

Vol. IV.

No. 8.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

AUGUST 1905.

Digitized by Khilafat Library

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
SLAVERY	279
1. PRE-ISLAMIC SLAVERY	279
2. TREATMENT OF SLAVES IN ISLAM	285
SELL ON ISLAM, II	297
REVIEW	311
DECAY OF FAITH IN MORALS	311
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA	317
PREDICTION OF EARTHQUAKES	320

QADIAN,
DISTRICT GURDASPUR, PUNJAB, INDIA.

Annual Subscription ... Rs. 4. | Single Copy As. 6.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS.

VOL. IV.)

AUGUST 1905.

(No. 8.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Slavery.

I. PRE-ISLAMIC SLAVERY.

Slavery has been condemned so often and so unconditionally that a writer, who must look at things with a calm and dispassionate mind and condemn every evil though it wears the garb of a virtue and praise every virtue though it is generally denounced as an evil, may be excused for saying at the very commencement of such a subject that slavery has been a necessity in the evolution of mankind and that society in certain stages of its growth and under certain circumstances was not only justified, but even bound to have recourse to it. There are many institutions still prevailing in the world which create a just horror in the mind, but which have to be tolerated for other ends. Not a tear comes to the eye of an exultant victor when he sinks ten thousand men in the bottom of the sea or bombards a town with thousands of innocent women and children in it, but it is not always just to denounce him as a hard-hearted tyrant for the terrible loss which he thus inflicts on humanity. Why is it then that men who shudder at the cold-blooded murder of a single individual are not horrified, nay, are sometimes pleased, when they see hundreds of thousands of their enemies falling down under their own fire? This is because war has ever been a necessity of life and it is so to this day.

As we go back into the history of mankind, we find war filling an important place, more important perhaps than it does now, in the organization of human society. Slavery was a necessary condition of war, and was in fact an immense improvement on the more ancient usage according to which the captives were put to death. "But it is

not so well understood," says a Christian writer in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "that slavery discharged important offices in the later social evolution—first, by enabling military action to prevail with the degree of intensity and continuity requisite for the system of incorporation by conquest which was its final destination ; and, secondly, by forcing the captives, who with their descendants came to form the majority of the population in the conquering community, to an industrial life, in spite of the antipathy to regular and sustained labour which is deeply rooted in human nature, especially in the earlier stages of the social movement, when insouciance is so common a trait and irresponsibility is hailed as a welcome relief. With respect to the latter consideration, it is enough to say that nowhere has productive industry developed itself in the form of voluntary effort ; in every country of which we have any knowledge, it was imposed by the strong upon the weak, and was wrought into the habits of the people only by the stern discipline of constraint. From the former point of view the freeman, then essentially a warrior, and the slave were mutual auxiliaries, simultaneously exercising different and complementary functions—each necessary to the maintenance and furthering the activity of the other, and thus co-operating, without competition or conflict towards a common public end."

The gradual substitution of slavery for murder of the captives is well illustrated in Israelite law and practice. In Ex. 22 : 20, it is said that "he that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." So in Deut. 13 : 12-18 where concerning an idolatrous city the commandment is given that "thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it in the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof, every whit for the Lord thy God : and it shall be an heap for ever ; it shall not be built again." Again in Deut. 20 : 16-17, "But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them ; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites." These commandments are further related to have been

carried into execution in practice. In Nu. 21-3, we read that when the Canaanites were vanquished, the Israelites "utterly destroyed them and their cities." So also in Judg. 1: 17: "And Judah went with Simeon, his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it." For other instances of such general slaughter of the enemy, see Judg. 21: 10-12, where the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead are all described to have been smitten "with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children"; Josh. 6: 24, where the Israelites are stated to have "burnt the city (Jericho) with fire; and all that was therein"; 1 S. 15: 3, where they are commanded to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass;" and 1 Ch. 4: 41, where the children of Ham are said to have been destroyed. This furnishes good reading for the Christian Missionaries who blame Islam for having taken up the sword in self-defence. But captives of war also began to be taken as slaves in Israelite law so that being spared, they did service for their masters, and this was no doubt an improvement upon the old institution. The usual practice seems to have been, however, that the men were put to death while the women and children were reduced to slavery. (See Deut. 20: 10-14). Among the Israelites, however, war, which can be easily seen to be a justifiable source of slavery, was not the only source. They bought slaves in foreign markets, and the neighbourhood of Phoenicians who were notorious as slave-dealers probably afforded them greater facility in such transactions.

The position of slaves among the Israelites was not, however, very unsatisfactory. The slave has generally been looked upon among the Semites as a member of the family and hence the master's kind treatment towards him. In this respect the position of the slave among all Semite people was far above his position among other people. The master's right in the slave was no doubt unlimited, but he was not entitled to kill him. But an exception was here made in the master's favour, *viz.*, if in chastising the slave, the master inflicted upon him such severe injury of which the slave died, he was exempted from punishment if an interval of at least a day elapsed between the death and the maltreatment. The loss of the slave was in such a case deemed a sufficient penalty. (Ex. 21: 20, 21). If a freeman killed

another man's slave or brought about his death, he was required only to pay a compensation of 30 shekels. (Ex. 21: 32). The position of Israelite slaves was far more satisfactory than that of the non-Israelites. The latter remained slaves all their lives while the former had a legal right to manumission after six years without paying anything. (Ex 1: 2). The Hebrew female slave could not be married to a non-Israelite slave, but was taken either by the master or by his son. When the Hebrew slave was made free after six years, the master was required not to send him away empty, but to give him a liberal present from his flock and other property. (Deut. 15: 13, 14). But the foreign slave did not enjoy any of these benefits. His lot was harder. But he was admitted to the family worship: in fact he was not allowed to worship after his own fashion. This circumstance, however, rendered the condition of the alien slave better, for the brotherhood in faith made the master more lenient and kind.

I will add a few words about the existence of the institution of slavery in Greece and Rome. Besides capture in war, there were many other sources of slavery in Greece. Even free parents sold their children who thus became slaves. Besides these there were other slaves on the market for sale. Slaves were made even by piracy and kidnapping. The number of slaves in the great Greek centres of civilization was enormous. There are said to have been 400,000 slaves at Athens with a population of 21,000 free citizens. Corinth is said to have possessed at this period 460,000 slaves and Ægina 470,000. These figures have been considered by some critics to be excessive, but there is no doubt that the number of slaves was very large, and the smallest supposition gives the ratio of slaves to free native population as 3 to 1.

Among the Romans the first slaves no doubt came through war. But with the increase of wealth there was an increased demand for slave labour, and this was supplied partly by an increase in the number of captives made in war and partly by resorting to slave trade. The following information is taken from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "In Epirus, after the victories of Æmilius Paulus, 150,000 captives were sold. The prisoners at Aquae Sextiae and Vercellae were 90,000 Teutons and 60,000 Cimbri. Caesar sold on a single occasion in Gaul 63,000 captives. Augustus made 44,000 prisoners in the country of

Salassi ; after immense numbers had perished by famine and hardships and in the combats of the Arena, 97,000 slaves were acquired by the Jewish war." The ratio of the free population to slaves in Italy between 146 B. C. and 235 A. D. was one to three, their respective numbers being about 6,944,000 and 20,832,000. The wealthier Romans possessed large armies of slaves. A freedman of the time of Augustus left as many as 4,116 slaves by his will. Extensive slave trade seems thus to have been carried on both in Greece and Italy.

The condition of slaves in Greece was better than in Rome. But even in Greece, with the exception of domestic slaves, their lot was far from being hard. "The agricultural labourers were not unfrequently chained, and treated much in the same way as beasts of burden." The evidence of slaves, men as well as women, was taken by torture. Mutilation or serious injury to the slave entitled the master, and not the slave, to compensation. By the Roman law the master had absolute authority over the slave, and could even put him to death at his will. As the number of slaves increased, and superintendence by the master over their work became more difficult, the practice was introduced of chaining the slaves during working hours. Even the porter at the gate was chained. Examples of good and kind treatment were not wanting, but the general condition of the slaves was degraded and unhappy. "The lighter punishments inflicted by masters were commonly personal chastisement or banishment from the town house to rural labour ; the severer were employment in the mill or relegation to the mines or quarries. To the mines speculators also sent slaves ; they worked half-naked, men and women, in chains under the lash and guarded by soldiers. Vedius Pollio, in the time of Augustus, was said to have thrown his slaves, condemned sometimes for trivial mistakes or even accidents, to the lampreys in his fishpond."

It was in the Roman Empire that Christianity arose and it was here that it could have effected any betterment in the condition of slaves. When Jesus Christ preached, the condition of slaves was no doubt the worst, yet we do not find a single word in his utterances enjoining, if nothing more, better treatment towards the slaves. He did not say a single word, at least nothing is recorded, against the cruelties and tortures inflicted on this helpless class. It is surprising

to find such a learned writer as the late Sir William Muir blaming the Holy Prophet Muhammad for not abolishing slavery at once, when he knows that the founder of Christianity never raised his voice even against the cruel treatment of slaves and the disgraceful traffic in slaves which was prevalent in his day. This serious omission on the part of Jesus Christ made Christianity as a religion quite indifferent to the severe tortures and degraded position of the enormous slave population. In fact, the only good influence on the institution of slavery claimed for Christianity is that it proclaimed the brotherhood of man, but this is only an assertion. The brotherhood of man was not specially proclaimed by Christianity. It was a doctrine taught by all the holy prophets of God. As regards the gradual improvement in the position of slaves in the Roman empire, it was in no way due to the influence of Christianity. The reform had begun before Christianity became a dominant religion in the Roman empire. As early as the second century the law had begun to exercise its influence in favour of liberty. The practices of the exposure and sale of children were forbidden. Kidnapping which was another source of slavery was punished with death. The power of life and death was taken away from the master by Hadrian who succeeded to the throne in 117 A. D. Emperor Nero (54 to 68 A. D.) had long before ordered the courts to receive the slaves' complaint of ill-treatment. These modifications came independent of the influence of Christianity which was as yet struggling for its own existence. In fact, Christianity, instead of exercising any wholesome influence on pagan customs was itself influenced by the pagan usages with which it came into contact. Its fundamental principles are many of them taken from the pagans. The reform which had begun before the dominance of Christianity was even hampered in its onward progress by the Christian emperors. This retrogression can be easily discovered in Constantine's removing the prohibition of the sale of children. It is asserted that certain harsh features of the institution of slavery were softened by Christianity, but the fact is as I have shown above that the reform had begun long before the influence of Christianity was felt in the Roman world, and this reform should naturally have gone on when Christianity became a dominant element, without receiving any impetus from that religion. As to the indirect influence of its preaching the brotherhood of man, I do not see any force in this assertion. The equality preached by

Christianity has always been an empty word. Here is a Christian's testimony: "The brotherhood in the faith in Islam now, as in Israel of old, is not, as unfortunately it has come to be in the Christian world, a mere empty phrase, but a very real force." (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, column 4658). How can we say that the harshness in the institution of slavery was softened by Christianity when we find the horrors of the amphitheatre prevailing under the Christian emperors of Rome so late as the time of Justinian?

