-respect go to receive Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday or any Sunday if he feels that all the rites of the Sacrament are the same as those observed by the pagans in commemoration of their respective deities who were wrongly believed to have given their lives to save humanity? Justin Martyr was forced to admit that the so-called Christian rites had existed among the pagans centuries before Jesus. Justin was asked by the then Emperor of Rome to explain why he should embrace Christianity and give up his ancestors' faith if the various articles of his own faith in the Mithraic Dispensation were the same as those in the new cult called after the name of Christ. Mithra, the Emperor thought, was the origin of Christ. Justin could not deny the fact. His explanation, however, is very interesting, as we read in his *Apologia*. He said that centuries before, Satan went to the higher regions in heaven and overheard angels rejoicing over the appearance of Jesus Christ in the days to come. Satan thus came to be acquainted with all the features of the story of the coming Christ, and he, being the arch-enemy of truth, tried, therefore, to confound it with falsehood. He visited numerous countries, from Persia to England, and all those that surrounded the birthplace of Jesus, and introduced cults each of which had the same story of its god as is now told of Jesus by the Church. Though the ingenious story of Justin could not convince the Emperor, it nevertheless explained the difficulties attaching to the new faith to its followers, and was accepted as the truth by Constantine for purely political reasons.

The simple religion of Jesus, which was no other than the religion of Moses with certain minor modifications, became completely Romanized to suit the tastes of the Gentiles. If these facts have now come to light and are fully established,

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the desertion of the Church by its former votaries in the West is but a natural sequence. Formal Christianity has collapsed. Its days are numbered. Its adherents have become divided into innumerable new sects—Spiritualism, New Thought, Christian Science, and the like—each of whom has all but denied the teachings of the Church and has adopted beliefs which, generally speaking, are of Islamic origin.

Dean Swan must be aware of this pagan story. The Church asserts that the Mystery Cult in different forms of Paganism was a deception and that the Lord of Christianity came to destroy it and uproot the falsehood from the world for ever. We Muslims do admit that Jesus, as a true Messenger of God, did come to destroy falsehood. He preached against it when he laid emphasis on obedience to the laws of God—His teachings were diametrically opposed to the pagan religion of the Sacrament, which dispensed with the Law and promised absolution from punishment for disobedience thereto for all who believed and participated in the Sacred Feasts. In fact, the chief feature of Paganism was participation in the Sacred Feasts. But Jesus demanded the fulfilment of the Law. The teachings of Jesus thus stood poles apart from Paganism, which summed up the religions of the Gentiles. Jesus really came to demolish it, but the coming generation of his followers, with the author of the Pauline literature at their head, who decidedly was not St. Paul but some Greek Father in the Church, succumbed to the wishes of the Gentiles, who hated the religion of the Law and its observance. Epicurean as many of the Gentiles were in all their ways, they could not abide by the strict laws of the Mosaic Dispensation, as Jesus exhorted his followers to do. They believed in a cult that cleansed them of all sin by simple belief. They followed a persuasion which gave them, as it were, a blank cheque on any bank of evil and indecency, while saving their skin from the punishment which would otherwise be incurred. They preferred to place all responsibility on the shoulders of another. Pagan ingenuity had grasped the situation and found the solution of the problem in the cult of mystery under which various virgins gave birth to gods who died on Good Fridays

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to relieve people from the burden of sin. Mithra, Apollo, Baal, Adonis, Horus, Osiris, Bacchus, Quetzacoatl, were the various incarnations of those virgin-born sun-gods. We read of Bacchus that sages approached Jupiter and solicited him to ward off the destruction that must fall on humanity in order to punish them for their sins. Jupiter promised to do so. He descended to the earth in a cloud which enveloped a virgin, who at once became pregnant of a god-child. The god-child was born on the 25th of December and received the name of Bacchus. When the new god grew older he proclaimed that he had come to deliver humanity and redeem it from punishment through his blood. It was Bacchus, and not Jesus, who for the first time said that he was "the Alpha and the Omega of the world" and would give his life to regenerate the human race, of which he also said that he was the Redeemer and Deliverer. He died on Friday and rose again on Easter Sunday and ascended to heaven. There is only one point of difference between the pagan gods and Christ. While the other redeemers of humanity willingly went to suffer death for mankind, since they had come to earth for this very purpose, Jesus Christ wished to evade the cup which he had to drink. He did not want to be crucified and would have been absent from the scene at Calvary if he could have done so. But he was in the clutches of implacable foes and was forced to drink the cup to the dregs. He came to the Cross with a heart full of sorrow. As the Bible says: "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: *nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*" The italics in the above show rather a forced consent than a willing one—a heart compelled to resign itself to fate, when no alternative is left, rather than a heart that welcomes the work which the Father has given him to finish. This alone is sufficient to falsify the supposed scheme of God to save the human race. As a matter of fact, no sooner had Jesus descended alive from the Cross and recovered than he left Judæa for good.

The Dean should not feel disappointed at the apathy and

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indifference of the people in Hong Kong, seeing that the Church is "repulsive" everywhere, as the Archbishop of York has said. This apathy is not the outcome of self-indulgence or the devotion of his "flock" to worldly affairs, as he thinks, but it is the Church itself that has excited revolt against itself among its worshippers, who think their intelligence has been insulted by being taught to worship the Sun-god under the name of Jesus, and who are determined no more to embrace Paganism in the guise of Christianity.

