

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

In other respects, the views of Scott on these passages of the apostle are evidently the same, for substance, set forth in this Article. Of course, he did not believe these views to be in conflict with the teachings of Christ, as recorded by the evangelists.

ARTICLE III.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAMISM.

BY REV. GEORGE F. HERRICK, MISSIONARY OF THE A. B. C. F. M.

CHURCH History fully details the relation which Christianity sustained to Judaism, whether of correspondence or of antagonism. The relation of Christianity to ancient forms of Heathenism also has been so elaborately sketched by Christian historians, that systems of heathen philosophy and belief, the nature of Paganism, and the state of the ancient pagan world, have never been more vividly and faithfully portrayed than in those portions of church history which describe the aggressive movements of Christianity. This is true also in reference to the latest onward movement of Christianity, which is even now making, and that too on a broader plane than ever heretofore. Christian enterprise, in the form of missionary effort, encounters the same forms of Judaism, which has been growing more dry and dead now for almost two thousand years, and meets with multifarious forms of heathen superstition and pagan cultus, and detailed accounts of these systems, and of the triumphs of Christianity over them, are added every year to the accumulating records of the militant, and to-be victorious, church of Christ.

But the relation which Christianity has held to Islamism occupies but little space in the annals of the church. Yet since the early conquests of the religion of the cross were

achieved, a religious system has arisen and spread over territory once conquered by Christianity, till its devotees are few less than the entire number of the professed adherents to the faith of Christ.

It is true that a ready general explanation may be given to this seemingly strange silence, in the statement that the relation of Islamism to Christianity, so far as it has not been one of absolute exclusiveness, has been of a worldly and political, not of a spiritual nature; and that its record should therefore be sought in the annals of the later Roman empire and of European and Oriental states, rather than in those of the Christian church.

But spiritual forces underlie all the great movements of human society; and it is hoped that a perusal of the following pages may assist in showing, both that Islamism held, in the outset, a more positive attitude towards Christianity, and was more indebted to Christian doctrine and the Christian scriptures than is acknowledged by Mohammedans, or generally supposed among ourselves, and also that the claims of the Mussulman — particularly the Turkish and Arabic Mussulman — portion of the "field" which Christ has assigned to the labors of his disciples are more actual and urgent, and the present aspects of the field more encouraging than is generally recognized, even by those who are interested in the aggressive or missionary work of the church. It is proposed to give:

I. Some account of the relation of Islamism to Christianity in its origin.

II. To glance at the development of Islamism as a religion.

III. To speak of the present relations of Islamism in Turkey to Christianity.

In the historical part of the subject, the principal authority, as the reader will perceive by the references, is Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, a standard work on this subject, recently published in London.

I. SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RELATION OF ISLAMISM TO CHRISTIANITY IN ITS ORIGIN.

1. *Mohammed's early Acquaintances with Christians ; his Journey to Syria.*

Mohammed, while still a youth, was accustomed to meet both Jews and Christians at the great fair held yearly at Ocâtz, three days from Mecca ; and, notwithstanding the mutual enmity existing between Jews and Christians, he perceived that their sacred books were, in the larger part, one revelation ; that both denounced the idolatry of his nation, and professed to worship one only God ; and, what would be more impressive still, that both repeated with profound veneration, a common name, — the name of Abraham, whom the Arabs claimed to be the founder of their temple at Mecca. It is thought possible, although no certain evidence supports the supposition, that Mohammed may have in this way conceived the idea as early as his twentieth year, of establishing a new religion in which the common elements in the Christian and the Jewish faith should be in some way united to the old worship of the Meccan temple.¹

At the age of twenty-five years Mohammed visited Syria ; but the Christianity of that age, with which he there came in contact, was much perverted, both in doctrine and in life, from the purity of the gospel. “ Lamentable indeed is it that the ecclesiastics and monks of Syria showed to the earnest inquirer so small a portion of the fair form of Christianity, and that little how altered and distorted ! Instead of the simple majesty of the gospel, the sacred dogma of the Trinity was forced upon the traveller with the misguided and offensive zeal of Eutychian and Jacobite partizanship ; and the worship of Mary was exhibited in so gross a form as to leave the impression upon the mind of Mohammed that she was held to be a god, if not the third person, and the consort of the Deity. It was by such blasphemous extravagances that Mohammed was repelled from the

¹ See Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, Vol. II. pp. 8, 9.

true doctrine of Jesus as the 'Son of God,' and led to regard him only as 'Jesus, son of Mary,' the sole title by which he is spoken of in the Koran."¹

Zeid (a slave, and afterwards an adopted son of Mohammed), both whose parents were Christians, "though severed from his home at too early an age for any extensive or thorough knowledge of its doctrines, yet probably carried with him some impression of the teaching and some fragments of the facts or legends of Christianity. Among the relatives too of Khadija, Mohammed's first wife, there were persons who professed a knowledge of Christianity, and followed, perhaps, something of its practice." Two cousins are particularly mentioned as converts to Christianity.²

2. Mohammed's Knowledge of our entire Scriptures derived mainly through Jewish Sources.

It seems probable, however, that Mohammed's knowledge of our scriptures — of the New Testament as well as of the Old — was chiefly derived from Jews, with whom he had far more intercourse, especially at Medina, than he ever had with Christians. Some things in the Koran, and still more in current Mohammedan tradition, are adapted to make the impression that Mohammed had seen one or more of the apocryphal Gospels, and perhaps had come in contact with followers of the Gnostic heresy in some one of its forms; but, as will be seen below, the small space occupied in the Koran by an account of events of New Testament history, as compared with the numerous and reiterated references to matters of Old Testament history, are sufficient evidence that, aside from some stories and legends of Christian origin, with which Mohammed became acquainted through Christians, his information concerning our entire scriptures was obtained from Jewish sources; Jewish legends and traditions being strangely mingled in the Koran with narrative which closely corresponds with the narrative of the Old Testament.

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 19, 20.

² Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. p. 50.

