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THE  
**QUR'ANIC DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

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Rev. W. R. W. GARDNER, M.A.

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*The Rev. Canon Sell, D.D., M.R.A.S.*

## The Qur'anic Doctrine of Salvation

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# The Qur'anic Doctrine of Salvation

## I. GOD'S PURPOSE OF MERCY

A PURPOSE of mercy on the part of the Creator was revealed to man immediately after the Fall. This revelation was contained in the promise of 'Guidance' which should come to Adam, but not for himself alone.. 'If guidance shall come to you from me, whoso shall follow my guidance, on them shall no fear come, neither shall they be grieved; but they who shall not believe, and treat our signs as falsehood, these shall be inmates of the fire, in it they shall remain for ever.'<sup>1</sup>

John Owen, speaking of the grace of God, says, "That promise, "They shall all be taught of God", enwraps in itself the whole mystery of grace, as to its actual dispensation unto us, so far as we may be made real possessors of it.'<sup>2</sup>

It is not too much to claim that, in a similar way, we may see in the promise of God given to Adam of 'guidance', the foundation of a doctrine of grace as taught in the Qur'an. God did not leave mankind to perish after the Fall; but declared to Adam His purpose of grace to save some.

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 36-7; cf. xx. 121 ff.; xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Owen's *Works*, vol. ii, p. 15.

This purpose of grace works out in the giving of direction or guidance to mankind. We must note, however, that the words 'guidance', 'to guide', etc., are used in the Qur'an in different ways in different passages.

Sometimes 'guidance' means no more than the offer of God's mercy — the proffer of help and enlightenment from Him. Yet even in this sense it means not merely a formal offer of help — the general truth that God is willing to direct man. It includes such a manifestation of His purpose and desire to help and enlighten men and thus save them, accompanied by signs and proofs which ought to be sufficient to induce them to accept the proffered help, that it may truly be called 'guidance'.

In other words, the offer of God's mercy is made, not as a mere formality to all, so that they may be without excuse, but as a true and sincerely meant opportunity for their escape from that darkness in which they are into the true light.

Thus we find, 'And as to Thamud, we had vouchsafed them guidance; but to guidance did they prefer blindness.'<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, a deeper and more particular sense in which the word 'guidance' is used. It refers, at times, to the effectual working of this grace of God in the hearts and minds of those who accept the offer made to them. Those who believe and follow the direction are those who are 'guided'.

This mercy of God is nothing abstract. It is an experience — a working of God on the conscience and

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Fussilat (xli) 16.

heart, and it is felt by those who have experienced it to have been from God. They well know that what they are is of God's grace, and that all that they have been able to attain to has been of His gracious leading and His mercy. 'And he shall look and see him in the midst of hell; and he shall say to him, "By God thou hadst almost caused me to persist, and but for the favour of my Lord, I had surely been of those who had been brought (with thee unto .torment)."'<sup>1</sup>

Corresponding to this deeper guidance of God, there occur other expressions which speak of God's misdirecting or misleading men.

The most general statement of this may be found in those passages which state that God does not guide the unjust, the unbelievers, the liars, etc. Yet it is exactly such whom God seeks to guide and direct. The offer of His grace and guidance is to the unjust, the liars, the impious. Even Pharaoh, in the midst of his impiety and rebellion against God, is offered His guidance. . . . 'Go to Pharaoh; for he hath burst all bounds: and say, "Wouldest thou become just? Then I will guide thee to thy Lord that thou mayest fear Him."'<sup>2</sup>

When, therefore, we find statements that 'God does not guide the impious', we must look closely to see the real meaning of the words, and we find it in the sense that such, while continuing in sin and wickedness, manifest by their conduct that they are not following the guidance of God. In this sense, and in this sense alone, is it meant that God does not guide

<sup>1</sup> Suratu's-Saffat (xxxvii) 53-5; cf. Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 41.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'n-Nazi'at (lxxix) 17-19.

them. Their evil deeds and their unbelief are not of God.<sup>1</sup>

It is from this point we must start when we seek to understand the Qur'anic teaching that God causes men to err or leads them astray.