It is true that all the pagan deities were creatures of imagination, while Jesus was a real personality. But all we know of any man depends on the character which is his; otherwise all people, for practical purposes, are imaginary beings. It is a man's character which gives him individuality. Millions and trillions of people come and go in each generation. They pass unnoticed, and no one remembers them after they have gone. They are taken as denizens of an imaginary world. But if they possess some distinctive character they are treated by the generations to come as actual men. Even persons created by the poetical imagination to personify the types of character have come to be regarded almost as real characters and receive more attention from us than do those who have actually existed. Ulysses, Macbeth, and Shylock, for instance, have become in a sense historic and have a greater claim to our notice than tens of thousands of Dicks, Toms, and Harrys of every time and clime. Character, then, is the factor which confers immortality on mortal men. As Jesus had been to some extent clothed in the garb of mythology, his historical existence has been denied by many learned savants in the West. If we strip him of the garments filched from the pagan cupboard, he cannot claim to be an historical character. The same may be said of the Jesus of the Gospels, which are admittedly not genuine in origin. We Muslims, however, are bound to accept him as a real entity because the Holy Qur-án speaks of him as a prophet; otherwise I, for one, see no reason why a Muslim should believe in his existence at all. Under these circumstances, we are bound to divest him of all pagan disguise and give him the character accorded to him by the Muslim scriptures. I cannot understand why we should

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reverence Jesus as he is represented by the Church, when all that is told of him has been rightly traced to mythology.

The best that can be said of the matter is that the theory of Redemption, as taught by official Christianity, was very much to the taste of pagans, who would prefer to see their god carrying their sins and relieving them of the bother of being righteous. It is true that every man is an easygoing person. He wishes to be free from hardship and tries to get as much enjoyment out of life as possible without doing anything; while righteousness is uphill work. Man would not attempt it, as the Holy Qur-án says, if he could get the same result by going downhill (xc. 11). All dirty things are easily come by. It is not strange, therefore, if pagan ingenuity devised a scheme of redemption that helped a man to save his skin and dodge the hardship of righteousness. But God's ways are unchangeable, and He has proposed a different method by which we are to achieve success and happiness in this life. It is not a soft bed for us to lie on, but a thorny path for us to tread, if we are to reach the goal. Every one of us must bear his own cross while no one bears the burden that is another's. It is hard living that brings prosperity. This truth was revealed to us in the following mighty words of the Qur-án: "That no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another." "And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for." "And that his striving shall soon be seen." "Then shall he be rewarded with the fullest reward" (liii. 38-41). Again the Book says: "Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another" (xvii. 15).

This statement is in accordance with the laws of Nature and strikes at the very root of the doctrine of Atonement which finds no parallel in the whole working of the Universe. This life of ours is admittedly of brief duration. If God has been pleased to send hardships and trials as necessary concomitants to happiness and success, how could He allow happiness to be acquired by mere belief in salvation by the Blood of Christ, or by participation in the Sacrament?

CHAPTER II

ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

POWER AND LOVE

"THE conception of Godhood in Islam, which is that of Power, cannot come up to the Christian conception, where God is Love." This is the basis of the sermon under discussion in these pages. The idea is but a re-echo of what is repeatedly heard from Christian platforms whenever any attempt is made to compare Christianity with Islam. The subject is not without interest, and may be approached from various angles— theological, philosophical, and logical. The most important among these is the historical aspect. The Christian idea has a certain sentimental beauty; but logical difficulties in the way of its acceptance immediately arise, especially when viewed from the practical side of life, and in the light of actual events.

I should like to deal with the historical aspect of the case as a natural sequel to what I have already said. The Dean, in common with other writers on the subject, admits a fallacy into his argument. Such writers start with the assumption of facts which need proof. They beg the question; with all possible academical gowns on their shoulders they commit the common error of *petitio principii*. The new Epiphany whereof the Church boasts depends entirely on the occurrence of the following facts. God was born of a Virgin so that He might be crucified on Calvary in order to save humanity from perdition by thus paying the penalty for their sins with His own life. He did it willingly, out of His love for humanity. I will deal later on with the reasonableness of such an assumption. But the first question to be considered is this: Did ever such an event occur in history? I have already shown that the story owes its origin to pagan imagination and was incorporated with Christianity by the Early Fathers of the Church. Jesus, as pictured by the Evangelical record, is a personality quite distinct from that portrayed in the literature passing under the name of St. Paul. We find nothing in the

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former picture to substantiate this uncommon conception of Divine Love. Jesus never spoke of it in his lifetime. Nay, he preached precisely the opposite.

He made righteous dealing and obedience to the Law the only passport to heaven.¹ If he had, indeed, come to save humanity by his blood—thus obviating the necessity for good deeds, as Luther argues—he would have proclaimed that Gospel himself to the world. Throughout the course of his ministry he seems to know nothing of this Redemption, though the Synoptic record speaks of his being tried for sedition by a Roman judge who was induced by the Jews to sentence him to crucifixion. Though almost all features of the trial story are derived from the passion story of Baal—one of the virgin-born sun-gods—yet it establishes only one fact: that a righteous person was wrongly tried for sedition and hanged for it. Such events are not of infrequent occurrence. Many innocent people are wrongly tried for sedition and put to death. Do they all atone for someone's sins? If not, how does the case of Jesus vary from that of other innocents who were victims of persecution? Jesus said nothing about his coming to bear our sins, or about his trial and persecution taking place as a manifestation of Divine Love. His behaviour in the Garden before his arrest shows that he had heard of what was coming. He tried to evade it, and with that end in view withdrew into the Garden to conceal himself. He told his disciples to keep watch and thus help him against his enemies. Many a time he fell on the ground and prayed God to save him from the impending fate. How, in the light of these events, can we conclude that God willingly came in His Own Person to suffer death, so that He might give expression to His peculiar Love for humanity? We read, of course, in the Bible that when celebrating the last Passover Jesus said that the bread and wine of the feast were his body and blood for the New Dispensation. But it should not be forgotten that the Gospel writings are not genuine and cannot be relied on *in toto*. It has also been established that these scriptures were written in the second century, or afterwards when the Church of Jesus was in the

¹ St. Matt. xix. 16-22.