From the condition of slavery as sanctioned by two great religions, Judaism and Christianity, and two great civilized nations of antiquity, the Greeks and the Romans, it is clear that the evil effect of this institution which served a useful purpose in one direction was lamentable and profoundly detrimental in another. The slaves were generally kept ignorant, treated with cruelty and looked upon as made only to do menial service and never to partake in the dignity of their masters. Absolute authority over the person of the slave, on the other hand, made the master a petty tyrant and he treated the slave more like a beast than a human being. The influence of slavery was, therefore, most harmful from a moral and social point of view, and the most important reform needed in this institution was that relating to the relations of the master and the slave. The Jewish law had no doubt many softened features, but as a whole slavery among all these nations had a hardening effect upon the morals of the master and a degrading effect upon the position of the slave. The Christian religion with all its later pretensions did not do anything to remedy these evils. Before describing the other reforms introduced by the holy religion of Islam in the institution of slavery, and the extent to which it abolished slavery, I will say something about the treatment of slaves enjoined by the Holy Prophet. The reader will thus see the mighty reform introduced by Islam in the relations of the master and the slave, a reform which practically abolished all the evils of slavery and while tolerating it for certain objects and ends to a very limited extent put an end to the abuse of this institution.

2. Treatment of Slaves in Islam.

It is a fact that among the Muslims a master's relation with his

slave is far better than a master's relation with his servant in the West. Rank and riches have always proudly looked down upon the poorer and humbler classes and perhaps nowhere with greater contempt than in the civilized West which claims to have got rid of slavery. Indeed it is the servant now whom the *sahib* has to deal with and not the slave, but with this change in name, a change in treatment is not observed. The native servant is looked upon as worse than a beast by the civilized European and treated with the same harshness as a slave was treated by his Roman master. Hardly a summer passes when we do not hear of a poor *pankha* coolie being beaten to death by a *sahib* for the simple offence that the unfortunate fellow was nodding at the time. Is it not equivalent to the Roman's right of life and death over his slave which is condemned in such strong words? As to kicking and abusing, they are daily done. The civilized Europeans should not feel proud of having abolished slavery so long as their treatment of their subordinates and servants is not more humane.

If the chief object in the abolition of slavery should be the lessening of the horrors and cruelties exercised by the master in exacting service from his fellow-beings and to raise the class employed in menial service from its position of degradation, I assert that Europe has not succeeded in the attainment of that object, while Islam achieved it 1,300 years ago. Is it not true that every European considers his menial subordinates, especially when they are foreigners, more or less as savages? What difference does it make if he calls them his servants and not his slaves when the treatment they receive is no better than that of a Roman master to his slaves? Europe, I repeat, is far behind Islam in its realization of the true relations between the master and the servant. The degradation which attached to the position of a slave in ancient times and more recently among the civilized Christian colonists, and which attaches still to the position of all subordinates and the poorer classes, was dissociated from slavery by Islam, not only in theory, but also in practice. With the advent of Islam the relations of a master with his servant or slave, so far as slaves were retained, became those of a brother with a brother. The master shared in his slave's humble services while the slave participated in his master's dignity. This

was true not only of masters in the humbler ranks of society, but even of the highest dignitaries in the land.

I will consider first the teaching of the Holy Quran with regard to the treatment of slaves. It says: *واعبدوا الله ولا تشركوا به شيئا وبالوالدين احسانا وبذی القربی والیتامی والمساکین والجار ذی القربی والجار لجنب والما حب بالجنب وابن السبیل وما مملکت ایما نکم ان الله لا یحب من کان مغتبرا لا فخر را [النساء 34]* i.e., "And be true and faithful servants of God, and join not aught with Him in worship; and be good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans, and to the poor and to a neighbour who is a near kinsman, and to a neighbour who is not a relative, and to a companion, and to the wayfarer, and to those whom your right hands hold: verily, God loves not him who does not care for others' rights and who looks proudly down upon others." (IV: 39). In this verse the commandment of doing good to men, among which the slaves are particularly mentioned, is mentioned along with the commandment to worship God faithfully. By giving both injunctions in the same breath, it is indicated that the former is no less important than the latter. The whole law is in fact broadly divided into two parts by the Holy Quran, *viz.*, worshipping God without joining aught with Him, and doing good to His creatures, and the law is as incomplete without the one as without the other. In the latter commandment some classes of men are particularly mentioned as those whom a man should treat with the utmost kindness and do good to so far as it lies in his power, and the slaves are among those specially mentioned. Thus while the Gospels fail to say a single word in favour of kind treatment of slaves, the Holy Quran enjoins in forcible words and gives it the same importance as it gives to Divine worship and kindness to parents, deeds whose faithful observance is an essential condition for being a true Muslim. Hugh admits in his Dictionary of Islam: "It has been already shown that both according to the teaching of the Quran and also according to the injunctions of Muhammad, as given in the traditions, kindness to slaves is strictly enjoined." It should be noticed that the Holy Quran uses the phrase *ما مملکت ایما نکم* "Those whom your right hands possess" as a description of "slaves," thus indicating that except the

captives of war or their offspring, no one can be a slave. This is mentioned only by the way, and the subject of the sources of slavery will be discussed later on. In the concluding words of the verse quoted above, there is again an injunction that those in a lower position should not be looked down upon, for the proud, says the verse, are hated by God.

The universal brotherhood established by Islam was another potent factor in softening the harshness formerly used in treating slaves. Marriages between free women and slaves and between free men and female slaves were allowed (iv : 29). A Muslim slave girl was to be preferred in marriage to a free woman who was an idol-worshipper, and similarly a Muslim slave was to be preferred to an unbelieving free man in contracting marriage relationships (ii : 220). Again, slaves were to be freed on various occasions as a propitiation for certain transgressions and this fact impressed upon the Muslims the meritoriousness of doing good to a slave in any form, for a deed could not be an atonement for a sin unless it was inherently righteous. If a slave girl was married to a free man, and she was guilty of an indecency, she was treated more leniently than a free woman (iv : 30). The marriages of slaves were enjoined : *وَاَنْكَحُوا اِلَا يَامِي مِنْكُمْ* *وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَامَاءِكُمْ اَنْ يَكُونُوا فَقْرًا يَغْنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ* (النور ٣٤) "And marry those among you who have no husbands, and your good servants and your hand maidens. If they are poor, God of His bounty will enrich them." The evils prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia were all abolished. Among these was the evil custom of making slave girls act as prostitutes in order to profit by their earnings of prostitution which the Holy Quran strictly prohibited (24: 33).

The first thing to be seen about these precepts of the Holy Quran is how they were regarded by the Holy Prophet himself, by his companions and by the early Muslim society in general. And first as regards the Holy Prophet himself. So strongly did he enjoin kindness to slaves and servants that in contrast with the injunctions laid down in the traditions no one else can be said to have preached the universal brotherhood of man and kind treatment of slaves or servants. The following words of the Holy Prophet are recorded in Bukharee, the most authentic work on traditions : *اِنْ اَخَا نَكُمْ خَوْلَكُمْ جَعَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ*

تحت ايد يكم فمن كان اخوه تحت يده فليطعمه مما ياكل وليلبسه مما يلبس
 Verily your brethren are your slaves; God has placed them under you: whoever then has his brother under him, he should feed him with food of which he eats, and clothe him with such clothing as he wears. And do not impose upon them a duty which it is beyond their power to perform, or if you command them to do what they are unable to do, then assist them in that affair." This principle of brotherhood between master and slave, a principle not limited to the domain of theory, but which must be actually carried out in practice by making the slave a partaker in the master's food and clothing, this perfect equality, is not met with in the teachings of any other founder of a religion or any philanthropist. The Holy Prophet in fact made the position of the slave enviable when he said that had it not been for such and such a thing, "I would have loved to live and die a slave." The slave was not a dumb worker for his master, but his honest and faithful counsellor as well. قال اذ انصح العبد سيده
 The holy Prophet said, "واحسن عبادته ربه كان له اجره مرتين", when the slave gives his master good advice or counsel and is sincere in worshipping God, he has a double reward." Much stress is laid in the Islamic law upon the good breeding and education of slave girls. قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ايما رجل كانت له جارية ادبها
 The Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, said, "If a man has a slave girl in his possession, and he instructs her in polite accomplishments and gives her a good education without inflicting any chastisement upon her, and then frees her, and marries her, he shall be rewarded with a double reward." This injunction which requires even slave girls to be well-bred and well-educated should be particularly noted by those who say that Islam requires the women to be kept ignorant. It, moreover, furnishes clear testimony as to the position to which Islam raises the slaves.

There are many other traditions which enjoin kindness to slaves and give the slave an equality with his master. Some of these are given by Lane in his Arabian Nights which have also been quoted by Hugh in his Dictionary of Islam, Mark the

following traditions for instance which are taken by Lane from the Mishkat: "Feed your memlooks with food of that which ye eat, and clothe them with such clothing as ye wear; and command them not to do that which they are unable." "He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement for this is freeing him." "A man who behaves ill to his slave will not enter into paradise." "Whoever is the cause of separation between mother and child, by selling or giving, God will separate him from his friends on the day of resurrection."