Mohammed did not assert his divine mission with boldness and without hesitation till his forty-third year, although he had composed many of the shorter and better suras or chapters of the Koran (the arrangement of which is not at all in chronological order) previous to that time. It is in those suras composed between his forty-fifth and fiftieth years that most frequent reference is made to the scriptures of the Old Testament, so much so that these suras are often little less than a compilation from Old Testament history, diluted and perverted by unfounded traditions; and in the three following years, i.e. during the three years immediately preceding the Hejira, the suras which mainly contain the references to New Testament history were composed.

In these suras the Bible is constantly mentioned as a revelation from God to Moses and to Jesus, and the object of the Koran is declared to be to attest and reiterate this former revelation, and especially so for the conversion of the Arabs to the "true faith of Abraham." The object in this was manifestly to conciliate and gain over the Jews to his interest.

The following illustrations will show how matters narrated in our own scriptures are treated in the Koran.

3. *References to Old Testament History in the Koran.*

The creation of Adam, and the conduct of Satan in reference thereto, is thus narrated in Sura ii: 11-26.

"And verily we created you, then fashioned you, then we said unto the angels, 'Fall down and worship Adam,' and they worshipped, all excepting Eblis [Satan], who was not one of the worshippers. He said, 'What hindereth thee that thou worshippest not when I command thee?' He answered, 'I am better than he; thou createdst me of fire, and thou createdst him of clay.' He said, 'Get thee down from heaven; it shall not be given thee to behave arrogantly therein: get thee hence; verily, thou shalt be amongst the despicable.' He said, 'Respite me unto the day when (all) shall be raised.' He said, 'Verily thou art of the number respited.' He said, 'Now, for that thou hast caused me to fall, I will lie in wait for them in the straight path; then I will fall upon them from before and from behind, and from their right hand and from their left, and thou shalt not find the most part of them thankful.' He said, 'Depart

from hence, despised and driven off; for those of them that shall follow thee, verily I will fill hell with you together.' 'And thou, Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise, and eat from whatever quarter you will, but approach not this tree, lest ye become of the number of the transgressors.' And the devil tempted them both, that he might discover that which was hidden from them of their nakedness. And he said, 'Your Lord hath only forbidden you this tree, lest you should become angels or become immortal. And he swore unto them, 'Verily I am unto you one that counselleth good.' And he misled them by ambitious desire; and when they had tasted of the tree, their nakedness appeared unto them; and they began to sew together upon themselves the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called unto them, 'What, did I not forbid you this tree, and say unto you that Satan was your manifest enemy? They said, 'O our Lord, we have injured our own souls, and if thou forgivest us not, and art not merciful unto us, we shall be numbered amongst the damned.' He said, 'Get you down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and there shall be unto you on the earth an habitation and a provision for a season.' He said, 'Therein shall ye live, and therein shall ye die, and from thence shall ye be taken forth.'"

It will suffice, without quoting further at length, simply to allude to "the stories of Abraham, who broke the idols of his people, and miraculously escaped the fire into which the tyrant cast him" (Sura xxii. 52, 53), and again of his hand being stayed from the sacrifice of his son, who was ransomed by a "noble victim" (Sura xxxvii. 84); of Joseph, in envy of whose beauty the Egyptian women cut their hands with knives (Sura xii.); of Jacob, who, when the garment of Joseph was cast over him by the messengers from Egypt, recovered his long lost sight (Sura xii. 93-96); of mount Sinai, held above the heads of the terrified Israelites, to force their acceptance of the law; of the seventy who, when struck dead upon the same mount, were quickened to life again (Suras ii. 55, 63, 93; iv. 153; vii. 172); of David, whom the mountains joined in singing the praises of God; of Solomon, on whose gigantic works the genii and devils were forced to labor at his bidding; of the genii who brought the throne of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon in the twinkling of an eye, and of the lapwing that flew to her with the royal summons (Suras xxvii. 16-45; xxxiv. 10-14; xxxviii. 18-42); of the Jews who broke the Sabbath and were changed

into apes (Sura vii. 164); of Ezekiel, who quickened a great multitude of the dead (Sura ii. 244; cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 1-10); of Ezra, who, with his ass, was raised to life, after they had been dead one hundred years" (Sura ii. 260), etc.

"Some favorite passages in the sacred record are the subject of special amplification and frequent repetition. Such are the history of Moses, the catastrophe of the flood, and the overthrow of Sodom, through which the Arabian prophet, ever recurring to them with a wearisome reiteration, seeks to deal forth exhortation and warning to the Meccans."¹

4: *References to New Testament History in the Koran are less numerous and less in detail.*

Christians and Christianity are however frequently mentioned, and accounts of the birth of John and of Jesus are given in a sura which is called, after Jesus' mother, 'Mary.' The account concerning John, and the antecedent prophecy made to Zacharias, are given in essential agreement, for the most part, with the account in the first chapter of Luke; and the supernatural conception of Jesus is acknowledged, but the circumstances of his birth are detailed in a manner totally different from that of the gospel history. From this passage it seems desirable to quote the following, from the account in Suras iii. 38-63; xix. 1-33:

"Verily the analogy of Jesus is, with God, like unto the analogy of Adam: he created him out of the dust; then he said unto him, Be; and he was. This is the truth from the Lord, wherefore be not thou among the doubters."

Jesus is said to have spoken thus in his cradle:

"Verily I am the servant of God; He hath given me the book,² and made me a prophet; and made me blessed wheresoever I may be; and hath commanded me (to observe) prayer and almsgiving while I remain alive; and made me dutiful to my mother, and not overbearing nor wretched.

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 185-188.

² Mohammedans believe that the true gospel was sent down to Jesus from heaven miraculously. They therefore reject alike our account of the origin of the gospel, as false, and the gospel, as we receive it, as spurious.

Peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised alive. This is Jesus, the word of truth, concerning whom they are in doubt. It is not for God to take unto him a son; glory be to him! When he hath decreed a matter he only saith unto it, "Be; and it shall be."¹

Concerning the teachings and miracles of Jesus, we take the following from Sura v. 118 seq.