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pagan melting-pot. We also know that the Feast of the Passover was not established by Moses at the Divine Command, but was merely a thing of pagan origin, celebrated by the heathen to commemorate the sun's crossing of the equator, which ushers in Easter (or Spring, which it literally means) and gives new life to the earth. It is also clear that all that is reported as having been done at the Last Supper was only a repetition of the pagan Eucharistic Feast. It is a blasphemy to think of Jesus observing a pagan festival. I admit that such a festival had already made its way into his tribe, but even then the words used by Jesus do not suggest that he was going to be slain for the salvation of mankind. He was Eastern. He spoke in an Eastern language, a language which is full of similes. He knew, from the history of the prophets, that all reformers and teachers of a new dispensation suffered physical persecution. They had established the truth that the tree of Reformation has always needed human blood for its sustenance and that martyrdom furthers the cause of a true religion. As a Prophet of God, Jesus foresaw all that was likely to happen to him, seeing that, in his case, the atmosphere around him was full of trouble. He knew that his own tribe had been heartless enough to put many a prophet to death before him. If such events have often been reported in sacred history there was nothing peculiar in the remark that Jesus made on the occasion of the Passover Feast if he observed it at all. The most surprising thing of all is the fact that, when he came out of the tomb, he did not refer to his death as a penalty for other's sins. We read very little of what occurred after the supposed Resurrection. St. Matthew was doubtful about the event, and the only description of it which we find in the Bible is given in the last ten lines of St. Mark. But these are admittedly a forgery, being neither in the Vulgate nor in the original Greek text, as pointed out in a marginal note by the first English translators of the Bible. But accepting them as they are, even they do not hint that the death of the Master was by way of atonement for the sins of mankind. Is it not a surprising thing that the very personage who achieved this work of redemption and was the instrument for bringing this

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new revelation of Divine Love upon the earth remains absolutely silent on the subject? We read of the Redemption theory in the Pauline literature. But the story is there told by a writer who could not quote Jesus in support of his assertion. He bases his argument on the theory of the Fall of Adam. But the Fall was not referred to by Jesus himself, nor do we find any allusion to it in any Jewish scripture; it was invented to fit the Redemption stories of the heathen gods with which the pagan literature is teeming. The Christian passion story has recently been discovered to be the same passion story as that enacted in a popular mystic drama. There are two Babylonian tablets, says the *Quest*, appertaining to documents discovered by the German excavators in 1903-1904, at Kala Shar Gate, the site of the ancient Ashur. They belonged to a library at Ashur, which was founded in the ninth century B.C. The tablets disclosed astounding facts. The two stories, the story of Jesus and the story of Baal, are one and the same. It, therefore, not only deprives the Evangelical record of any claim to be genuine, but also represents them as a complete plagiarism. If the facts, which are necessary to establish this peculiar revelation of God's Love, are decidedly of heathen origin, with very little in the Bible to support them, and if the Biblical record is admittedly folk-lore, then the Dean of St. John's and his fraternity are talking of a thing which never happened in history. They, as I said before, start to theorize on an assumption of facts that lack proof.

Now I will look at the case psychologically. To make a virtue of necessity is a common thing, but to create a new logic to serve some necessity, and thus to make a departure from the established order of things in metaphysics, is only to abuse the laws of learning. Love and Power, for instance, should not be regarded as antithetical, the one to the other, as the Church has always tried to represent them when comparing Islam with Christianity. A Muslim theologian is not so ignorant as to commit this fallacy, especially when Love is only a substantive and principal quality, while Power is auxiliary in all its functions. If it be the function of Power to serve the ends of Love, how can they be opposed to each

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other? The love of justice induces us to defend the helpless and innocent against tyranny. The love of helping others incites us to generosity. The love of truth prompts us to expose a liar, a proceeding which often requires moral courage. All these manifestations of Love and its several other forms necessitate the possession of power by him who indulges in this noble passion. If we cannot understand the manifestation of Divine Love which is supposed to have occurred at Calvary, it is not only because it seems to indicate want of Power on the part of God, but also because it is inconsistent with our notions of Godhood. It is derogatory to Divine dignity, especially when we believe that God could fulfil His object—the deliverance of the wicked race—in some honourable way. But the Dean is of opinion that God's action of Calvary manifests His power of suffering and of sacrifice. No doubt it is a noble example of sacrifice to give one's life to save that of others; but sacrifice, in itself, comes into play when its maker has been left no other alternative. If he has more dignified means at his command for the working out of his design, and yet prefers to meet a despicable fate instead of having recourse to them, it would show a niggardly spirit rather than one of sacrifice. Sacrifice, in the last resort, means exhaustion, and the absence of any other means to save the situation. It is unbecoming and even blasphemous to think of such poverty of resource in the case of God. If He could save sinful humanity and regenerate them by other means, why should He stoop to such undignified methods, especially when the whole plan itself is going to fail in bringing true moral regeneration to mankind? It is interesting to note here that I do not find sacrifice in the list of the Qur-ānic names of God. It is, no doubt, a morality of the highest order, and the basis of various other high qualities, such as bravery, generosity, charity, and the like; but meritorious as it is in the case of man, it is not so in the case of God. If a man, who has, say, a thousand pounds, spends a hundred shillings in charity, it will not mean any great degree of sacrifice on his part. But it would be the highest sacrifice if a man who had ten pounds gave it all away in charity. The idea of parting with some-

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thing one's very own is a necessary constituent of the idea of sacrifice. If God gives us anything, He loses nothing. Sacrifice means loss. Therefore, it is improper to suppose that God Himself should possess the quality of sacrifice, though to create an example for others He may raise up some godly man for that purpose. Herein lies the difference between patience and sacrifice—a difference which is often overlooked by Church theologians. Divine government may suffer a breach of its laws, but the Moral Ruler loses nothing by it, so it is not His sacrifice but rather a species of device (if the word be permitted) for the furtherance of the Divine Plan. The sinner is not punished at the moment of his sin because he may yet repent, and for this reason God can most rightly be invested with the attribute of Patience, but not of Sacrifice, and so do we find it in the Qur-án.