All these traditions afford the clearest and most conclusive evidence that the slave was not considered as a slave in Islam and that he was the equal of his master in all respects, having only a different sphere of action. Even after 1300 years no philanthropist dare preach, leaving aside practice, the equality between master and servant taught by Islam. I quote some more traditions only to show how great is the stress laid by Islam on this point and how sincerely it desired that the degradation attaching to the position of a slave should be removed. The Caliph Ali reports the following words of the Holy Prophet: *«تقوا الله في الصلاة وفي ما ملكتم ايما لكم: Fear God in the matter of prayers and in the matter of those whom your right hands possess.»* It is also reported that these words were repeated by the Holy Prophet on his deathbed and that these were the last words he uttered. There is no one else whose anxiety for the slaves was so great. And mark how he couples the injunction to be kind to slaves with the injunction to be constant at prayers and thus makes the observance of these two duties as the two pillars of Islam. Nothing is more impressive than the following saying of the Holy Prophet: *«قد اوما نى حبيبي جبرائيل بالرفق بالرققيق حتى ظننت ان الناس لا تستعبد ولا تستخذم.»* *«Verily my friend Gabriel continued to enjoin on me kindness to slaves until I thought that people should never be taken as slaves or servants.»* One must shut his eyes to the plainest injunctions of Islam to say that the system of slavery is so intervoven with the Islamic law that the abolition of slavery upsets the Muslim faith! The truth is that no one had the keen and sincere desire to abolish slavery which the Holy Prophet had. A person once came to him and questioned him as to how many times he should forgive his slave. The Holy Prophet turned away his face.

This happened a second and a third time. On the fourth occasion when the same question was repeated, the Holy Prophet said : **اعف** **عن عبدك سبعين مرة في كل يوم اذا ارادت نوال الاجر والثواب** "Forgive thy slave seventy times every day if thou desirest to be rewarded with a good reward for what thou doest." His gentle heart did not even bear the slave to be called by a contemptuous name. It was for this reason that he commanded, saying, as Bukharee reports, **"لا يقل احدكم عبدى امتى وليقل فتاى وفتاى وغلامى"** Let no one of you say *abdi* (my man-servant), *amti* (my maid-servant), but let him say **فتاى** (my young man), **فتاى** (my young maid) and **غلامى** (my young man or my young boy)." The latter words are applied to slaves as well as free men, while the former are generally applied to slaves only.

Before describing how these injunctions were observed in practice to the very letter by the early Muslim society, I should dispel a doubt which may have arisen in the mind of the reader, *viz.*, that if the slave was so perfectly the equal of his master and if he was to be treated by the master with such kindness, wherein lay the difference or the distinction between them. The Holy Prophet himself explained this point and I need not do more than quote his words as reported in Bukharee. **كلكم راع فمستول عن رعيته فالامير الذي على الناس راع وهو مستول عنهم والرجل راع على اهل بيته وهو مستول عنهم والمرأة راعية على بيت بعلها وولده وهي مستولة عنهم والعبد راع** **"Every one of you is a ruler and every one of you shall be questioned respecting those or that of which he is a ruler: the Amir is a ruler over his people and he shall be questioned respecting them, and the man is a ruler over the people of his house and he shall be questioned respecting them, and the woman is a ruler over the house of her husband and his children and she shall be questioned respecting them, and the servant or the slave is a ruler over the property of his master and he shall be questioned respecting it."** Every one then according to the teaching of Islam has a certain sphere of action, and while from one point of view he is dependent upon another, from another point of view he is himself a ruler. Islam does not teach the equality of an anarchist, but the equality which is in consonance with social order and

which ensures to every individual the necessary degree of liberty without destroying the social order which is necessary for the progress of humanity. But it should be borne in mind that in thus describing the spheres of action, the Islamic law does not consider any kind of work degrading for any man, or any exercise of power as too high for a man in a lower position. The master must assist his slave when the task is too heavy for him, and the slave or the servant exercises the authority of a master on various occasions. Their mutual relations are governed by the utmost kindness to the slave on the one side and obedience and faithfulness to the master on the other. In all matters where their duties do not interfere, they are by the Islamic law on a platform of equality.

I will now exemplify these statements by some instances. The Holy Prophet, as he was a teacher, was also an exemplar, and if his words were mightily effective, it was because he himself first set an example by doing what he taught. We have recorded one of his sayings that Gabriel laid so much stress upon kindness to slaves that he thought that people should be no more kept as slaves. In fact, such was the sincerest and most earnest desire of his sympathetic soul and the highest ideal of his teachings, and he was leading the world to the ultimate abolition of slavery. From his sayings when we come to his practice, we see that he was the first man to act upon these injunctions. We find that all those whom he got into his possession as his slaves, he at once set free. Does it not show clearly what the Holy Prophet meant? But this subject I will discuss later on. At present we have only to see how he treated his servants, for his slaves he always freed. Fourteen or fifteen persons are named who served him on various occasions. And besides this, the greatest among his followers deemed it an honour to do him any piece of service. He was moreover the head of the republic at Medina, and later on the ruler of Arabia. But notwithstanding all this he would himself mend his clothes, cobble his shoes, milk his goats and assist his wives in their household duties. He sat at meals like a servant and was always ready to rise to do anything for others. When riding he would take any one behind him. Ans, one of the Holy Prophet's servants, relates many anecdotes of his kind treatment of his servants. He was so kind that he was never enraged and never beat any of his servants. A maid servant once

being sent on an errand was long in returning, and he chid her in these words: "If it were not for the law of retaliation, I should have punished you with this toothpick." This simple story speaks volumes for itself. Ans says: "I served the Holy Prophet for ten years, and he never said to me so much as *uff* (a word expressive of vexation, displeasure or hatred); and he never said to me when I did a thing, 'why hast thou done it,' nor, when I omitted to do a thing, did he say, 'why hast thou omitted to do it,' and his treatment was the best of all men." Ayasha reports that "the Holy Prophet never beat any one of his servants or any woman."

The example of the Holy Prophet was followed by his loving followers. On one occasion he gave away a captive of war to one of his companions, Abul Haisam by name, to serve him and enjoined him to treat him kindly. Abul Haisam went to his wife and informed her of the Holy Prophet's gift as well as his injunction. His wife said to him: "Thou canst not carry out this injunction fully except thou free the slave." Thereupon Abul Haisam set him free.

Zanba' found one of his slaves in the act of illegal intercourse with one of his slave girls and cut off the slave's nose on account of this crime. The slave came to the Holy Prophet who asked him who had mutilated him. He answered, "Zanba'." Thereupon the Holy Prophet called the man and asked him what led him to take such a step. He related what he had seen. The Holy Prophet said to the slave, "Go and thou art free." Then he said, "O Prophet of God! whose freedman shall I be called?" The Holy Prophet replied, "the freedman of God and His Prophet," and in accordance with these words which implied a promise that the man thus freed would be supported by him, he and his family were granted maintenance not only during the Prophet's life time, but also after his death by Abubakr. When Omar succeeded, "the freedman of God and His Prophet" came to him and desired to go to Egypt, where provision was made for him by Omar by grant of land.

Abu Mas'ud, one of the Ansar, says that "I was beating a slave of mine when I heard behind me a voice, 'Know, O Abu Mas'ud! God is more powerful over thee than thou art over him.' I turned back and saw the Holy Prophet of God and at once said, 'O Prophet of God, he is free now for the sake of God.' The Holy Prophet said, 'if

thou hadst not done it, verily fire would have touched thee.' ”

It is related that Abu Huraira saw upon an occasion that a man was riding while his slave was running after him. He said to the man, “Take him behind thee on thy beast, O servant of God, verily he is thy brother and his soul is like thy soul.”

Ma'rur says : “I saw Abu Zar, one of the companions of the Holy Prophet, and he was wearing a new garment and his slave was also wearing a new garment of the same description. I questioned him as to this. He said ‘I abused a man (*i.e.*, his slave) and he complained of me to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet said: ‘Didst thou attribute evil to his mother?’ And then said: ‘Verily your slaves are your brethren; Almighty God has placed them under you; whoever then has his brother under him, let him give him food of that which he eats and clothe him with clothing which he wears, and do not command them to do that which they cannot bear, or if you do it, assist them in their work.’ ”

Ali is reported to have said : “Verily I am ashamed of myself when I take as a slave a person who says, ‘God is my Lord.’ ”

“It is related of Othman that he twisted the ear of a slave on account of disobedience, and afterwards, repenting of it, ordered him to twist his ear in like manner, but he would not. Othman urged him and the slave advanced and began to wring it little by little. He said to him, ‘Wring it hard, for I cannot endure the punishment of the day of judgment’ (on account of this act). The slave answered, ‘O my master, the day that thou fearest I also fear.’ ”

“It is related also of Zainul-Abidin, that he had a slave who seized a sheep and broke its leg; and he said to him, ‘Why didst thou do this?’ He answered, ‘To provoke thee to anger.’ ‘And I,’ said he, ‘will provoke to anger him who taught thee; and he is *Iblis* (*i.e.*, the Devil): go, and be free, for the sake of God.’ ”

High positions were not denied to slaves and freedmen. Usama, son of Zaid who was the freedman of the Holy Prophet, was made a commandant over an army by him. About this time the Holy Prophet died, and Abu Bakr who succeeded him refused to take away the command from him. Nay, when the army departed, Abu Bakr

walked some distance in the company of Usama while the latter rode. Usama requested Abu Bakr either to have a horse himself or to allow him to leave the horse and walk on foot. But Abu Bakr did not yield. Again, when Amru went to conquer Egypt, he sent a party to the Roman Governor of Egypt to negotiate for peace, the head of this party being an Abyssinian, (the Abyssinians served in Arabia as slaves), named Ubadah. When the party came in the presence of the Governor, he desired the Abyssinian to be removed as he looked down upon him and did not like his presence. Upon this the party informed him that he was their chief and would speak for them and that they were bound by what he said. The Governor was surprised and said that they should not have taken a black as their chief, but on being told that excellence among them depended upon a man's worth and not upon his colour and nationality, the Governor accepted him as the chief of the party.