"Then God shall say, O Jesus, son of Mary, call to mind my grace upon thee, and upon thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit, that thou shouldst speak with men, in the cradle and in mature life; and when I taught thee the scriptures and wisdom, and the law and the gospel; and when thou formedst of clay like unto the figure of a bird, by my permission; and thou blewest thereupon, and it became a bird, by my permission; and thou didst heal the blind and the leper, by my permission; and when thou didst raise the dead, by my permission. . . . And when God shall say, O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou speak unto mankind, saying: Take me and my mother for two gods, besides the Lord? He shall say, Glory be to thee! it is not for me to say that which I know to be not the truth. If I had said that, verily thou wouldst have known it. . . . I spake not unto them aught but what thou commandedst me, saying: Worship God, my Lord and your Lord."²

The teaching of the Koran, and the steadfast belief of all Mussulmans, is that Jesus was not crucified, but that "he was simulated (in the person of another)," see Sura iv. 155-158.³

5. *Christians warned against Extravagances in Religion.*

In view of the divine honor and reverence paid to Jesus by Christians, they are addressed thus in Sura iv. 169-170.

"Ye people of the book, commit not extravagances in your religion; and speak not of God aught but the truth. For verily the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is an apostle from God, and his word, which he placed in Mary, and a spirit from him. Wherefore believe in God, and in the apostles, and say not, There are *three*. Refrain; it will be well for you. Verily the Lord is one God; Glory be to him! Far be it from him that there should be to him a son."⁴

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 282, 302.

² Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 284, 285.

³ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. p. 286.

⁴ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. p. 288.

6. *The Koran at first regarded as concurrent with, and auxiliary to, the Scriptures.*

The following extracts from the fifth sura show that the Koran was at first regarded as "concurrent with and auxiliary to the Jewish and Christian scriptures, and but gradually acquired a superior and superseding character, as the latest revelation of God's will." Jews and Christians were, at first, not only permitted, but urged, to adhere to and follow their own sacred books.

"Verily we have sent down the Old Testament, wherein are a direction and a light. . . . And whosoever doth not judge by that which God hath revealed, verily they are the unbelievers. . . . And we caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, attesting the scripture which preceded him. And we gave him the gospel, wherein is guidance and light. . . . And whosoever doth not judge according to that which God hath revealed, they are the wicked ones. . . . To every one have we given a law and a way. . . . Wherefore, press forward in good works. Unto God shall ye all return, and he will tell you that concerning which ye disagree."¹

Subsequently, when it became evident that the only instrument of conversion effective with Jews and Christians was the sword, which Mohammed unhesitatingly and unscrupulously employed, and when Islamism became a really formidable power, the authority of Mohammed and the Koran was boldly claimed to be superior to that of all preceding prophets and revelations. The equality of authority which was at first postulated by Mohammed between his own and antecedent revelations, and the respect for former revelations and for their adherents which he at first inculcated, tacitly and practically became a nullity before the haughty pride of power, which grew as the conquests of Islamism increased.

But never did Mohammed openly and formally declare that former revelations were cancelled or abrogated; and the testimony borne to our scriptures in "the divine and eternal Koran," which, to this day, every intelligent Mussulman, however illiberal towards Christianity, dares not refuse

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 293, 294.

to acknowledge, amounts, logically, to a full concession of both their authority and their genuineness as a divine revelation.

The reason, probably, why that which is contained in the Koran, derived from, and intended to be corroborative of, the Jewish and Christian scriptures, was all compiled during the space of some eight years, is, that previously to his forty-fifth year Mohammed had little acquaintance with the sources from which his information was derived, and, doubtless, had not distinctly and consciously formed for himself the design of gaining over Jews and Christians, as well as heathen Arabs, to his new faith. And in his later years his maturing system moved away from all sympathy with the purity of Christian doctrine.

It should not be omitted to notice that a favorite and oft-repeated claim of Mohammed himself, and of his followers till the present day, is that he was foretold in our scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments. Prophecies in the Old Testament which refer to Christ, and those in the New Testament which refer to the Holy Spirit, were, with the help of obsequious and unscrupulous Jewish converts to Islamism, interpreted as referring to Mohammed.

7. The Foundation Truth of Islamism borrowed from Jews and Christians.

In concluding our account of the relation of Islamism to Christianity, in its origin, it is needful only to *state*, without enlarging upon the manifest and acknowledged fact, that it is to our scriptures that Islamism is indebted for that great foundation truth, to which it owes all the vitality it has ever possessed as a religious system, viz. the existence of one absolute, personal God.¹

¹ Although this is a truth common to Judaism and Christianity, yet in the apprehension of Mohammedans it is regarded as derived, *not* from Christianity, but from Judaism, — from Judaism in opposition to Christianity; for, accustomed as the Mohammedans have been to associate ideas of Christian worship with idolatrous reverence to pictures of Mary and the saints, and totally misap-

II. GLANCE AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMISM, AS A RELIGION.

1. *Inception of the new Religion in the Mind of Mohammed.*

It has been a much vexed question whether Mohammed was from the beginning an intentional deceiver. The position, however, which appears most defensible is, that the Arabian prophet, who was in early life of irreproachable moral character, and of a meditative and religious turn, was, before he ventured to declare himself a prophet from God, much agitated by inquiries and doubts, which arose in his own mind, concerning the true faith. "The debasement of his people, his own uncertainty as to the true religion, the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity, exciting doubts without satisfying them, pressed heavily upon his soul; and he frequently retired to seek relief in meditation amongst the solitary valleys and rocks and caves near Mecca."¹ His longing for light and guidance, his reverence and his high aspirations are expressed in snatches of true poetry, preserved in the Koran, with which the heavy, prolix, and even grovelling, effusions of his later years form a melancholy contrast. One short passage, originating at this time, which has been inserted as the first sura of the Koran, and which is, as we believe, the best thing in the book, might, with no impropriety, be adopted by the devoutest Christian. It is as follows :

"Praise be to God, the Lord of creation;
The All-merciful, the All-compassionate!
Ruler of the day of reckoning!
Thee we worship, and thee we invoke for help.

prehending, as they always have done, the true Christian doctrine of the Trinity (a trinity *in* unity, and not *opposed* to unity, in the Godhead), they have not regarded Christians as really holding to the doctrine of one only absolute, personal God. But when the difficulty of the elucidation of this subject, even for Occidental minds, is duly considered, and when it is remembered that Orientals generally, besides the force of ancient custom, lack the moral earnestness and patient mental application necessary, or are too flighty and capricious for the intellectual apprehension of so recondite a subject, — we wonder less at the misapprehension to which we have referred.