To render the position tenable, the Church must needs resort to a queer sort of logic. It is argued that the grace of the Lord, which includes also the forgiveness of sin, cannot be granted without some compensation, and that a sinner cannot be forgiven until the penalty for his sins has been paid, which is also necessary if justice is to be done. This Church logic discloses a number of fallacies. It involves the assumption of the proposition that God cannot show His grace without a price being paid therefor. On the other hand, if He could do so there would be no necessity for any atonement, and the whole theory of atonement would fall to the ground. Church theology is purely dogmatic, and entirely unsupported by natural theology. All Nature gives the lie to it. Millions of things necessary for our life here on earth, as well as in the hereafter, were given to us without our deserving them. They were not given by way of compensation for any action of ours, seeing that they came into being millions of years before man was created. All things in heaven and earth are a necessity; we cannot live for a minute if one single component part (however slight) of the universe is eliminated, and all these existed before man's appearance on the scene. This, the Grace of God, was manifested without any demand for compensation from us. To allow an evil race to enjoy a life of bliss would

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be another instance of the Grace of God. If He, with all His knowledge of our coming misdeeds, had been gracious enough to give us the means of happiness without exacting therefor any price in this life, nothing could prevent Him from doing the same thing when we die. Why then assume a compromising position for our Lord, if the situation could have been saved without bringing Him to the indignity which He is supposed to have suffered at Calvary?

The Church, in this connection, would refer to the Divine sense of justice. The clergy would argue that the ends of justice demand punishment. But as the Love of God wanted to save humanity, justice became reconciled with His Love when He suffered His own death on the Cross. This, the half-Apostolic logic of Pauline literature, only betrays ignorance on the part of the clergy of the theory of criminal liability. A sense of justice must be respected in the judge when he has to decide between the rights of two parties—the wrong-doer and the sufferer. The judge must punish the culprit if he is to satisfy the demands of justice. But there is no occasion for this when the dispute lies between an offender and the judge himself. If the judge forgives an offender for his wrong to another person, without the consent of that person, it is sheer injustice. But if he forgives the sinner for a wrong against himself, it is no violation of justice but an act of true mercy. This is what is meant in the Lord's Prayer when Jesus said, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (St. Matt. vi. 12). Here he said nothing in any way unintelligible, but simply referred to common practice. If we forgive our debtors, we do so by remitting the debt. We never go through the farce of paying them something out of our own pocket and then asking them to return it to us by way of payment. Where is the necessity for such a novel method of "give and take" when by simply saying that we remit the debt we absolve the debtors from all liability. It may, perhaps, seem presumptuous on the part of Jesus to enlighten the Lord in this respect. Yet it is not so. The prayer seems to me to be a revealed one and the author of it—the Most High—inserted the sentence in order to warn the

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Church that was to come against belief in the theory that the Lord would not show His Mercy without price. The whole Church theory in this respect falls to the ground, since it is undoubtedly curious that Christian people should ask God, night and morning, to remit their sins without penalty, and yet entertain beliefs flatly contradicting the spirit of the prayer.

There is yet another thing to be considered. Belief in salvation by the Blood of Christ might be accepted as the specific means for regeneration, were it able to kill the disease of sin. Had our participation in the Eucharist transmuted the base metal in us, making us morally regenerated after eating the body and drinking the blood of the Lord, we should certainly have believed in it. But a churchgoer leaves the precincts of the church with the same sinful nature with which he entered it and partook of the Holy Meal. The Lord's Supper has indeed actually increased sin, instead of acting as a charm against it. Christianity is the only religion in the world which can boast of creating more criminals among its ministers or clergy than any other creed, and all this through the doctrine of Atonement which is given a new revelation under tasteful ecclesiastical trappings. The Rev. Mr. —, once incumbent of a well-known church in Lahore, India, pleaded his faith in the Atonement as his defence when charged with misconduct, he having been caught red-handed. But the subject is too painful for me to pursue. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

To return to the psychological aspect of the case, I would say again that Power and Love are in no sense antagonistic. Love, in itself, has its merits and demerits, and we cannot speak of it in a detached sense when speaking of God or use the term in its popular sense. Love, in its worse aspects, begets whoredom, fornication, and illegitimacy. The love of money is responsible for numberless crimes. Theft, cheating, misappropriation, forgery, are different manifestations of the evil wrought by an inordinate love of money. Avarice, cupidity, niggardliness come under the same category. Nevertheless, Love has also its beautiful phases—beneficence, benevolence, compassion, mercy, sympathy, fellow-feeling, devotion

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to the children—which come into existence when Love gets fair play within legitimate and desirable limits. How then can we speak lightly of Love and even of Power as Divine Attributes when they change in their quality according to circumstances? They, no doubt, are the strongest bulwarks of theology. When appearing in their highest form they belong to God. But before we say “God is Love,” we must be quite clear about the nature of the Love which we believe pertains to God. The Holy Qur-án, therefore, does not give us any derivative of the word “hubb” (the Arabic equivalent of the English word “love”) when speaking of the Divine Attributes, though the sacred list gives many names which include Love in its best and highest aspects. They refer to all that constitutes Love in its most desirable sense, ignoring all conceptions and phases of Love which tend to encourage inordinacy and evil, or are incompatible with Divine grandeur.