An incident concerning the Caliph Omar illustrates well the position of slaves among the Muslims, and shows how literally the early Muslims obeyed the injunctions of their Prophet. When Abu Obeida besieged Jerusalem, he was requested that the city would be surrendered provided the Commander of the Faithful, Omar, himself settled the terms of peace. Abu Obeida wrote to the Caliph who at once set out from Medina for the purpose. In this journey he was attended by his servant, but they had both only one camel to ride upon. So they rode by turns until they approached Jerusalem. It happened that just at this juncture the servant had his turn to ride. So the caliph dismounted and asked his servant to ride, and himself ran after the camel until they reached the camp of Abu Obeida. The general fearing that the inhabitants of Jerusalem might look with contempt upon the Caliph coming in this state submitted that it was not becoming for the Caliph to run in this fashion while his servant was riding, for all eyes were turned towards him. Upon this Omar said: "No one said this before thee, and this thy word will bring a curse upon the Muslims. Verily we were the most degraded of all people and the most despised and fewest of all. It was God who gave us honour and greatness through Islam, and if we seek it now in other ways than those enjoined by Islam, God will again bring us into disgrace." By his last words he meant that if the Muslims sought honour

by not treating their slaves as their equals and their brethren as enjoined in Islam, they would certainly lose all honour. I ask if any conqueror or any ruler of the smallest state, or any civilized person in a high position can show such moral courage and such kindness of treatment to-day? Omar was not only a Caliph, but was entering a city as a victor. He knew that it was necessary to keep his prestige lest the besieged should turn against him. But he did not care for any of these considerations. Is there a single country on the surface of the earth where servants are treated like this by such mighty masters as the Caliph Omar. And if the Muslims of later days erred from this straight course, it is as the Caliph Omar had said. They sought honour in other directions than that pointed out by Islam and therefore they lost it.

I may, however, add that the precepts of the Holy Prophet have been so imbibed into the blood of the Muslims, or more correctly, I should say, so mighty was the Divine magnetism which the Holy Prophet possessed, that his followers even to-day surpass all the nations of the earth in their kind treatment of their servants or slaves. *Lane writes from his personal experience that the slaves "are generally treated with kindness" in Egypt. Regarding other countries he says that "the general assertions of travellers in the East are more satisfactory evidence in favour of the humane conduct of most Muslims to their slaves." As for the injunctions contained in the Holy Quran and the traditions, the same writer remarks that "these precepts are generally attended to either entirely or in a great degree." Even Hugh* admits "that the treatment of slaves in Muhammadan countries contrasts favourably with that in America, when slavery existed as an institution under a Christian people." Writing on Muhammadan slavery, a Christian writer remarks in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "The slavery of the Muhammadan East is usually not the slavery of the field, but of the household. The slave is a member of the family, and is treated with tenderness and affection. The Koran breathes a considerate and kindly spirit towards the class, and encourages manumission."

Having stated these precepts and facts relating to kindness to slaves, I ask every impartial reader if the slavery tolerated by Islam

*See note on Slavery, Lane's *Arabian Nights*, Vol. I. p. 55.

*See Hugh's *Dictionary of Islam*, article on slavery.

can at all fall under the description of slavery in the sense in which it is generally understood. I ask if the servants in all civilized countries to-day would not envy the position of a Muslim slave. Nay, it is a mistake to say that Islam tolerated slavery, for it cut at the root of each and every evil flowing from it. It made the slave the equal of his master. He was not only nominally a member of the family, but was actually so. Partaking of the same food, wearing the same clothes and living under the same roof as his master, not burdened with overwork, never addressed harshly, never beaten; the position of the slave was in fact enviable. The world has not yet got rid of slavery though it thinks that it has passed laws abolishing it, for the slave exists in the garb of a servant still. Unless the injunctions of the Holy Founder of Islam are taken as guiding rules, slavery must exist in one form or another. The time has come when Christian Europe missing all these excellent teachings in Christianity should turn to Islam for true guidance. It not only gives the most excellent teaching, but a practical teaching at the same time. No Christian ever minded the injunction to turn the other side of the face when one was smitten, but thousands, nay hundreds of thousands, of Muhammadans strictly obeyed the injunctions of their Holy Prophet to treat their slaves as they would treat their brothers. Where in the whole world can a perfect law like that of Islam be pointed out?

(To be continued.)

Sell on Islam, II.

It is surprising that a writer on Islam of the fame of Sell should be so ignorant of the Holy Quran, and this in spite of his admission that the Holy Quran "really forms the best biography of the Prophet's life." Muir is of the same opinion when he says that "of Muhammad's biography the Quran is the keystone." But if Sell had read the Holy Book, putting aside his Christian prejudice, he should not have blamed the "Muhammadan historians" for calling the period before the advent of the Holy Prophet in Arabia "the time of ignorance." It was not, as Sell seems to think, an afterthought on the part of the Muhammadan historians. The Holy Quran itself has called this time the time of darkness, the time of ignorance and error

and the time of spiritual lethargy and death, and the truth of the Quranic statement in this respect cannot be questioned. Nor is this statement in the Holy Quran only an incidental one, but it is repeated again and again and the greatest stress is laid upon this point. In v : 59, vi : iii, vii : 198, xxxiv : 64, and on many other occasions, the unbelievers are plainly addressed as an ignorant people. Even the exact phrase, the time of ignorance, occurs in the Holy Quran at least thrice in reference to the pre-Islamic period. In v : 55, we have *لَا تَبْرَحْ أَلْحَا هَلِيَةً لِّأَسْأَلِهِمْ* which Rodwell renders as follows: "Desire they, therefore, the judgment of *times of* (Pagan) *ignorance*?" Again in xxxiii : 33, the wives of the Holy Prophet are enjoined to observe seclusion in the following words: *وَلَا تَبْرَحْنَ أَلْحَا هَلِيَةً لِّأَسْأَلِهِمْ* which the same author renders as follows: "And go not in public decked as in *the days of your former ignorance*." A similar phrase *هَلِيَةً* "the disdain of the *times of ignorance*" occurs in xlviii : 26. In all these cases, moreover, the time of ignorance is spoken of in connection with some evil.

The Holy Quran teems with verses which speak of the errors, darkness and death prevailing in Pagan Arabia. In the second verse of the sixty-second chapter, Almighty God thus speaks of his obligations upon the Muslims: *هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ* which Rodwell renders as follows: "It is He who hath sent to the pagan folk (Arabs) an Apostle from among themselves, to rehearse His signs to them, and to purify them, and to impart to them a knowledge of the 'Book' and wisdom; for verily they were aforetime in a manifest error." Nor does the Holy Book condemn thus the Pagan Arabs only. Further on in the same chapter it describes "the people of the book" in the following words: "The likeness for those on whom the burden of law laid, and who afterwards would not bear it, is that of an ass beneath a load of books." This is an exact description of the Jewish and the contending Christian sects. Again in vii : 178 and xxv : 46, the idol-worshippers of Arabia are spoken of in the following words: "Verily, they are just like the brutes! Yes, they stray even further from the right way." Had such statements concerning the pre-Islamic Arabs been made by the later Muhammadan historians as Sell wrongly supposes, their truth would no doubt

have been questionable, and they could not have been taken as true without strong proof. But these statements were made in the presence of those who are spoken of in them and were proclaimed day and night before them. They never questioned their truth as Sell does to-day, but their answer was simply what the Holy Quran has faithfully recorded elsewhere: "We follow the usages wherein we found our fathers," to which is added the excellent retort "What! though their fathers were utterly ignorant and devoid of guidance." (ii: 165).

It is not to Arabia only that the Holy Quran refers as being overshadowed by the darkness of ignorance, but it speaks of the whole earth as being dead. Thus it says: *اعلموا ان الله يحيى الارض بعد موتها*, *i.e.* "Know it that the earth had been dead, and God is now going to restore it to life again." In these words the Holy Quran clearly asserts that before the revelation of the Holy Quran every nation of the earth had depraved itself and all the people were sunk deep in vice. Corruption was not limited to the peninsula of Arabia, but prevailed throughout the world. Elsewhere the Holy Quran describes the time before the advent of the Holy Prophet as a night, and the time after his advent as a day. It also says: *ظهر الفساد في البر والبحر* "General corruption has prevailed by land and by sea," *i.e.*, throughout the whole world. All these verses show with sufficient clearness that the Holy Quran claimed to have come at a time when general corruption prevailed and history affords strong testimony of the truth of this claim. Christians of course make an exception in favour of Christianity but it is an admitted fact that the corruption of Christianity had commenced so early as the second century. As the outward splendour of the church increased, its internal purity decayed until at the time of the appearance of the Holy Prophet it was utterly corrupt. The contending sects of Christianity turned against each other "with the fury of savage beasts against man," and "the kingdom of heaven was converted, by discord, into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest and of hell itself" according to a Bishop. (Vide Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* vol. iv, page 459).

The Holy Prophet, therefore, came when the world urgently needed a reformer. This is an argument for his truth and it is advanced in the Holy Quran itself. Thus it says: *الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم*

نزل عليك الكتب بالحق "God is He who has not His equal ; He is the self-subsisting one by whom all things subsist ; He has sent the Book to satisfy a true need." Again, *و بالحق انزلناه و بالحق نزل* "At a time of true and long-felt need have We revealed Our word, and it has come to you when you stood in urgent need of it." In fact, never was the need of the world for a prophet greater than when the Holy prophet made his appearance, and it is for this reason that the Holy Quran has laid stress upon this point. Was the need as great at the appearance of Jesus ? is a question which I hope Mr. Sell will answer candidly. Jesus was born in the Roman Empire and I leave it for him to answer whether the Arabs were more civilized and enlightened than the Romans ? For according to his own contention, the more civilized and enlightened a people, the less the need for a reformer among them. Let him compare the social, moral and political condition of the Roman Empire at the birth of Jesus with that of Arabia at the birth of the Holy Prophet, and acknowledge with the frankness of a lover of truth which of these stood in greater need of a reformer. He has talked much in his article on Islam of the good influence of Judaism in Arabia, but I ask if it was the same Judaism to reform which Jesus had appeared, and met with such a signal failure. It is surprising indeed that Mr. Sell should believe that a religion which failed to exercise any good influence at the birth of Jesus, was really casting a wholesome influence six hundred years afterwards when it had become more corrupt on account of its rejection of the healthy reform which Jesus meant to introduce into it. I wonder how Mr. Sell satisfies himself as to the truth of the remark which his own belief so flatly contradicts. Does he think that he is justified in making any remark, true or false, to throw discredit upon the Holy Prophet ? And yet these people pretend to be preachers of virtue and truth !