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. p. 55.

Lead us in the straight path ;
 The path of those upon whom thou hast been gracious,
 Not of those that are the objects of wrath, or that are in error."

In this spiritual aspiration — this rising above the superstition and idolatry of his people — a few of Mohammed's nearest friends joined him. But the people generally would reply: "It is well for Jews and Christians to follow the purer faith thou speakest of. If a prophet had been sent unto us, we should, no doubt, have followed his directions, and been equally devout and spiritual in our worship."¹

2. *Mohammed assumes a Divine Commission, and makes a Compromise between Good and Evil.*

The Arabian prophet thus saw the necessity of a divine commission ; and for this he longed and prayed, in alternate hope and despair ; sometimes believing himself guided of God, and sometimes fearing himself under the influence of the evil one. It would seem that at this juncture ambition — the ambition of being a leader and a prophet — fired his soul ; and he assumed henceforth to speak in "the name of the Lord." Muir has drawn a parallel between the temptation of Christ and that of Mohammed, from which we quote. That Mohammed himself believed in the personality and influence of Satan is undoubted.

"Satan, taking advantage of the cravings of hunger, tempted Jesus to contravene the laws of his human existence by supplying his temporal wants through his supernatural powers. But sternly did he throw aside the suggestion, and throughout his life appears to have refrained from bringing the divine power which he possessed to the relief of his personal wants.

An analogous temptation was ever ready to entrap the footsteps of Mohammed. He, indeed, was not possessed of any inherent supernatural ability. But as a teacher who professed himself inspired, he arrogated a spiritual power, which he was continually tempted to misuse in subservience to his personal necessities, and even to his erring desires. The subsequent records of his life too plainly show that he fell into the snare.

In the second scene, our Lord was tempted to seek spiritual and lawful ends by unlawful means, — to manifest his Messiahship by a vain-glorious

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. p. 67.

display of supernatural energy. What a melancholy light does the comparison cast upon the career of Mohammed. He was tempted to assume a forged weapon of fearful energy and temper by which to work out his ends. That instrument was the name of God.

Again, the devil tempted Jesus to fall down and worship him by the promise of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. To the world's end the power of darkness would form an awful antagonism to the power of Christianity. Was it possible to compromise the struggle? Would Satan abate the fierceness of his opposition? But Jesus knew of no compromise with sin, even in its most hidden form, and, fully conscious of the fearful nature of the approaching combat, rejected the alluring offer.

So did not Mohammed. He listened to the suggestion, and was tempted to seek a compromise between religion and the world. The result was a politico-religious system, forming the closest combination imaginable between worldliness and spirituality, between good and evil. Barely so much of virtue and spiritual truth is retained as will appease the religious principle which exists in man, and his inward craving after the service of his Creator; while the reins of passion and indulgence are relaxed to the utmost extent compatible with the *appearance* of goodness. Mohammedanism, indeed, presents a wonderful adaptation to fallen humanity. The spurious imitation of godliness satisfies the serious; the laxity of its moral code and the compatibility of its external observances with inner irreligion present no barrier to the sensualist. Ambition, rapine, assassination, lust, are the undenied features of Mohammed's later life, openly sanctioned by the assumed permission, sometimes even by the express command, of the Most High! What an assimilation must gradually have been wrought between the promptings of the evil one from without and the subjective perceptions of Mohammed within, when he could imagine, and with earnestness and sincerity assert, that the Almighty had sanctioned, and even encouraged, his debased appetites."¹

3. *The first Successes of Mohammed.*

It is far from our purpose to give in any detail the account of the early progress of the religion thus established in Arabia, — of its conquests or its political relations.

As was natural, when Mohammed had assumed his prophetic mission, and a few beyond the circle of his immediate friends and dependants became converts to the new faith,

¹ Life of Mahomet, Vol. II. pp. 91-96. It is due to Muir to remark that, in the passage from which these extracts are taken, he is advancing a hypothesis, — is making a suggestion by which the course of Mohammed may be explained.

persecution arose, and, by the prophet's advice, his followers took refuge from the storm in Abyssinia. It was then that Mohammed well-nigh jeopardied the very foundation of his new system, by a compromise with the ancient idolatrous worship of the temple at Mecca. He soon saw, however, that he had conceded too much, and retracted all; standing again, as at first, on ground hostile to idolatry,—on the exclusive postulates of Theism. The converts returned from Abyssinia, and were unmolested.

Meantime the new religion began to spread, at first gradually, and soon more rapidly, at Medina, till the number of Mohammed's adherents having reached nearly a hundred, he was compelled to fly from Mecca (date of the Hejira A.D. 622), in order to be within the protection of his followers where their number was greatest. It was a little more than two years previous to that event that Khadija, Mohammed's first wife, died. With her he had lived till his fiftieth year in fidelity, but from that time forward we find little to approve in his private life, his teachings, or his public acts. In two months after his wife's death he was again married, and about the same time betrothed to Ayesha, then a mere child, whom also he married two or three years later, thenceforth increasing the number of his wives and concubines according to his own pleasure; and he soon unsheathed the sword, which both himself and succeeding Khalifs most successfully wielded for the extension of the new religion through Arabia.

Yet it is this man that Mohammedan writers, to this day, hold up as the pattern of the faithful, in such terms as the following, which we have translated from a book on theology in Turkish: "Especially that prince of all apostles and joy of prophets, the confidence of the devout, the pride of the creation, the prophet of the world, the beloved of the great, the apostle of the latter times,—Mohammed Mustapha [chosen]; upon him be peace and the blessing of God, in great measure. He is the priest and pattern of the pious," etc.