Before I deal with this part of the subject, it is necessary to establish a *criterion* whereby to test Love in its worthiest forms, for it is indeed a poor sort of logic that would attempt to prove its case by relying on statements or assumptions which our opponents do not admit as facts. It would be the fallacy of *petitio principii* over again. For example, to remove the slur cast by the story of the crucifixion on Divine Majesty, the Church at once speaks of a Divine Love which had to be revealed. But when the Church is asked for proof of the so-called Divine Love they refer us to the crucifixion of Jesus, and where can we find a worse example of the vicious circle? How can we accept the crucifixion of Jesus in proof of it, without believing in his divinity? It should be proved in itself, as every proposition should be, by independent evidence; otherwise we get back to our vicious circle again.

It is a matter for rejoicing that science has given us a most reliable method whereby to test the truth of the various theological concepts. God has come now within the scope of scientific research. His existence has been established; but this happy event has also shaken the foundations of all religions and theologies that did not derive their source from the Most High. Scientific observation has found its own theology,

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which may be named Natural Theology. We find Intellect, Design, Propriety, Precision, and Precaution in the working of Nature. We find that the Maker of Nature possesses Compassion, Liberality, Benevolence, Beneficence, Purity, and Justice. He appears as the Maker of laws, yet is Himself observant of His own Laws. He is jealous of His Laws and sometimes inexorable in punishing those who transgress them, but forgiveness and the remission of offence are also His Prerogative. There is no mediation with Him. His blessings are open to every living person. Lip-service is of no avail with Him, but they are amply rewarded who translate their belief into action. The Creator of Nature is our best Exemplar, and if we follow His ways we become successful in every walk of life. He is Bountiful, but there seems to be no sacrifice in this on His part, since He does not appear to be in the need of it. These and numberless other truths have been writ large on every page of Nature, which has been rightly styled, in the Qur-án, the Open Book of God. If we had been able to study and master it, as the Holy Qur-án urges us to do, there would have been no necessity for any revelation from on high. But history shows that man cannot interpret Nature's Book without Divine aid, and hence the necessity of Divine Revelation. The Book of Nature is, therefore, the most reliable criterion wherewith to test the respective claims of the various beliefs. These are not the days of miracles, and if there had been any Worker of Miracles, His work would have been set at naught by science, just as most of the miracles mentioned in ancient scriptures have been proved to be either folk-lore or performed through the knowledge of some secret of Nature unknown to the world at large at the time. The only means whereby a religion can prove its truth is the testimony that it may receive from Nature in its support, be it Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or any other creed. It cannot command any allegiance from intellectually advanced people if its verities are not confirmed by Nature. If this part of my treatise is agreeable to the Dean, he will at once discover why it is that a Muslim does not see his way to accept the Church tenets. There are many points of agreement between Christianity and Islam, but

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wherever there is a difference, Nature stands on the side of Islam. The Christian Catechism, therefore, needs amendment. It should try to establish the Church verities in the light of Nature, and then to approach Muslims; otherwise foreign Missions will continue, as hitherto, to meet with failure in Muslim countries. Similarly, let us refer the matter in dispute to the judgment of Natural Theology and see if there is even a tittle of evidence in the whole of Nature which exhibits the peculiar aspect of Love alleged to have been responsible for Calvary.

We may be mistaken in our reading of Nature, but we candidly admit that we find no proof whatever of the Church's theory of the working of God. The Muslim mind has been trained by the Qur-án to form its own unbiased opinion. The Holy Book appeals to Nature repeatedly in support of its tenets, and has established this principle for the thinking mind, that it must first perceive similarity between the work and the Word of God before accepting the latter, if it lays down any unintelligible doctrine. On these grounds of reasoning, we are unable to entertain the Church conception of Divine Love. To us, it is quite untenable. But we should be prepared to accept it if the Dean could discover any manifestation of Nature, whereby it might be corroborated. This leads me to yet another aspect of the subject. Let us see how the Love of God, in general, has been revealed. We find the following features to be noted in His Work. The Creator of Nature is also the Nourisher and Maintainer. Everything in creation finds means to satisfy its needs. He is not partial in this respect. So far, His Love may be compared with that of a father, but we find something else which is beyond the power of a father to show or even possess. God, of His special Love for His creatures, reposes wonderful and high capabilities in everything, then He brings it to perfection, arranging for its sustenance in every stage of its development. In modern scientific phraseology, He works on the principle of evolution, and for brevity's sake I would call Him the evolver of everything in Nature.

Jesus did not make a happy choice of the word when he

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called Jehovah the Father, though it suited the time, since the Jews regarded God as an inexorable punisher of sinners. The expression, however, was not only not comprehensive, but in some way defective. There are many fathers who, like those in the animal world, have no care for children, especially when they have passed the age of minority. Besides, conception of fatherly love by many children who lose their mothers while their fathers marry again is not a happy one. The second phase of His love is His provision for all His creatures of that which they need for their subsistence and development. This He has supplied of His own goodness and not as a reward for anything; indeed, the necessary means of sustenance were created by Him long before any necessity for them appeared. Thirdly, in order to infuse into us a spirit of activity and exertion He seems to reward any good action manifold; we sow a seed and reap a harvest. Fourthly, His love seeks to bring us to perfection—to bring all our faculties to their full and perfect fruition. He is so watchful that if He finds any of His creatures going astray and in danger of bringing the Divine scheme to nothing He adopts disciplinary measures for their correction. There is no revenge on His part. Whenever we break the laws He forgives us. He allows us to mend our ways, but when His further forgiveness would increase stubbornness in us He adopts harsh measures, popularly termed punishment, for His creature's good. But His punishment is only His Love displayed in a harsh form. It comes to us for our own benefit, like the punishment an earthly father would mete out to the child he loves, and it is very wholesome in its effects.