It cannot be denied that the Jews were in a far better condition socially and morally than the pre-Islamic Arabs and were far more civilized and enlightened than the latter. I cannot understand then what Mr. Sell can gain from the misstatement that the Arabs were a civilized people, for Jesus at any rate appeared among a much more civilized people. If this circumstance upon which he lays so much stress can detract aught from the position of Muhammad as a prophet, that other circumstance which he cannot deny must strike

at the root of the Messiahship of Jesus. A man with any sense of justice in him would see that the same principle must be applied in the case of both prophets. If the Divine origin of the mission of the Holy Prophet can be disproved by the allegation that the pre-Islamic Arabs were a civilized people, then there is no reason why the Messiahship of Jesus should not fall to the ground on account of the plain and admitted fact that the people among whom he appeared were the most enlightened people of antiquity. The Jews to whom Jesus, mission was specially directed received no new social or moral law. On the other hand, everything that he taught was taken from their books.

The difference referred to above is by no means an unimportant one. The Holy Prophet had before him a people who, however enlightened Mr. Sell may choose to call them, had for centuries been immersed in gross fetishism and idolatry from which Judaism and Christianity with all their forces had failed to deliver them. Their social and moral laws were simply those of savages and they were involved in the basest vices and the grossest immoralities. A superhuman power was required to reform them, for all human efforts had proved utterly futile. Contrasted with these people, the Jews did not stand in need of any reformer at the advent of Jesus. Politically they were no doubt weak but Jesus did not come to take away from them the yoke of subjugation, although in the beginning of his career he seems to have thought so. They hated the worship of any thing besides God and were not only believers in the unity of God, but had for centuries been the preachers of this noble doctrine to other people. The doctrine of Divine unity had in fact been their chief distinction from other races for many centuries. They had a complete written law according to the requirements of the age, and they had also their teachers who sat "on the seat of Moses," the great law-giver. As compared with the lawless Arabs of pre-Islamic times their social and moral laws were of the highest type in that stage of the world.

Now mark the transformation wrought. The deep-rooted idolatry of the Arab gave place to a firm faith in the unity of God. The low fetishism suddenly changed into noble Divine worship. The base and beastly qualities were transformed into sublime virtues. None

can describe the most wonderful transformation thus wrought in more fitting words than those which the Holy Quran has adopted. On the one hand we have a description of the Arab society as it existed before Islam, some verses relating to which have been already quoted. A period of twenty-three years elapses, and all of a sudden the whole scene is so entirely changed that one cannot recognise in the newly arisen nation the lawless Arabs of pre-Islamic times. The fire of enmity which had burned for centuries among individuals and tribes was extinguished all at once, and all traces of it were so entirely blotted out as if it had never existed. The tribes that had lived at constant warfare with one another were now united in one body, and the whole nation seemed as an organised whole, the parts of which had never been separate or loose. The Holy Quran refers to this wonderful change in the most sublime and beautiful words when it says : *واذكروا نعمت الله عليكم اذ كنتم اعداء فالف بين قلوبكم فاصبحتم بنعمته اخوانا وكنتم على شفا حفرة من النار فانقذكم منها كذلك يبين الله لكم اياته لعلكم تهتدون* (آل عمر ان ١٠٢)

“And remember the favour and goodness of God towards you, when you were bitter enemies to each other and God united your hearts after separation, so that by His favour you became companions and brethren ; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus God clearly shows you His signs that you may be guided.” (iii : 102). This wonderful union among the unruly and never yielding spirits of Arabia is without a parallel in the history of the world.

The change in belief is not less important and less magnificent. Those, who not only worshipped idols and attributed Divine powers to the heavenly bodies and elements of nature, but who with the blind superstition of a savage bowed in worship even before animals, trees, unhewn stone and heaps of sand, were not only brought to a realization of the doctrine of Divine unity, but also to the highest and sublimest conception of the Divine Being and Divine attributes. They who prostrated themselves before their idols at the time of every need and considered them as endowed with all power, recognised now the highest principle of Divine unity which denied the attribution of any power to anything besides God. They not only professed a belief in God, but their faith was tested with the hardest trials which they withstood with admirable patience. It remained unshaken like a power-

ful tree which had sunk its roots deep into ground before the mightiest tempest of trials. They were the people who not only "said with their lips that their Lord was Allah" but when they faced trials "they showed faithful perseverance and remained firm in what they said (xli : 30). They who once believed that their deities were daughters of God, now proclaimed to the whole world :—" Say, He is one God ; God of whom nothing is independent and who has no equal ; He begets not and is not begotten, and there is none like unto Him." (Unity). And again : " God ! There is no God but He ; the living who gives life to all, the self-subsisting by whom all things subsist ; neither slumber seizeth Him nor sleep ; to Him belongs whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the earth ! Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His own permission ? He knoweth what is present with His creatures, and what is yet to befall them ; nought of His knowledge do they comprehend, save what He willeth. His throne extends over the Heavens and the earth, and the upholding of both burdens Him not : He is the High, the Great." (ii : 25 7). Those who only a few years before had so far lowered the dignity of human nature as to bow before inanimate objects as having power and control over their destinies owned now no power in heaven or earth except the power of God ?

The most wonderful thing about the transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet is its completeness. The old order of things seemed all to have been swept off and to have given place to a new order. What as regards their beliefs and practices, and what as regards their social and moral codes and their political condition, all underwent an entire change. Their nocturnal carousals gave place to heart-felt prayers with tears in their eyes, and the times of drunken revelries were changed into the times of humble prayers. Their savage haughtiness gave place to an angelic meekness. For the darkness of ignorance they had the light of knowledge now. In fact their evil nature seemed to have entirely gone away and given place to a virtuous disposition. The love of evil was changed for an earnest liking for virtue. It is in one of the latest revealed chapters that the Holy Quran thus speaks of the companions of the Holy Prophet : "God hath endeared the faith to you, and hath given it favour in your hearts, and hath made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience

hateful to you (xlix : 7 ; Rodwell, p. 519). The description of the "servants of the Merciful" given at the end of the chapter entitled the *Furqan* is in fact a description of the companions of the Holy Prophet as compared with the pre-Islamic Arabs who are termed as "brutes" and savages in the Holy Quran in a previous verse of the same chapter (xxv : 43). After describing their savage state as it was before their acceptance of Islam, the Holy Quran proceeds to say : "And it is He who has ordained the night and the day to succeed one another for those who desire to think on God or desire to be thankful." (xxv : 63). In these words it is indicated that the night which had overtaken Arabia would now pass away and be succeeded by the light of day. ~~This passing away of the darkness and the coming of the~~ light refers to the wonderful transformation brought about by the Word of God which was revealed to the Holy Prophet, and it is described as a sign of his truth, for what plainer proof is needed of the truth of a prophet than that he brings about a pure transformation in the lives of his followers and drives away every error and impurity with the truth and purity which he brings. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran gives in the very next verse a description of those who had accepted the mission of the Holy Prophet. This description begins with the 64th verse of this chapter, and runs as follows :—

"And the servants of the God of Mercy are those who walk upon the earth lowly, and when the ignorant address them (*i.e.*, speak evil against them, they do not return the evil but), say a right saying (in which they are secure from harming and sinning) :—

"And those who pass the night in the adoration of their Lord, sometimes prostrate and sometimes standing in prayer (whereas they formerly spent it in revelry and drunkenness) ;

"And those who say, 'O our Lord ! turn away from us the torment of hell, for verily its punishment is a serious affliction, for indeed it is an ill abode and resting place :—

"And those who when they spend are neither extravagant (like the pre-Islamic Arabs who out of pride sometimes ruined themselves by wasting all their property) nor miserly, but keep the mean :—

"And those who call on no other gods with God, and kill not the

soul whom God has forbidden to be killed, except for a just cause; (in the time of ignorance, no more value being attached to the life of a man than to that of a sparrow), and who commit not fornication (which was formerly not deemed a sin at all), and he who does this shall be punished for his sin; doubled to him shall be the chastisement on the day of Resurrection, and in it he shall remain disgraced for ever. Save he who repents (after having committed the evil in ignorance) and believes and does works which are free from every impurity—as to them God will change their evil inclinations into a virtuous disposition, for God is Gracious, Merciful—And whoso has repented and done righteous deeds, verily he it is who turns to God with a true conversion and repentance:—

“And those who, when monished by the signs of their Lord, fall not down thereat as if deaf and blind:—

“And those who say, ‘O our Lord! give us in our wives and offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us models of virtue to the pious.”

This is in fact a description of the holy transformation which the Holy Prophet brought about in the lives of those who accepted him. Now I ask, why do we follow any particular religion? Not for salvation in the next world only, for salvation in the world to come is nothing if that religion is unable to bring about a pure transformation in our lives here. A heaven which is only prospective and cannot be realized by us here is worth nothing to us. The chief criterion of the truth of a religion is then the transformation which it has wrought. Judge Islam by this criterion and apply this test to its holy Founder. Nay, judge every religion and every prophet by this test. If Mr. Sell or any one else can point out a single instance in which men so degenerate and sunk so deep in errors and immorality were within such a short time raised to such heights of social, moral and spiritual perfection, I promise that I shall not give Islam the preference which I am giving it and I will no more say that Islam is the only true religion, the only purifier of a man's life in this world. But the more I have thought on this question, the more I am convinced that no man besides the Holy Prophet had ever to deal with men fallen so low as the pre-Islamic Arabs, and no one ever raised any body of men to the height of perfection to which he raised them. No! not even Moses and Jesus did it, though they no doubt were the

prophets of God. Show me a transformation as great, as complete and as unexpected as the one wrought by the Holy Prophet, and I will not for a moment hesitate to admit that the man who brought it about was from God. All men are not of course like Sell, and I appeal to the conscientious and the just-minded to consider if history presents a parallel to the most remarkable and mighty revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet Muhammad. If not, and I know that it does not, what is the use of the quibbles resorted to by the Christian Missionaries?