Having thus given some account of the inception of Islamism; let us now briefly review

4. *The Religious System of Mohammed.*

What we are here to examine, is the system in its completeness, and before a rest from the early conquests achieved by its leaders gave scope for those literary labors and theological speculations which resulted in the accumulation of a vast amount of traditional matter concerning the prophet and the Koran, which was eagerly received by his devoted followers, flushed with the pride of success and victory ; and in the accumulation also of equally large and equally, perhaps still more, various explanations of the Koran, upon which arose large and important divisions among those who were regarded as orthodox Mussulmans ; and still more numerous divisions among those who, while going under the general name of Mohammedans, deviated widely from the original faith.

(a) Doctrines :

(1) With regard to the great fundamental doctrine of the being and attributes of God the Mohammedans are, and have always been, at essential agreement with us, with two exceptions, viz. first, their idea of unity in the Godhead is that of an absolute and *unqualified* unity—a unity which totally excludes all distinctions of personality ; and second, they have no adequate conception of the divine holiness. This will be more evident from what we remark below, with regard to their view concerning predestination, sin, and the existence of evil. It is true that there has been among Mohammedans much profitless discussion concerning the mode of the Divine existence, essence, and attributes ; but perhaps not more than may be found in the history of Christian speculation on the same subject.

(2) Of the Mohammedan idea concerning revelation perhaps enough has been said already. They have no difficulties on the matter of inspiration, and no divisions of any moment. According to their belief, all the contents of our own scriptures, as well as of the Koran, have existed from eternity by the throne of God, and were sent down by the hand of the angel Gabriel to the prophets.

(8) Their doctrine of Decrees, or Predestination, is as *absolute* as any Christian predestinarian could wish, and is made to cover *more ground* than any Christian would be willing for a moment to allow. They hold God to be the author both of good and of evil; that his positive decree includes the latter just as really as the former. Logically, we hardly need remark, this is the baldest fatalism; and it is only because even the Mohammedan's conscience and consciousness of personal responsibility, dull and perverse though it is, is still stronger than his logic, that he is not an unqualified fatalist. But what a conception of the character of God must those have — albeit they far surpass us in the numerous and exalted terms in which they express his attributes — who make God the author of all evil, and that, too, without seeming to perceive that they thus introduce an element into the character of God which is annihilating to every moral attribute.

It is plain from what has already been said that the Mohammedan idea of human will or freedom is exceedingly defective. They really hold that men possess only a partial and *quasi* will, i.e. doctrinally they occupy this ground; for of course, the social and civil fabric does not rest upon any such impracticable basis. If a criminal pleads that it was *decreed* that he should commit the crime of which he has been convicted, the judge does not hesitate to reply that it has been also decreed that *he* should inflict punishment for that crime, and he proceeds accordingly. But still the practical effect of the doctrine held, certainly is to deaden and silence the conscience, and close the inner eye to the real fountain and source of moral evil.

(4) Of Sin and Atonement. — No man is more ready than a Mohammedan to acknowledge, either in the general for all men, or specifically for himself, the place of a sinner before God, and just exposure to condemnation; but the conviction is a shallow and surface conviction. It does not put a guilty, polluted soul into contrast with the infinite purity and holiness of a God who cannot *look* upon any iniquity but with the

deepest abhorrence. Sin, therefore, in the apprehension of a Mohammedan, may be forgiven on mere repentance, for "God is gracious and merciful." Therefore we search in vain for any doctrine of atonement in the creed of the Moslem. They have indeed some customs, borrowed from the Jews, which look toward such a doctrine; but they are out of place in the system, — accretions, not developments.

In this vital point Islamism stands in marked contrast with a Christianity whose very life and soul is salvation from sin through the atonement, the expiatory sufferings and death of the God-man, — God manifest, and suffering for men in the flesh; and in the contrast how hollow and cold and dead does Islamism appear.

The doctrine of Regeneration, too, finds nothing corresponding to it in Islamism; only a counterfeit, a travesty almost, in the rhapsodies of certain visionaries and mystics.

(5) In the general doctrine concerning the resurrection and the judgment the Mohammedans are at essential agreement with us, but differ in many, in almost all, of the details, concerning which they have very confident, and often very puerile and foolish notions. But it is in the minuteness with which the delights and sensuous — rather sensual — joys of the paradise of "the faithful" is delineated, that one of the chief attractions and distinctive features of Islamism is to be traced. The popular impression among ourselves on this subject is, however, so generally correct that we need not enlarge in detail. The hell of Islamism is a place of material and minutely-described torments, such as might have been gathered from ancient heathen sources. There is considerable diversity, however, and obscurity in the writings and in the belief of Mohammedans on this subject.

(6) Mohammedans believe in the existence of good and evil angels, and also of another order of beings between men and angels, called genii. They believe these to be possessed of souls, and that Mohammed's mission was to them as well as to the human race. The great multitude of traditions, and superstitions founded on traditions, in which the mass

of Mussulmans implicitly believe, it would be impossible to notice, much less to explain in detail, within the limits of an Article like this. These traditions, affecting every tenet of their faith, and every item of their history, are even more familiar to the great majority of orthodox Mohammedans, and particularly so to the Mohammedans of Turkey, who do not generally understand the Arabic, their sacred language, than the teachings of the Koran itself.

(b) The religious institutions or practical duties of Mohammedanism are chiefly these :

(1) Prayer, to be formally observed, at stated seasons, five times a day, either in a mosque or in any other place, to be preceded by lustration, complete or partial, notified by the call of the muezzin ; and designed to be accompanied once, on Friday, — although it is not always, not indeed commonly, — by a sort of sermon, with reading from the Koran. In the beginning the Kibla (or place toward which Moslems turn when they pray) was Jerusalem, but afterward, when there was no longer any hope of gaining over the Jews, Mohammed courted favor with his own countrymen by making the Meccan temple his Kibla.

(2) Fasting also is a binding duty upon every Mussulman ; but it is a fasting which unites the worst characteristics of feasting with the most irrational and unprofitable method of fasting, viz. abstaining altogether from all food and drink from early morning till sunset, and then feasting and engaging in pleasure, *ad libitum*, during the night, and this for one entire month every year.