These four aspects of Love are clearly visible in Nature, and I think that the Dean will agree to them, with the exception of the fourth, and that because it does not tally with his belief in the sacrifice at Calvary. He should be pleased to know that the Qur-án opens with four Attributes of God which literally signify the four aspects of Love which I have shown working in Nature, for the revealed theology in the Qur-án faithfully corresponds with Natural Theology. On further study of the Qur-án, he would find that the four

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said Attributes of God have rightly been styled by Islam the mother of all other Attributes given in the Book. The remaining ninety-six of the Holy Names of God are only illustrative of these four Names—Rabb, Rahmān, Rahīm, and Malik-i-Yaumiddin. Can the Dean discover any trace of the conception which he thinks Islam entertains concerning God in these Attributes? They sum up the whole Muslim conception of Godhood. They are all different forms of Love, and the noblest forms too. There is no sign of harshness in the first three. But even the harshness which is alluded to in the fourth Attribute has Love for its motive—that is to say, it corrects us when no other alternative is left. In this connection the doctrine of repentance as set forth in the Qur-ān (vii. 156) may be referred to with advantage. It is clearly laid down in the Book that the mercy of God encompasses everything, and that no sooner does a sinner return to God than he is received into the merciful arms of the Most Compassionate. The Qur-ānic word for “repentance” is “tauba,” which literally means “returning” or “coming back.” God has, also, in this respect, been named “At-Tawwāb”—“The Oft-Returner.” This word usually takes Ar-Rahīm as its adjective, which conveys the idea that God is oft-returning with mercy and returns to him who forsakes a life of inordinancy. The prophet says that if such a one comes to God, a yard only, God will come to him a hundred. When the prodigal son, after wasting all his substance, returns to the Heavenly Father, He comes to welcome him a hundred times. The Dean will see in the parable of Jesus only an illustration of the Qur-ānic Divine Attribute “Tawwābu ’r-Rahīm,” i.e. “He Who often returns to His Mercy.” The disciples of Jesus were mostly ignorant men, who could not understand ideas in the abstract, and the Master, at their request, had to explain to them religious truth by means of parables. They were unable to appreciate this Qur-ānic conception of God, therefore Jesus explained it to them in the parable of the prodigal son. But unfortunately the Gentle Philosopher of Nazareth would find another difficulty in the ranks of present-day Christians, though some of them are eminent scholars. They force an

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interpretation of the parable which he never meant. Had the Master related that the father of the prodigal son went in search of him and found him given to all kinds of wickedness, and unwilling to leave his evil courses, and still the father pampered his sinful disposition by showing mercy, the parable would have been applicable to the Church doctrine of the Atonement. But such is not the case, because when the son "came to himself," he said: "I will arise and go to my Father and will say unto Him, Father, I have *sinned against heaven, and before thee*, And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants" (St. Luke xv. 17-19). These sentiments of the prodigal son are exactly the words of repentance which Islam would propose for every sinner; and the All-Knowing Father would come forward to receive him. How this parable has been twisted to substantiate the principle of Atonement is something that I cannot understand. This same aspect of the Divine Mercy has been beautifully expressed by a Persian poet in the following lines, when he speaks on behalf of God:—

Return, O Sinner, from the ways
Thou trodest in thine evil days.
It matters not how thou didst err—
As infidel or winebibber—
My Court, know thou in thy distress,
Is not a Court of Hopelessness.
Return—nor heed how oft, in vain,
Thou didst repent—to sin again!

Hawk of Justice and Hawk of Grace
In search of prey they ran a race;
They spied on the wing a bird of sin,
They circled o'er him in noise and din.
But the Hawk of Grace did the swifter fly
And swooped on the bird with a pleading cry:
"Repent, repent thou Sinful One,
For know thy Lord will nowise shun
To pay the price of sin indeed.
Repent, and to His grace give heed!" †

Thus the Muslim God invites every sinner to His Mercy if he promises to be faithful to Him. But His Mercy does not, in the ordinary way, go to one who never cares to be faithful to

† English rendering of a Persian poem.

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Him again but remains obstinate in his evil ways. Herein lies the difference between the Muslim conception of God's mercy and the Christian conception of Atonement. Whatever sentimentality or prejudice may assert, Nature is the true umpire. It supports the Qur-ānic description of God and contradicts what is taught by the Church to explain its story of the Atonement. I would also suggest that our belief in God as "Rahmān"—His second Attribute—debars us from belief in the Atonement, seeing that we do *not* find that God is incapable of showing mercy without some *quid pro quo*. He can remit sins without exacting any punishment, but if He does punish, under His fourth Attribute, it is simply for our correction, and even then we are told that He will, in the long run, forgive sinners by remitting their punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad has given us these good tidings that, in the end, God, out of His goodness, which loves to work without reward, will forgive even the evildoers of the most hopeless type. Here we find something far superior to the so-called Love of God as conceived by the Church. To sum up, the God of Islam often forgives the sinner. If He punishes, it is by way of chastisement for our correction, but in the end He will forgive all even without punishment. He will have no need to suffer crucifixion, for forgiving our sins. He will, and can, achieve His object without it. It is in this sense of the word, as I shall show later, that our God is Omnipotent.

It is clear that no conception of God can be complete, unless it includes belief both in His Omnipotence and Omniscience. An Infinite Being cannot come within finite conception; therefore God is transcendental. He is neither *knowable* nor *definable*. But still we are capable of forming some idea of things infinite. We know nothing of the Divine Essence, but we can conceive of some of His Attributes—Attributes that are observable as working in Nature. All morality in Islam is a shadow of Divine Morals. If we follow Him humbly all will be well with us. Again, if we have been fashioned after the image of the Lord we must be capable of conceiving, as well as imitating, some of God's ways which I have summed up in

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the words—the whole of Islam. The faith on its objective side is this, that we shall steep ourselves in the colours of God.¹ For this reason the Holy Book has given God some hundred names. The list is not exhaustive, but it mentions some of His qualities which come within the range of our conception and imitation. Nothing in itself is wrong. Good and evil are relative terms. Occasion and the use of things make them good or bad. For example, autocracy, or a brutal exhibition of force on our part, is an evil expression of Power, but when Power is used to execute justice or to crush evil it is altogether beneficent. Such, too, is the case with every concept that can be entertained concerning God. Every word that can be used to express any Attribute of God may also convey an evil aspect of that Attribute. To keep us on our guard, the Qur-án says that God possesses Excellent Names²—meaning that the names which the Holy Book has used as expressing the various Attributes of God should be taken in their best sense. Under these circumstances, how can we give such a connotation to these words as will convey their evil side? The word “Power,” therefore, when used as an Attribute of God cannot be taken as signifying autocracy or brute force.