Let us consider if Jesus wrought a greater or at any rate a similar transformation. If he did, I will be the first man to admit his superiority over or equality with the Holy Prophet; if he did not, then the Christians in rejecting the Holy Prophet are rejecting truth and fighting with God. Let me remind the reader what was the state in which the Holy Prophet found the Arabs and what was the state in which he left them. The first is thus described by the Holy Quran: *ظهر الفساد في البر والبحر* "Evil and corruption have raged throughout the world," and history bears out the truth of this statement. And what was the state when he departed from this world? *اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتي* , says the Holy Quran. "This is the day that I, God your Lord, have made your faith perfect for you, and have bestowed my blessings upon you in completeness." And the truth of this assertion appears clearly enough from the condition of the companions of the Holy Prophet. I ask Mr. Sell to state candidly whether Jesus found the Jews in the same degenerate condition as the Holy Prophet found the Arabs? Was there a deep-rooted idolatry among them like the Arabs? Or is it true that they had a deep-rooted aversion for idolatry and a strong faith in monotheism? And further, were they governed by social laws, or were they like the Arabs a lawless people? Did they possess an excellent moral code from which Jesus also drew his moral teachings, or were they like the Arabs ignorant of the true laws of morality? And now mark the difference in the results achieved by these two prophets, the one who had before him the task of effecting a mighty revolution and the other who apparently had very little to do except to preach to the Jews what they already knew. Jesus in spite of all these facilities failed to raise the Jewish nation to the height to which the Holy Prophet raised the fallen Arabs. Nay, more, he failed to bring about any perceptible

change in their social and moral condition. Study the condition of the Jewish nation before the advent of Jesus and after his supposed death on the cross, and you will not observe any trace of what may be called a revolution. I do not say this out of prejudice, but I have carefully gone through the facts and I find that not only did Jesus pass away without making any impress upon the Jewish mind, but he was not even noticed as a reformer of any importance for at least a hundred years afterwards. The Jewish writers never considered him for a long time as a man of any importance, not even as an opponent. It was only after a new movement had been set on foot that Jesus became the central figure in a system as unknown to him as to the prophets of Israel, a system whose effect upon society was the most deterrent and pernicious. But of Jesus himself we can say with certainty that his preaching did not transform the Jewish nation in any matter in which they stood in need of a transformation. No general spiritual awakening was brought about by him so far as his life and history show and he passed away from the scene as unnoticed as he had entered upon it. This is the reason that we do not meet with any contemporary record of the events of his life, although we possess full historical particulars of every event of any importance during that time. And yet this man is taken to be a God, while the great benefactor of humanity who raised a whole nation from the depth of degradation to the height of perfection is declared an imposter! Call him what you will, you cannot deny the deep obligation under which humanity lies to him, nor can you point out another man who worked such a mighty transformation in the lives, not of one or two individuals, but of a whole nation. Why should we follow names, I ask Mr. Sell. Let us follow him who can purify our lives. Jesus cannot, for he could not do it even in his life time or at any rate he could not do it to the extent to which the Holy Prophet did it. It is time that the Christians, bidding farewell to all prejudices which they have been cherishing for thirteen hundred years should consider pure facts and should not be deceived by mere assertions devoid of proof.

If leaving aside the Jewish nation which was left by Jesus exactly in the state in which he found it, we consider the state of the handful of followers whom he seemed to have convinced of the truth of his mission, there is still no evidence that he wrought any grand transfor-

mation in the lives of these few. Constancy and faithfulness are the first requirements of a true purity of life, for if a man has not the power to face all hardships and trials in the way of God, he is certainly devoid of the power which can enable him to overcome evil. Unless a man is cast into the crucible of God's love, his soul is not purged of the dross of earthliness and his transformation is incomplete. Now the followers of the Holy Prophet had their faith put to the severest test on numerous occasions and they were found firm as a rock. They were thrown into all sorts of dangers and trials, but nothing daunted them. While at Mecca they were thrown naked on burning sand and stones under the scorching heat of a midday tropical sun and in that state they were scourged. But even when senseless they did not recant and the only voice that escaped their lips was that there is no god but God. After suffering these severe hardships for several years, they had to leave all their possessions and seek shelter in a foreign land. On their return persecution became still hotter but they one and all showed apostolic patience under all these sufferings. Emigrating once more they settled in Medina living there hand to mouth lives, but their cruel persecutors followed them even in their new abode and now with the sword in their hand. They had now to fight in self-defence, but notwithstanding their marked deficiency in numbers as well as in military skill they stood by the side of the Holy Prophet to the last and laid down their lives as if they were nothing in comparison with the cause which they supported. Thus from the beginning of the Holy Prophet's career to the end, his followers had to face the severest difficulties and hardest trials, but they were as firm to the last as on the day when they first accepted Islam. A very lengthened period of hardships extending over no less than a quarter of a century was unable to shake them in their faith and they stood by the side of the Prophet as constant as the northern star. Such faithfulness under such long suffering is not met with anywhere else.

Let us now contrast the followers of Jesus with those of Muhammad in respect of their constancy. It is a painful truth, but it must be told, that we do not meet with in them any heroic example of constancy and faithfulness to their master. In the first place they lived under a regular government and therefore persecutions of the type borne by the followers of the Holy Prophet were quite unknown to

them. Jesus' conduct on some occasions shows that he did not hesitate to assume even an offensive attitude as in the case of the changers of money and sellers of sheep, oxen and doves whom he scourged and drove out of the temple (John 2: 15). The followers of such a man were in no danger of being persecuted. Some ten or twelve who were promised thrones no doubt left their business and went with him, but after all they left nothing behind them but the nets with which they caught fish. In his whole life there was only one occasion and even on that occasion they could have stood by him without endangering their lives. But in that critical hour when Jesus was put under arrest and placed on his trial in a court of justice, his chosen disciples did not wait even to witness the fate their master met. Nay, one of them being found about the place told a lie and denied him. Men so fickle and faithless could never be expected to have overcome evil.

I do not deny that Jesus wrought a partial transformation in the lives of his handful of followers, but what I regret, and what every lover of truth must regret, is that while he is considered the Messiah of God and even as God by Mr. Sell and his co-religionists, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is termed an impostor and what not though he wrought a transformation more difficult, more mighty, and far more extensive and complete. Let us be guided not by emotions but by facts, and recognise both Jesus and Muhammad what they truly were and what facts show them to be. Let us be just and free from prejudice and let us love truth for its own sake, and we would discover that while Jesus is unduly exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is unduly depreciated. Let us give to each the position which he deserves. If Jesus found Jews in a worse condition than that in which the Holy Prophet found the Arabs, and if he wrought a transformation more complete and more extensive than that which the Holy Prophet wrought, we Muhammadans would not have any objection to accept him as the greater of the two, but if history reveals a contrary state of facts, the Christians, if they have any respect for truth and any love of purity, must assign the higher place to him who deserves it. I do not know whether my words would make Mr. Sell more judicious in his remarks, but I hope that the test of a man's true greatness to which

I have drawn the reader's attention would enable every seeker after truth to form a correct opinion concerning those for whom high claims are advanced by their admirers. It is this test which decides that no philosopher, no philanthropist, no reformer, no prophet has succeeded in bringing about a transformation in the world as great and as marvellous as that wrought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and that consequently he stands at the top in the list of great men and the benefactors of humanity.

This criterion, the truth of which no sensible person can deny, cuts short lengthy religious controversies and brings the whole question of religious difference to a very easy solution. But if instead of applying the test, we attack the motives of this or that founder of a religion, who can escape? All the objections which Mr. Sell brings forward against Islam, would with a slight alteration in names hold good against Christianity if his way of reasoning is true. If Mr. Sell can blame the Holy Prophet for taking up the idea started by the Haneefs, Jesus is more blameworthy for having borrowed his ideas from the Essenes, a sect of considerable importance. If the Holy Prophet had heard the Jewish and Christian stories from any supposed monk, Jesus had read the Old Testament and probably also the Talmud word by word from a Jewish Rabbi and had read also the other Jewish writings, and every word that he preached can be traced to earlier sources. I assure Mr. Sell that if he undertakes to write a life of Jesus in the same spirit in which he has written the life of Muhammad and adopts the same line of argument, he would find him proved, to his own surprise, a man of much less importance, but a far greater borrower and a far greater impostor. I say it is no use to cavil and carp at great men. Some test or criterion should first be fixed upon and every prophet or reformer should then be judged by the same test. Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Buddha, let all be considered by the same one test. If Mr. Sell has any objection to the test I have mentioned, I shall have no objection to apply to all these men any other reasonable test which he may propose. And I assert with confidence that apply whatever test you like, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, will stand at the top of all great men.

The only object, which Mr. Sell has in view in misrepresenting

the Arabs as an enlightened people and in misrepresenting Arabia as already prepared for a great revolution, is to minimise the effect of the mighty revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet by giving an explanation of it. But he is mistaken. Even if he can find any satisfaction in the unfounded and false statements which he has made to account for the remarkable success attained by the Holy Prophet, what explanation has he to advance for the fact that Jesus failed to achieve a similar success. In fact such assertions hold the Divine Being to ridicule and are worse than the blasphemy which is avowedly so. Can such impotence and weakness be attributed to God, that He saw the failure of His only son and could not give him any assistance, while an impostor achieved the mightiest success which the world has ever witnessed and He durst not interfere and hamper his progress. This is not upholding religion, but trifling with it. Almighty God holds every power in His hands and certainly He does not vouchsafe that assistance to impostors which he does to His righteous servants. Even if Arabia was already prepared for a reformation, it was God Himself who prepared it. Even if you can explain a man's success, it is still success; and if you can give a thousand explanations for another's failure, it is still failure. Who ordained that the Holy Prophet Muhammad should succeed in bringing about a pure transformation in the world, in spreading virtue and uprooting evil? And who ordained that a similar success should not crown the efforts of any other man? Was it ordained by any power besides that of God in heaven? Ah! foolish men, how long will you conceal the truth?