(3) Almsgiving and pilgrimages also are institutions of Islamism ; but for those who are acquainted with Oriental and Romish Christianity there is nothing sufficiently peculiar here to require explanation. Both these duties are a source of merit, — a merit which may be accumulated to any extent to which the zeal of “the faithful” may prompt them to engage in the performance of them.

(4) The merely outward and totally unspiritual character of Islamism in the whole sphere of moral and religious duty

is most clearly seen from an examination of any popular book prepared for the use of the faithful in explanation of the Mussulman faith, and of the duties, moral and religious, of its adherents. These books are filled with the most minute and elaborate directions for the formal observance of regular duties, of prayer, etc., with wearisome and senseless, and sometimes positively disgusting, distinctions drawn between what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is permitted and what is forbidden, and the most puerile directions about outward and formal matters pertaining to good behavior and the common decencies of life.

5. *Mohammedan Sects.*

Mohammedans began to be divided up into sects before the first century of Islamism had passed away. The principal sects among the orthodox are four, these again being subdivided into several smaller sects; and, although among heterodox Mussulmans there are four principal sects, these are subdivided, and we may say compounded, up into very many — some say seventy — minor sects, distinguished by some real or fancied difference, great or small; and, besides these, it would be impossible to even mention here in detail the various sects of dervishes, etc., which are an out-growth of Islamism, and the adherents of which are Mohammedans in name, in some sense and partially so, perhaps, in doctrine also. The brief account of Mussulman sects given below (for which we are indebted mainly to the Preliminary Discourse of Sale's Koran), taken together with the statement just made, is at least sufficient to show how mistaken is the notion of some, that, while there are divisions among Christians, the ranks of Islamism have never been broken by schism and opposing sects.

(a.) *Orthodox Sects:*

The orthodox Mussulmans are all called by the name *Sunnites*, or *Traditionists*, because they hold to the traditions as a sort of supplement to the Koran (like the *Mishna* of the Jews), and treat them with corresponding respect. The

founders of each of the principal sects are held to have been men of great devotion, and profoundly versed in the knowledge of spiritual truth.

The first sect originated early in the second century of the Hejira. Its adherents are called Hanefites, from the founder, and it is that sect of orthodox Mussulmans which is least bound by the authority of tradition, and which gives largest scope to the exercise of the individual reason in understanding and explaining the Koran. The number of the adherents of this sect is large among the Turks.

The sect of Malekites was founded a little later than the former, and, in contradistinction to that sect, gave the most absolute respect to the authority of tradition. The founder of the sect is said to have exclaimed, in his last illness: "Would to God that for every question decided by me according to my own opinion I had received so many stripes. Would to God I had never given any decision of my own." This sect is chiefly followed in Barbary and other parts of Africa.

The sects of Shafeïtes and Hanbalites were founded near the end of the second century of the Hejira, and the followers of these sects seem not to be distinguished so much by different doctrines or practices, as by the fact that they claimed to be followers respectively of different, but mutually friendly and very illustrious, teachers. These teachers both, and about equally, respected the traditions as of high authority. The sects still exist in Arabia, and to some extent in Persia.

(b.) Heterodox Sects.

The oldest heterodox sect is that called Kharadjïtes, or Revolters, because they, to the number of twelve thousand, revolted from the Khalif Ali, in the thirty-seventh year of the Hejira. The heresy of this sect consists chiefly in these things, viz. they hold those who have committed grievous sins as infidels; and they believe it right to resist a prince when he transgresses the law. The reason of the revolt of those in whom the sect originated was that, as they alleged,

Ali was guilty of sin in leaving an affair to the judgment of men which ought to have been determined by God alone.

Opposed to this sect is the large sect of Shiites, which has a wide-spread influence in Persia and elsewhere, and consists of those who are followers of Ali, and pay him especial honor, holding him on an equality with, or even superior to, Mohammed, and blasphemously applying to him many things said in the New Testament of Christ. They do not acknowledge that Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othman were legal successors of Mohammed. This sect is subdivided into numerous smaller sects, characterized by minor differences.

The Motazalites, or Separatists, rejected entirely the doctrine that the divine attributes, or any of them, are eternal. Only the divine essence is eternal. They seem to have taken up this position from discussions with Christians, and as an extreme recoil from the doctrine of an eternal distinction of persons in the Godhead. They believed that to assert the eternity of any of the divine attributes is opposed to the doctrine of unity. They denied that God is the author of both good and evil; that is, they held that he is not the author of evil. They held also that if a professor of the true religion commits a grievous sin and dies without repentance, he will be eternally damned, though his punishment will be lighter than that of the infidels. In this sect is said to have originated the scholastic divinity of Mohammedanism. It is divided into some twenty smaller sects.

The doctrine of the Sefatians, or Attributists, in opposition to that of the Motazalites, was, that all the attributes of God are eternal. They also believed God to be possessed of certain attributes which they termed "declarative," and, starting from human modes of conception in regard to God's seeing, hearing, etc., many of the followers of one or other of the minor divisions of this sect came to believe in some sort of corporeal resemblance between God and men, and some of them carried this gross mode of conception so far as to describe, with minute and blasphemous familiarity, the members of God's corporeal organization.

III. THE PRESENT RELATION OF ISLAMISM IN TURKEY TO CHRISTIANITY.¹

1. *The practical Acquaintance of Turks with Christianity derived through the corrupt Oriental Churches.*

From the very rise of the Ottoman empire to the present time, Turkish Mussulmans have been acquainted with Christianity chiefly as represented by Greek and Armenian Christians. The latter have long been a subject race; the former have been, for five centuries, the hereditary enemies of the Turks.² And for four centuries Turkey has had a most powerful enemy, professing the faith of the Greek church, on her northern borders; and her fiercest and most paralyzing encounters in war have been with her Russian foe.

But it is not mainly because nations professing Christianity have been the public enemies of Turkey that Turkish Mussulmans have stood in such unqualified hostility to our faith; although the severity of the prohibition which has, till within ten years, excluded all conversions from Islamism to Christianity, has doubtless been more rigid on this account. The causes of this hostility and aversion are rather to be sought in the character of Christianity as represented in Turkey, and in a consideration of the way in which such misrepresentations of our faith must impress a people like the Osmanly Turks.