Besides knowledge and power, the Divine Will is also one of the chief themes of the Qur-án. It subdues the will of all created things to Itself. We believe it to be so, but it would be absurd for our critics to suppose that we believe in our God as a self-made entity or as one arbitrary in His ways. Muslim theologians have made use of another precaution in this respect. They use “Al,” the Arabic article, before every such name. “Qādir” and “Qadīr,” in the Arabic language, mean “powerful” and “mighty.” But when we say or write Al-Qādir we at once mean God, and the words exclude all such connotations as are not of the loftiest. Even the Dean of Hong Kong was compelled to take a similar precaution when he spoke of Love as the Attribute of God. He knew that there were various wrong and wanton forms of what is called Love. Lust, for instance, is Love in its crudest shape. Now we do not find such precaution in any scripture other

¹ Holy Qur-án, ii. 138.

² Ibid., lix. 24.

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than the Qur-án. But the best of all these precautions we find in the choice of the words used in the Book about God. These in themselves negate any idea of evil, and I will give all the Holy Names used in the Holy Qur-án to signify Power. They are nine in number and are as follows:—

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| (1) " Al-'Azīz " | (4) " Al-Qawīyy " | (7) " Al-Qadīr " |
| (2) " Al-Jabbār " | (5) " Al-Qādir " | (8) " Al-Jalīl " |
| (3) " Al-Qahhār " | (6) " Al-Muqtadir " | (9) " Al-Majīd " |

They all mean " powerful," but imply different forms of Power. " Al-'Azīz " means Mighty, Potent, Powerful and Strong in its absolute sense. But it is opposed to everything that is low or mean. It also signifies noble, honourable, glorious, or illustrious. Though it has the sense of " He Who is invincible," nevertheless, wisdom and knowledge are the necessary adjuncts of the word. How could Al-'Azīz be autocratic or brutal if His ways are necessary to be noble and honourable? " Al-Jabbār " and " Al-Qahhār " signify the power and influence which bring others under His subjection and makes them subservient to His Will; but this pre-eminence should be accompanied by firmness and justice. It must help the subordinate to bring out all that is best in him. The subordinate may, for example, be compared to blind force and energy, but " Al-Jabbār " and " Al-Qahhār " should guide it into a proper channel. The Dean referred perhaps to these Attributes when he tried to find fault with the Muslim conception of the Divine Will. God is unworthy of such a title if His Will does not bring the will of others into subjection. But when this takes place in order to set the misguided will on the right way, then it is the best use of the said will. " Al-Qawīyy " is He Who possesses both physical and spiritual strength in the highest degree and uses them for the good of others. " Al-Muqtadir " refers to such power as enables its possessor to face life's hardships and succeed in any enterprise which demands ability, perseverance, and courage. He encounters and surmounts all the difficulties that may arise in the performance of great deeds. " Al-Qādir " refers to a man's high achievements in wisdom and knowledge which he uses

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with power enough to overcome all opposition. "Al-Jalīl" implies such works of power performed by us as induce others to praise and glorify us. More especially does it refer to that kind of power which excites the wonder and surprise of others. "Al-Majīd" also means "power," but it makes generosity and liberality of mind a special feature of the man. He is *Majīd* whose work is profitable to others.

Not only does the Qur-ān make use of these words on the occasions I have mentioned, but reliable Arabic lexicons also give these various shades of meaning attached to them, though all mean "powerful," "potent," and "mighty." Let the Dean meditate on these meanings and he cannot but admire the different manifestations of Power to which they point. He will find in them the most valuable assets of our character if we can but acquire them. Many a time have I felt surprised at the ignorance which Christian writers evince on the subject of Islam. I would excuse all writers like the Dean whose knowledge is only second-hand. But what are we to say of those in the Christian camp who pose as Arabic scholars, some of them indeed occupying chairs of Arabic in Western universities? I do not know how to distinguish between mischief and ignorance when such blunders emanate from gentlemen of this kidney. Either they know very little of Arabic and, therefore, are not entitled to hold their learned positions, or they are intentionally guilty of literary indecency.

Some six years ago, when I wrote *The Ideal Prophet*, I referred in its Introduction to such objectionable doings on the part of certain University Professors of Arabic. I pointed out what I may call their literary blackguardism. They have read my book, but they must have appreciated my remarks because they evidently thought that silence was more prudent than a reply. But let the Dean consult Lane-Poole, for example, as to the meaning of the words I have given above. These Holy Names are undoubtedly most excellent Names. They furnish us with the best illustration of the Power which it is our aim to possess and use, and they preclude all misuse of force.

I need say little more on the subject beyond a few remarks on the question of Love, seeing that it is wrongly alleged that

CORRESPONDENCE

Islam has none of the higher Ideals of Love. I have already observed that the Holy Qur-án did not use "hubb" as the Arabic equivalent for the word "love" or any of its derivatives concerning God, because Love, as such, has various objectionable aspects which are unbecoming to an honourable gentleman, to say nothing of God. The Qur-án, speaking about God, refers to such manifestations of Love as assume different forms of goodness, mercy, and compassion as alluded to above. I need not repeat them here, but I wish to state emphatically that no other form of Love can come up to this Muslim conception of the Divine Love. The Qur-án, however, speaks of God as "Al-Wadūd," which means He Who affectionately loves others and Whose love exceeds others in its intensity. The word "Wadūd" does not convey any lustful or loose idea, more especially when it is used about God.