(To be continued.)

Review.

DECAY OF FAITH AND MORALS.

The "*Free Opinions*," by Marie Corelli, issued recently has met with much adverse criticism in the English press on account of the outspokenness of her views regarding certain phases of modern civilized life in Christian countries. Two important points related in the book are a decay of morals and a decay of faith, and there is no

reason to believe that in these two respects her statements are exaggerated. In fact, we have had worse descriptions of modern civilized society, from the pen of those who could not be suspected of misstatement or misrepresentation. The tone of the book has been condemned as harsh and offensive, but truth is always harsh when conventionality requires it to be suppressed. Marie Corelli's description of the decay of religion is characteristic of a candid writer. At the outset she puts the following two plain but suggestive questions to her readers: "Do you believe with all your heart and soul in the faith you profess to follow?" 2, "Do you not believe one iota of it all? And are you only following it as a matter of custom and form?" The actual state of the majority is described in the following forcible words:—

"You, who do not believe, but still pretend to do so, for the sake of form and conventional custom, do you realize what you are? You consider yourself virtuous and respectable, no doubt; but facts are facts, and you in your pretence at faith, are nothing but a Liar. The honest sunshiny face of day looks on you, and knows you for a hypocrite—a miserable unit who is trying in a vague, mad fashion to cheat the Eternal Forces. Be ashamed of lying, man or woman, whichever you be! Stand out of the press and say openly that you do not believe; so at least shall you be respected. Do not show any religious leaning either to one side or the other 'for the sake of custom'—and then we shall see you as you are, and refrain from branding you "liar." "It can be said with truth that most of our Churches, as they now exist, are diametrically opposed to the actual teachings of their Divine Founder. It can be proved that in our daily lives we live exactly in the manner which Christ himself would have most sternly condemned." The condition of the clergy is described to be still worse. "It is quite easy to say 'Pagan London' but what if one spoke of 'Pagan Clergy?' What of certain ecclesiastics who do not believe one word of the creed they profess, and who daily play the part of Judas Iscariot over again in taking money for a new betrayal of Christ? What of the ordained ministers of Christianity who are un-Christian in every word and act of their daily lives? What of the surpliced hypocrites who preach to others what they never even try to practise? What of certain vicious and worldly clerical *bon-vivants*, who may con-

stantly be met with in the houses of wealthy and titled persons, 'clothed in fine linen and faring sumptuously everyday,' talking unsavoury society scandal with as much easy glibness as any dissolute 'lay' decadent that ever cozened another man's wife away from the path of honour in the tricky disguise of a 'soul'? What of the spiteful, small-minded, quarrelsome 'local' parsons who, instead of fostering kindness, neighbourliness, good-will and unity among their parishioners, set them all by the ears, and play the petty tyrant with a domineering obstinacy which is rather worse than Pagan, being purely barbarous." And again, "Who can blame sensible men and women for staying away from Church, when in nine cases out of ten they know that the officiating minister is less Christian, less enlightened, less charitable and kind hearted than themselves?"

The Church would, no doubt, resent such a statement as the following, but in my opinion it does not make a full disclosure of the decaying morality of the clergy. Deeds of disgrace resorted to by this privileged class often pass away unnoticed on account of the shelter afforded to them by their position. The other day we all read in newspapers of a reverend gentleman who is said to have outraged sixteen orphan girls placed under his charge, and whose misconduct was brought to light when the seventeenth unfortunate girl fell a victim to his brutal passions. Had his voluptuousness been within any limits or had he stopped in his vicious course after he had outraged sixteen, he would have passed off for an innocent sheep of the herd of Christ. All such cases, therefore, never come to light, and Marie Corelli refers only to such cases as have become public. She says: "Any public disgrace befalling a clergyman is always accompanied by a strong public sense of shame, disappointment and regret. And when we meet (*as most unhappily we often do*), with men in 'holy orders' who,—instead of furnishing the noble and pure examples of life and character which we have a distinct right to look for in them,—degrade themselves and their high profession by conduct unworthy of the lowest untutored barbarian, we are moved by amazement as well as sorrow to think that such wolves in sheep's clothing should dare to masquerade as the sacredly ordained helpers and instructors of the struggling human soul. During the past few years there have been many examples of men belonging to the hierarchy of the Church, who have want only and knowingly outraged

every canon of honour and virtue, and their sins appear all the blacker because of the whiteness of the faith they profess to serve."

At the root of all this indifference is the love of wealth and the worship of Mammon, a disease which affects everybody in modern civilized society from the highest to the lowest. For it is true that a man cannot serve two masters; he may serve either God or Mammon. The thoughts of the whole Christian world are centred upon the acquisition of wealth and worldly comforts. "Look around on the proud array of the self important, pugnacious, quarrelsome, sectarian and intolerant so-called 'servants of the Lord.' The Pope of Rome, and his cardinals and his Monsignore! The Archbishop of Canterbury, and his Bishops, Deacons, Deans and Chapters and the like! The million 'sects'—and all the cumbrous paraphernalia of the wealthy and worldly, 'ordained' to preach the Gospel! Ask them, for proofs of faith! For signs of humility! For evidences of any kind to show that they are in very soul and life and truth, the followers of that master who never knew luxury, and had not where to lay his head!

"And you among the laity, how can you pray or pretend to pray to a poor and despised 'Man of sorrow,' in these days, when with every act and word of your life you show your neighbours that you love money better than anything else in earth or in heaven! when even you who are millionaires only give and do just as much as will bring you notriety, or purchase you a handle to your names! Why do you bend your hypocritical heads on Sundays to the name of 'Jesus,' who (so far as visible worldly position admitted) was merely the son of a carpenter, and followed the carpenter's trade, while on week-days you make no secret of your scorn of, or indifference to the 'working man,' and more often than not spurn the beggar from your gates!"

The existence of the "social evil" in Western society is admitted by one and all, whether Christian or Atheist. Marie Corelli bewails its prevalence to an alarming extent in the highest class of British society. "But perhaps the most noxious sign of the blight in the social atmosphere is the openly increasing laxity of morals, and the frankly disgraceful disregard of the marriage tie. Herein the British

aristocracy takes the lead as the choicest examples of the age. Whatever Europe or America may show in the way of Godless and dissolute living, we are unhappily forced to realize that there are men in Great Britain, renowned for their historic names and exclusive positions, who are content to stand by, the tame witnesses of their own marital dishonor, accepting, with a cowardice too contemptible for horse-whipping, other men's children as their own, all the time knowing them to be bastards. We have heard of a certain nobleman who,—to quote Holy Writ,—‘neighed after’ another man's wife to such an extent, that to stop the noise, the obliging husband accepted £60,000, a trifling sum, which was duly handed over. It was all hushed up quite nicely, and both parties are received in the best society,’ with even more attention than would be shown to them if they were clean and honest, instead of being soiled and disreputable. The portrait of the lady whose damaged virtue was plastered up for £ 60,000 is often seen in pictorials, with appended letterpress suitably describing her as a lily-white dove of sweet purity and peace. One blames the sinners in this sordid comedy less than the ‘fashionable’ folk who tolerate and excuse their conduct.”

The book describes many minor evils prevailing in English society, such as the death of hospitality, the decay of home life, the madness of clothes, a desire on the part of women to get advertised in the press as young, beautiful and attractive women, the humbug of the press in wasting columns after columns in describing the clothes and ornaments worn by well-to-do women when they make their appearance in the public, the love of wealth, etc., but I do not consider them of particular importance. If the two defects, which to my mind are the chief defects of English, and in fact every Christian, society, are remedied, the minor defects will disappear of themselves. In fact, the one thing badly needed by all advanced societies is a pure, simple and certain faith in God, a faith which like the sun should dispel every gloom, purify the heart of all evil ideas and reveal the face of the living and powerful God. True purity of heart can never be attained by a man unless he has a close and strong connection with God. The religion of the West, whether you call it Christianity or any thing else, fails to establish such a connection with God, and this is really the source from which all evils flow. There are two

kinds of attractions in the world, *viz.*, a Divine attraction and an attraction of this world and its benefits and comforts. These two attractions act in opposite directions and, therefore, the one which possesses the greater power and has the greater hold over a man's mind, must rule his feelings and guide all his actions and motives. The state of society in Europe is essentially one which weakens the Divine attraction and makes the worldly attraction more and more powerful every day. The name of God is reserved for sermons on Sundays, but the hearts are perfectly devoid of love for God, for love of the world is uppermost in them.

Islam is the only religion which can free the heart from the trammels of passion and the love of this world. It is a religion which points out the way to God and brings with it all those blessings which have ever been vouchsafed to the righteous. If a man walks upon its commandments, it makes him drink deep at the fountain of His true love. In Islam a man's connection with God is so close that all his connections with the world are cut asunder. A holy transformation is wrought in the heart which frees it from every impurity. In fact, the chief distinction of Islam from all other religions is that it makes a man attain to the salvation or heaven, which it promises, in this very world. It is this religion which mankind needs, because it is the only religion which can purify their lives and inspire them with true love for God and true sympathy for their fellow-beings.

The reason for Islam being the only religion which can bring about a pure transformation in the life of a man is that besides Islam no other religion points the way which can release a man from the bondage of sin. Through Islam a man attains to that certain faith in God which keeps him away from transgression and evil deeds. For, unless a man knows with a certainty which is greater than his certainty concerning things of this world, that there is a God who knows the inmost secrets of the heart and who has the power to punish the evil-doer, his faith cannot avail against the powerful attractions of this world and the force of evil. This strong and certain faith in God is generated by the living Word of God which by breathing purity into a man's heart and by the manifestation of heavenly signs brings about a certainty in the mind as to the existence of God.

Christianity in India.