The proffered mercy of God is twofold in its effects on mankind. It leads some, it hardens and thus misleads others. When accepted, it leads to light and truth and happiness; when rejected, it becomes the means of searing the conscience, of hardening the heart, of blinding the spiritual insight, and of causing to err. God does not act in one way with some, and in another way with others. The same 'act' of God leads some and causes others to err.

The passages which make this clear are many, and we cannot do more than quote a few.

'That which hath been sent down to thee from thy Lord will surely increase the rebellion and unbelief of many of them.'<sup>2</sup>

'Whenever a Sura is sent down, there are some of them who say, "Whose faith hath it caused to increase?" It will increase the faith of those who believe, and they shall rejoice; but as to those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add to their doubt: and they shall die infidels.'<sup>3</sup>

'Verily God is not ashamed to set forth as well the instance of a gnat, as of any nobler object: for as to those who have believed, they know it to be the truth from their Lord; but as to the unbelievers, they will say: "What meaneth God by this comparison?"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Suras xxvii 50; xxx. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Ma'ida (v) 69.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu't-Tauba (ix) 125-6.

Many will He thereby mislead and many guide: but none will He mislead thereby except the wicked.'<sup>1</sup>

'Say: It is to those who believe, a guide and a remedy; but to those who believe not, there is a thickness in their ears, and to them it is a blindness: they are like those who are called to from afar.'<sup>2</sup>

'Thou wilt mislead by it whom thou wilt and guide whom thou wilt.'<sup>3</sup>

Through all these passages it is clear that this hardening of the heart, this blinding of the inner eye, this deafening of the spiritual ear, is a punishment on those who will not believe. It is but the confirmation of the sentence that those who, following the suggestions of Satan, will not open their hearts to divine truth, with them hell shall be filled. 'God said: Go forth from it, a scorned, a banished one! Whosoever of them shall follow thee, I will surely fill hell with you, one and all.'<sup>4</sup>

The hardening, the misleading, is the punishment, and yet the result of obstinate unbelief and culpable disregard of the 'signs' of God, which should have led to repentance and faith.<sup>5</sup>

That the effect of the offer of mercy depends on the reception which it meets on the part of man, is made clear in the following passage: 'Verily thou canst not guide whom thou desirest; but God guideth whom He will; and He best knoweth who will yield to guidance'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 24.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Fussilat (xli) 44.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 154; cf. also Suras xiv. 32; vi. 25, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 17; cf. verses 37, 143.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Suras xliii. 35; xlv. 6-7, 22, 30; xlvii. 18, 25; liii. 23; ii. 66; lxxxiv. 53; xxviii. 56; lxi. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Suratu'l-Qasas (xxviii) 56.

The offer of God's grace must be accepted and received by man ere it can effect any benefit on him in enlightening him or directing him into truth. Man cannot tell beforehand who will receive it, but God can, for 'He knoweth best who will submit to be guided'.

Those who knowingly turn away from God will find their desires and affections and their very ideas concerning truth so changed that they will not be able to discern truth even when they see it. This is the leading of God into error. Thus we find, 'And when they went astray, God led their hearts astray, for God guideth not a perverse people.'<sup>1</sup>

We cannot close this section without drawing attention to the fact that in some passages the verb *adalla yudillu* usually translated 'to lead astray' does not necessarily mean to *lead astray* or *mislead*. It may mean to *regard as being astray*, to *look upon as being out of the way*. This is a meaning which the commentators mention as possible in the following passage. 'Desire ye to guide those whom God hath led astray, but for him whom God leadeth astray, thou shalt by no means find a path?'<sup>2</sup> The meaning, not only possibly but even probably, is 'dost thou desire to regard as rightly guided him whom God regards as astray, since him whom God regards as astray thou shalt find no way of showing to be rightly guided? This is also in all probability the true meaning of the expression generally translated 'whom God hath led astray'.<sup>3</sup> This use of the verb is common in Muhammadan works when speaking of those who belong to an unorthodox sect.

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu's-Saff (lxi) 5.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 90.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'r-Rum (xxx) 28.

Having, then, seen that there is a divine purpose of mercy, we come next to ask, who are those who are included in this purpose?

The answer to this question has already been touched upon in what has been said of God's guidance and His misleading. But the question must now be more fully discussed.