CORRESPONDENCE

FLINTS, N.W.
Sept. 4, 1931.

TO THE OFFICIATING PRIEST [Imām—Ed. I.R.]
Mohammedan Mosque,
Woking.

DEAR SIR,

It has been in my mind for several years now to adopt the Mohammedan faith, to which, in belief, I much more nearly approximate than to any other confession.

Born of Protestant stock I find myself at sixty entirely out of sympathy with the ideals of its varied sects and contradictory dogmas.

I am a small farmer in North Wales.

Formerly my family were tenants of the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, and I hope this latter fact will, in some measure, serve as a sufficient explanation of my changed religious views.

I am familiar with the teachings of the Qur-án.

Will you kindly inform me as to what course I ought to pursue with a view to being finally received within the pale of the Muslim Church? Can you tell me, for instance, if there is any Muslim centre in Liverpool or Manchester—cities not very distant from this village?

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I am only a recent settler in Wales. My employment, tying me severely to the locality, prevents my taking long journeys or being long absent from home.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early reply,

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

HENRY SANDBACH.

WOKING,

September 11, 1931.

THE IMĀM,

The Mosque, Woking.

DEAR SIR,

A few weeks ago whilst searching the shelves of the local public library I came across a "little green book" called the *Islamic Review*. Being curious, I read the contents, little thinking at the time that the "little green book" was to alter the whole course of my life.

As I read the book I was conscious of a new life—something which seemed to open the future for me; I began to see life from a wholly different angle.

After a few weeks of careful study I could compare the Holy Qur-án with the Bible. It was obvious that I should follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. My conscience demands that I should follow him.

The sincerity and simplicity of his religion appeals to me, and to ease my conscience I must and will follow the Prophet Muhammad.

There are no mysteries in his teachings, every little thing is explained to us in a clear manner. I earnestly hope and pray that when I go back to my people in Wales, Allah (all praise is due to Him) may use me as an instrument in His hands to open their eyes and lift them up from the darkness in which they are sunk. Let me pray in the meantime that Allah may forgive those who have misguided these people.

Your Brother in Islam,

D. H. JONES.

TEMPLETON,

MASS., U.S.A.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your kind letter and pamphlets which I gave my friends here to read and they helped largely to correct their false notions about Islam.

CORRESPONDENCE

To tell you a little about myself. I am a French citizen brought up in the Roman Catholic way and am thirty years old; have been resident in this country since 1925. I have tried various occupations, which being mostly unsuccessful, financially, have left me, under Divine guidance, with a free mind to study different philosophies—from economic systems to Buddhism, Christianity, New Thought, and so on. And I must say that I am thankful to your valuable magazine, which I have been reading at the public library in New York City, to have enlightened me on different questions concerning the teachings of the last of the Prophets. I feel I am doing only justice in trying to have the God-inspired Prophet Muhammad recognized by people who have been kept entirely ignorant of his mission.

If God permits, I hope one day to go to the land of the Prophet and make a deeper study of Islam and its original language. . . .

Hoping you will forgive my wasting your valuable time,

I am, respectfully yours,

MAURICE LE CAGNEUR.

"YUEH HWA MAGAZINE,"

THE GRAND MOSQUE,

TUNG TZE PAI LAO,

PEOING, CHINA.

April 14, 1931.

ISLAM IN CHINA

DEAR BROTHER IN FAITH,

Your letter has been duly received. We are too humble to deserve your words of praise, but at the same time consider it a great honour to be called upon to join hands with external brothers in the cause of our Holy Islam. In response to the request in your letter, we have the pleasure of writing a few lines about the social and religious conditions of the Chinese Muslims. In China, it being one of the most important Muslim-inhabited countries, you can meet with Muslims and see Mosques everywhere. Islam has a long history in China.

Generally speaking, Chinese Muslims are able to earn their livelihood and send their sons or daughters to school. Numerous Islamic primary schools have been established. A number of magazines, too, have appeared in Chinese; lately, especially within the last thirty years, Chinese Muslims have made great progress and they, at present, have only one idea, viz. to make Islam prosperous in China. There is an organization which is specially meant for this purpose. This organization is called "Cheng Ta, Islamic Normal School," and is the central association of Muslims in the North of China. The president of the society is Ma Sung Ting, who is a very pious young man thirty years old. This gentleman devotes

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all his energy to the cause of the furtherance of Islam, at the expense of his personal affairs. Even our magazine gets a great help from this zealous Muslim. There are similar societies in Shanghai and Wan Hsien.

We are anxious to read and publish translations of books or magazines published by the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust. Kindly send us your *Islamic Review* regularly.

Yours truly,
CHAO TSIN,
Editor.

NOTICE OF BOOKS

Informations Musulmanes. (51, Boulevard Beausejour, Paris.)

Her Highness Dayang Muda of Sarawak realizing the need for an absolutely independent organ of Muslim information, not only in the Muslim world itself but also in Europe and the Western world, has started a journal entitled *Informations Musulmanes* (annual subscription in France, 96 francs; foreign, 12 shillings). We have its two first issues before us. The journal attempts to give a clear and accurate information to those who are interested in Muslim problems of the Orient as a whole, and is determined to reserve to itself the part of impartial reporter of events in the Muslim world. Provisionally, it is proposed to publish it only once a month and in the French language. Those interested in Eastern affairs will find this journal very useful.

There does exist a monthly on parallel lines, under the title of *Oriente Moderno*, in the Italian language. Appearance of yet another in another European language does emphasize the imminent importance of the Muslim countries, and is a welcome sign of the times.

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