In character the Turk is, indeed, haughty and domineering, capricious, and fond of ease and the pleasures of sense; but he is generous and reverent, and, according to the Oriental standard, highly honorable, conscientious, and trust-

¹ In speaking of Turkey it is understood that we do not speak particularly of Syria and Egypt, although much of what is here stated would equally well apply to those provinces.

² It is only because there is among the Greeks, with all their national vanity and tenacious attachment to their own church, no real unity, no mutual confidence, no forgetfulness of low, narrow, and selfish aims, in the interest of their nation and their faith, that the multitude of Greeks, scattered all through the Turkish empire, have not always been a formidable and dangerous power, inimical to the government to which they yield an unwilling allegiance.

worthy.¹ In intellect he is neither an imbecile nor a slug-gard. He has no sympathy with that form of wily cunning, deceit, and treachery in which the Greek is an adept; nor with the hypocritical sycophancy often found in the Armenian, nor with the low sordidness of the Jew; and, however great the defects of his social system, the Turk occupies a much higher place of moral purity, and holds far worthier ideas concerning woman and domestic life, than his neighbor, the unprincipled Persian, the very high priest of whose religion makes a jest of the holy tie of marriage, and scouts the very idea of female chastity.

Every orthodox Mohammedan, as bound by faith, tradition, and custom, holds in utter detestation the worship of images and pictures, — until very lately carrying this so far as to forbid even the possession of pictures of any kind.² The Mus-ulmans themselves have at least the merit of purity and simplicity in their worship, and in their places of worship. It is natural, therefore, that they should recoil with extreme aversion from a religion which appears to them, as regards its form of worship, to consist of idolatrous reverence paid to pictures of saints; a religion, too, whose grandest and holiest doctrines have been, through the ignorant and culpable mis-representations and perversions which they have suffered at the hands of priests and higher ecclesiastics, grossly misap-prehended by Mohammedans. Moreover, Turks have seen that this religion does not save its votaries from vices and sins the most offensive, rather that they are especially prevalent among the very priests of the religion itself; and they have

¹ The conduct of too many high Turkish officials has, in the estimation of Western Christian nations, fixed upon the entire Turkish character a charge of rapacity and venality which it does not deserve; for the tendency of high office and of power to blind and blunt the moral sense has less to restrain it in Turkey than in England or America.

² There is a curious supposition among Mohammedans that paintings and statues will, in the future world, surround the artist whose creations they are, and clamorously demand of him to endow them with souls, and will thus secure the unhappy artist's condemnation. Such superstitious are, however, now rapidly vanishing before the photographic art.

naturally concluded that if Christianity countenances such practices, the claims of its votaries that it is superior to their own faith is unsupported.¹

This impression, on the part of the Turks, concerning Christianity has not been materially improved by the Roman Catholic element, which has acquired considerable strength in various parts of the empire. It is only a pure Christianity, — pure in doctrinal teaching, and faithfully illustrated by living examples, — that has the fitness or the power to correct the erroneous impressions made by a corrupted Christianity. It is, therefore, only as the gospel and Protestant Christian teaching, with its purer faith and form of worship, gains a foothold and disciples in Turkey, that the Turks can be disabused of their erroneous notions concerning the true faith of Christ. This influence is as yet too feebly and imperfectly exerted in any except a few cities and villages of the empire to do much toward correcting the impressions of centuries.

2. *The present Attitude of Mohammedans in Turkey in relation to their own Faith and Material Reform.*

It is within the memory of men still living that the old exclusiveness of Mohammedanism in Turkey, which extended even to political and commercial relations, began effectually to be removed, and that foreigners began to reside, to any extent, even in Constantinople. It is little more than twenty years ago that the first important concessions to religious liberty were made. A little later, at the close of the revolutionary movement in Hungary, many Hungarians and Poles took refuge in Turkey, and many of them were employed in the Turkish service; and later still the memorable Crimean war deepened and strengthened and greatly increased the in-

¹ The use of intoxicating drinks, even of wine, is prohibited by Islamism; but the practice is so common, and often carried to such excess, among Christians, particularly Greeks, that it has come to be regarded, in the eye of Turks, almost as a custom of Christianity. On the other hand they have learned to distinguish the native Protestant Christians by their honesty and sobriety. It must, however, be acknowledged that, especially within a few years, many Turks also can no longer cast the stone of judgment, for they are not without sin in this matter.

fluences tending to break up the old intolerance, and to throw Turkey open to the influences of European civilization. Within this period also, many Turkish youth have been educated in the schools of Europe, mostly in Paris, and these men are now filling, to a great extent, the offices of government. The schools which the government has established at Constantinople also (all the pupils in the medical and military schools acquiring the French, and all those in the naval schools the English language), together with newspapers, magazines, public lectures, literary societies, are more and more every year bringing the Turks of this generation into acquaintance with the science and literature, the customs and inventions, the useful arts of the nations of Europe.

But it must not be supposed that changes like these can take place, almost within the limits of a human generation in an Oriental state, without opposition. It is to be expected that such radicalism will evoke the most determined and obstinate conservatism. And so it is. The Mohammedans of Turkey are to-day divided into two parties by a line of incomparably greater breadth and importance for the future interests of Turkey, than all the differences which separate the sects and schools of Mussulmans. The liberal party is doubtless, numerically, much the smaller. It is much concentrated at the capital, and at present holds many of the highest and most influential offices of the government, including the grand vizirate. In the provinces, its influence is naturally far stronger in European than in Asiatic Turkey. It is because the influence of this party is in the ascendant at the centre of the empire, where also it derives most efficient and needed countenance and support from European representatives and residents, that Turkey has, within a few years made such rapid progress in reforming and extending her educational system, and in the creation of a periodical and a permanent literature, the *source* and *material* of which is *very largely* of European origin. It is this party which forces the government to construct roads and telegraph lines, and to foster the useful arts and material improvements.