It is with satisfaction that we read in the July number of the *London Quarterly Review* an article on the "Influence of India on Christian Thought" by Mr. E. W. Thompson, M. A., admitting that Christianity has learned, and must learn, many truths from the people in the midst of whom it works. The learned writer says:—

"Surely one need not seek to-day to convince an audience of intelligent Englishmen that residence in India can supply subjects worthy of serious study, that in her institutions and literature is contained material of the highest scientific value for the student of language and of religion. In this article, I would go much further, and maintain that in India there are elements of positive worth not merely of curious interest which the Christian missionary can accept thankfully, and use in the building up of the fabric of the Christian Church and nation.

"The validity of the Christian missions does not rest upon the utter falsehood of non-Christian religions, and the complete and unrelieved corruptness of their morality. Nowhere has God left Himself without witness, and the missionary, in dealing with venerable systems of the East, should resemble rather the miner in the diamond mine than the man with the muck-rake."

It is doubtful whether the missionary would mind this advice, though Mr. Thompson is certain that "one of the great gains that has already come to the Church through its more perfect obedience to the command of Christ, and its wider intercourse with the family of mankind, has been a gain in humility. We are being weaned from self-conceit and racial arrogance." But facts do not uphold this statement. The presumptuous missionary who may be inwardly as black as the blackest sheep does not hesitate to condemn the most sacred leaders of humanity and the purest truths that have been taught to mankind. Christianity has in this respect been always a narrow religion. It looks upon all religions as the product of imposture and considers Divine revelation to have been granted only to the Jews which culminated in a Jew being raised to the dignity of Godhead. The principle which Christianity is now partially recognising was

preached by Islam 1300 years ago. Thus we read in the Holy Quran: "Verily, we have sent thee in truth a herald of glad tidings and a warner; *and there is no nation to which a warner was not sent.*" (xxxv: 22). The Holy Quran, therefore, does not teach the principle that Almighty God revealed His Word only to one or two favoured nations, a doctrine which Christianity had to invent to support the supposed Divinity of a Jew, or that He never sent a prophet to any people besides them but that He bestowed His gifts upon all people by sending prophets and warners to them. Thus truth and light were brought to all people, but with the lapse of time errors found their way into every system, and it is for this reason that Islam holds the principle that truth and error are found mixed in all religious systems of the world in their present form, Christianity and Judaism included. It was to sift truth from falsehood that Islam came and this is also asserted in the Holy Quran in the plainest words.

There is another point of vital importance. While Christianity which rejected and still rejects the Divine origin of all religions besides the Jewish has come to realize at length that there is truth in every religion, it has also learned the more important fact that it must learn such truths from alien religions, because they are not met with in it. This statement involves an admission that Christianity is not a perfect religion in itself. The superiority of Islam lies in this that while it has from the beginning preached that every religion was founded on truth and that errors found their way into it later on, it has at the same time taught that it is a perfect religion and that there is no religious truth which is not to be met with in it. Such a perfection cannot be claimed by any religion besides Islam. I will illustrate this point by a quotation from Mr. Thompson's paper. He says:—

"As in the organic world, we of the West have drawn a hard and fast line between man and beast, so we have made a sharp distinction between the life now and the life hereafter. There is a break of guage, so sudden and so thorough, that the travelling reason is thrown off the line and disabled from pursuing its investigations further. How is it possible that the life of the ordinary Christian, as we know it here, erring, striving, sorrowful, should pass at

death into a sinless existence where obedience and bliss are alike unfailing? We are all conscious of a lack of continuity at this point. The Roman Catholic finds relief in the doctrine of purgatory. The Protestant, as a rule, takes the common sense view that we do not know, and cannot know, and that, therefore, it is no use troubling about these things. But the influence of India is all in the direction of that view of the future life which declares it to have an intimate connection with the present. There is no arbitrary and capricious hiatus between what we now are and what we shortly shall be. If the hour of death finds us genuinely repentant, abhorring evil and cleaving to that which is good, and trusting in the manifested mercy of God, His grace may set our foot upon a ladder of ascending life beyond the possibility of falling again; or if we have surrendered our very selves to sin and disowned the spirit known and felt to be holy, His grace and justice may appoint us a lot in some unimagined lower existence beyond the possibility of ever rising again. Yet, however it be, both in that reward and in this condemnation, the future is the continuation of the present; our powers and responsibilities yonder will be proportioned to our power here and the use we have made of them."

Here we have the writer's confession as to an erroneous doctrine taught by Christianity and as to truth learned from elsewhere, the source admittedly not being Divine revelation. But Mr. Thompson has evidently misread the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. There is no repentance according to this doctrine, and a sin once committed must be answered in some lower bodily form, and therefore it is not correct to speak of a "genuinely repentant" man in the Hindu theology. Nor is there such a thing as "a ladder of ascending life beyond the possibility of falling again" in the Hindu religion, for even the perfect ones, who have attained a true connection with the Divine Being which is salvation, are ejected from that state of perfect bliss to pass through all the lower forms of birth again. Mr. Thompson has really confused the Islamic doctrine of salvation and punishment with the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. It is Islam which teaches the doctrine that the life hereafter is a continuation of this life and that death is only the gate which leads us from one condition to the other in the state in which it finds us. I cannot say whether Mr. Thompson is actually ignorant of the Islamic doctrine or

whether he finds it hard to acknowledge having learnt a truth from Islam. The Holy Quran teaches in plain words that "he who has been blind here, shall be blind hereafter, and wander yet more from the way" (xvii: 74); indicating clearly that the eyes with which a man can have the eternal bliss of seeing God are granted in this life, and that if they are not granted here, he passes to the life hereafter in the same state of blindness. In like manner, the Holy Quran tells us that it is in this very life that a paradise is granted to the righteous and that they begin to enjoy the bliss which is promised to them more completely in the next, as in the following verse: "Verily those who say, our Lord is God, and then walk uprightly, the angels descend upon them (in this very life and say), 'fear not and be not grieved but rejoice in the paradise which you were promised; we are your guardians in the life of this world and in the next, and you have therein what your souls desire and you have therein what you call for: this is only a kind of hospitality from the Forgiving and the Merciful (and the actual reward will follow in the next).'" (xli: 30). Again Almighty God thus addresses a soul which has found contentment in God and is at peace with Him, which, in other words, has so completely surrendered itself to His will that it cannot go against it: "Oh, thou soul which art at rest, return to thy Lord well-pleased and pleasing Him; enter thou among my servants, and enter thou my paradise," (lxxxix: 27-30). On various other occasions in the Holy Quran we are plainly told that it is in this life that a heavenly life begins, and that the man who has not obtained salvation (*i.e.*, freedom from the bondage of sin) in this life shall not obtain salvation hereafter. Thus it would be seen that Islam is a perfect religion and there is no religious truth which is not to be found in it. While Christianity may have to learn truths from other religions, Islam has to teach them these truths.

Prediction of Earthquakes.

Writing on "The Great Earthquake in India and its Lessons" in the *Occult Review* for July 1905, Alfred J. Pearce quotes Morrison's observation on the exciting causes of great earthquakes which runs as follows:—

"Earthquakes generally follow close on the heels of Eclipses; and they happen more frequently when there are planets especially the larger planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and Uranus in the signs *Taurus* and *Scorpio*, and when there are several planets on or near the tropics or equator."

It was in accordance with this observation, it is stated, that the prediction was published in Zadkiel's Almanac about an earthquake "about the seventy-fourth degree of East longitude," the centre of the seismic disturbance being, however, Kangra which is situated between the 76th and 77th degrees of East longitude. Whether or not astronomical causes have anything to do with earthquakes, I do not mean to discuss. What I want to show is that there is another and more important fact which deserves the attention of all astronomers, or astrologers, and seismologists. Zadkeil's Almanac was published in October 1904, and it further did not state in what country the seismic disturbance would take place. Almost an year before its publication, one had announced and published in newspapers that he had received a Divine revelation foretelling a great shock of earthquake in this country in the near future. Four or five months later he again published, and this time too in newspapers, that buildings would be levelled with the ground in a part of this country. (See R. R., Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 182, and No. 6, p. 227, where full details are given as to these prophecies). It is wonderful that people have no objection to admit the truth of a statement which shows the influence of planets on earth's surface, but they dispute facts which prove the existence of God beyond all doubt. Zadkiel's Almanac only says that a "sharp shock of earthquake will soon be felt, most probably at the latter end of March and beginning of April," nothing being said about the locality except that it would be about the 74th degree of East longitude which may be anywhere in the world. Now a sharp shock is a vague word and many sharp shocks have been felt which were neither at the time nor about the longitude given. For instance, decidedly sharp shocks of earthquake were felt in France, Switzerland, Italy, Wales, Turkey, Bunder Abbas, and New Zealand, and sharp shocks have also been felt several times in the Punjab after the great shock of 4th April. Zadkiel's Almanac does not indicate the degree of sharpness, and any one of the sharp shocks related above, could have as well been a fulfilment of the alleged prophecy as the

shock of 4th April. But in the Word of God in the prophecy of the Promised Messiah, the severity and the locality of the shock are foretold with a degree of exactitude which cannot be surpassed. The Divine revelation also said that a sharp shock would be felt, but it further explained the degree of its severity by saying that "buildings would be levelled with the ground in a vast tract of this country," i.e., the Punjab. These revelations, moreover, were not based on any astrological or astronomical considerations, for they were published an year and six months respectively before the publication of Zadkiel's Almanac. Evidently none of the sharp shocks except that which destroyed the Kangra district could be a fulfilment of this prophecy. At any rate, if the vague prediction in Zadkiel's Almanac shows any influence of the planets, the mighty prophecy published by the Promised Messiah is a clear and certain proof of the existence of an Almighty and All-knowing God who knows the deepest secrets of the future and can bring about all things in accordance with His supreme will.

A yet clearer and grander testimony to the existence of Almighty God is the Divine revelation foretelling a yet severer shock in this country, which has been denied alike by the astrologers and the seismologists for a period of two hundred years. But the Promised Messiah has made its occurrence a sign of his truth and it must therefore take place in his life-time. These two signs are a clear testimony of the existence of God for those who reflect.