National exhibitions, steamboat companies, and every sort of organization which has for its object the development of the resources of the country and the improvement of its people, owe their origin to this young but enterprising party.

In religion, while nominally Mohammedan, — because the state of which they form a part and in which they aspire to influence is a Mohammedan state, — the adherents of this party are, to a very great extent, imbued with the shallow and materialistic philosophy, the infidelity, and the pantheism with which they have come in contact in their acquaintance with the civilization and literature of Southern Europe. Recognizing this form of civilization as better than that of their own people, they have adopted it, together with its grievous errors and weakness in the higher matters of faith and religion. The scepticism and pantheism, or the religious indifference, of these men is not, therefore, generally that which results from thorough examination and conviction, but rather incidental, and consequent upon their acquaintance with Europeans holding to these modes of thinking and speculation. Science has shown them the falsity and absurdity of many of the dogmas and traditions, and the puerility of many of the superstitions, of their hereditary faith, and many of them acknowledge that, at heart, they have no attachment whatever to the religion which they outwardly profess. The vigorous effort making for the appropriation and use, in the civil department of the government, of a large portion of the immense property belonging to the mosques, is indicative of the spirit and temper of this party.

The rising influence of the liberal party is jealously watched by the whole body of the Ulema (which corresponds to the clergy in Christendom) and by all their dependants and followers, and by the whole body of fanatical Mussulmans, throughout the country. This party would gladly restore the old prestige of Islamism, with all its exclusiveness and bigotry. With all their might they oppose the reforms that are making, and for essentially the same reasons as influenced the conduct of the clergy in European states at the

time of the rise of modern science. The Ulema see that the tendency of such progress is to weaken their own influence and the influence of their religion over the people, and they are joined by the mass of the people in protesting against these innovations, because they tend to weaken the advantage hitherto possessed by themselves, as the dominant race, over their Christian subjects, by fostering ideas and (so-called) improvements of Christian origin, many of which it can with difficulty be disguised, are really in the face of their hereditary religion, its cherished dogmas, traditions, and superstitions. The most effective argument in the possession of the liberal party with which to silence these objectors is the undeniable dependence of Turkey for her very existence upon the Christian powers of Europe.

3. *Attitude of the Mohammedans of Turkey toward Protestant Christianity.*

The early converts from the Oriental churches to Protestant Christianity found the Turks almost uniformly friendly to them. This was both because the Turk soon discovered that the new form of Christianity was purer, — “nearer to their own religion,” as they have always delighted to express it, — and so in its simplicity and purity of worship it truly is; and also because Protestantism had a powerful supporter in the representative of England at the Porte. But, at a later period, when a few from the ranks of the Turks themselves passed over, to be reckoned among the converts of the gospel, the attitude of Mohammedans materially changed. Were religion unconnected with the state, and were there no relation between a man’s hopes of advancement in rank and influence and fortune and his creed, the liberal party would probably have been found showing the utmost friendliness to the new form of Christian faith and worship, even though the rigid Mussulman party might violently oppose. In fact, however, while the opposition of the latter party has always been experienced, it has not been in forms grievously oppressive, until, about two years ago, exaggerated and essentially false

accounts of movements among Mohammedans toward a change or reform of their own faith, or toward Protestant Christianity, were circulated both by leaders in hostile Christian sects and by fanatical Mussulmans, with the design of compelling the liberal party, who mainly hold the reins of power in the government, to lay aside the attitude of indifference or of positive favor, which some were willing to show, to Protestantism, and to cast the power of the government against any defection from the ranks of Islamism. This attempt succeeded for the time, and its effects, in the intimidation of inquirers, still remain. The character of the two parties into which Turks are divided remains essentially unchanged, and, with suitable firmness and fidelity on the part of Protestant England's representative at Constantinople, favor, at least the negative favor of indifference, may be expected from the one party and a troublesome but not very harmful opposition from the other, to any efforts of Protestant missionaries to circulate and preach the gospel among the Turks, and to any Mussulmans, who from honest conviction, become followers of the gospel. The Protestant Christian missionary still finds those of the one party of Turks approachable, friendly, eager to listen, so long as he speaks of the science, the customs, the material benefits of the civilization he represents, but generally shy, inattentive, uninterested, if he speaks in his proper character, as an expounder and advocate of the truths of the Christian faith.

For the adherents of this liberal party, a prime and most necessary service to be rendered by the missionary of the gospel, is to furnish a check and an antidote against the pernicious speculative systems which have gained so many followers already in Turkey; to show that there is a faith which is not only not opposed to reason, — as they have seen their own to be, — but demanded by right reason and conscience; a religion which alone can satisfy their own deepest wants. And if the minister of the gospel can gain little access, at present, to the party of rigid Mussulmans by direct and personal contact with them, he must be content, at first,

to speak to them through the printed page, — for some will read, — and he may perhaps hope to reach a less callous religious sense, and, by the blessing of God, a fitting spiritual soil, certainly a soil comparatively unencumbered with the thorns of ambition, worldliness, and a materialistic philosophy. For the masses, who for the most part may be reckoned in the larger of the two parties, the mission of a pure Christianity is to break the fetters of superstition, ignorance, and sense, to exalt in the idea of the Turk that which is spiritual, and to lead him to the honest examination of that truth which makes free; which is itself light and life and salvation.

It is plain, then, that there is here a field for missionary effort which claims the prayers, the faith, and the earnest, patient labors of the church of Christ. It is true that many think the "time" of the Mohammedans has not yet come; "There are yet *four months*, and *then* cometh harvest." But the attentive ear may hear the master's voice: "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white *already* to harvest."

And it is not civilization, nor the introduction of material improvements, nor the infusion of European science and literature which is to regenerate the Mohammedans. It is the gospel, and the gospel only, clearly explained and illustrated in the lives of those who receive and exemplify it, which can pour into Turkey such a flood of light that neither Greek nor Romish machinations, nor the fanaticism of the illiberal among the Turks, nor the indifference of the liberals, shall be able to quench its rays.

[NOTE. — It has been thought advisable to retain, in the preceding Article, the popular term Islamism, instead of the more correct one, Islam.]