In the first place, we note that the offer of this mercy or direction is made to all men. This might be inferred from the passage already quoted in which occurs the expression 'whoever shall follow my guidance, on them shall no fear come'.<sup>1</sup> All mankind have the opportunity of following this direction. The universality of the offer is brought out in several passages. For example, we find the words, 'The truth is from your Lord, let him then who will believe, and let him who will be an infidel.'<sup>2</sup> And again in another passage we read that the offer of guidance is made — or as the text runs man 'is guided' — and whether he accept or reject the offer cannot change the fact that he has had the offer of salvation placed before him. 'In a right way have we guided him; be he grateful or ungrateful'.<sup>3</sup> To be grateful is to be believing; to be ungrateful is to be unbelieving. We find the following words, ' . . . and if ye obey Him, ye shall have guidance'.<sup>4</sup> Obedience to God which, of course, presupposes faith in Him, is the only thing necessary on the part of man that he may be effectually guided.

Perhaps the most general statement with regard to this offer of salvation to all men is to be found in,

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 36.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Kahf (xviii) 28.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-Insan (lxxvi) 3.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'n-Nur (xxiv) 53.

'This (is) no other than a warning to all creatures, to him among you who willeth to walk in a straight path: but ye shall not will, unless God willeth, the Lord of all creatures'.<sup>1</sup> The offer is made to all, for the admonition is to *all creatures*. This can only mean that the guidance of God is in all good faith for all. We are here speaking of the *purpose* of God. This must be held in mind. We are not speaking of the *application of that purpose*, which must be considered later.

In God's purpose none are excluded on predetermined grounds, or on foreseen disobedience, from the possibility of participating in the benefits of His guidance, and in the blessings which flow from the following thereof. It cannot be imagined that the last clause of the sentence, 'but ye shall not will, unless God willeth, the Lord of all creatures,' is to be taken in any sense which would be a virtual denial of the first clause. Whatever the meaning of this clause may be, such an explanation is inadmissible. If this were to be admitted the first clause would be absolutely meaningless, if not absurd; while, as a matter of fact, it is the main statement of the verse, which the second clause is meant in some way to modify, but not to deny.

In the purpose of God, His guidance is intended for all men, and is available by all. If any have refused it, that is not to be put down to the divine unwillingness to allow them to participate in it. None are excluded on *a priori* grounds, so to speak, from participating in the benefits of this offer of salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Suratu't-Takwir (lxxxi) 27-9.

The one thing which must exist on the part of the individual, is a willingness to accept the guidance. That this willingness on the part of the individual must be enforced is one of the teachings of the Qur'an which stands out clearly and emphatically. It lay within the possibility of the divine omnipotence to over-ride the will of man, and thus make all men *of one religion*, as the Qur'anic phrase sometimes is; or, as it is sometimes put, God might have *led all men*. In other words, God could have so forced the will of man that none could have refused to accept His direction and guidance. But Muhammad saw clearly that such was not, as a matter of experience, the way in which God had seen fit to direct mankind.

As regards times and seasons, as regards means and methods, none can will to accept the guidance of God, but as He willeth. God has reserved unto Himself the determination of events so that these impulses and motives, which lead men to accept His guidance, originate and act in His providential dealings with men in such a way that man's willingness to accept the divine guidance depends on and issues forth from the divine will. Man's actual willing in the course of history is dependent on the working out of God's will. And thus man can claim no merit even in that part of his salvation, which consists in the acceptance of the divine offer of mercy.

It is specially to be noted that the expression here translated (lxxxix. 27-9) by Sale 'unless God willeth', does not in the original have such a definite and decided sense. It is not unless if God will, but rather unless as God will. It expresses a condition of means and manner rather than a condition of possibility.

The condition 'unless as God willeth' limits not the power of men to will the acceptance of His offer of salvation, but the time and manner and way in which men will. In fact, the meaning, at bottom, is very much the opposite to that which is generally supposed to be attached to the expression. It is an encouragement to men rather than a ground for their doubt or even hopelessness. If a man feels inclined to accept the offer of salvation, he may be certain that the inclination is in accordance with God's will, and if he accept it he may rest assured in his own mind that the divine will is leading and guiding him.

The mistake commonly made in the interpretation of this and similar passages is akin to, if not identical with, the false view so long taken by Calvinists of the doctrine of election. The doctrine of election in both the New Testament and the Qur'an, is a doctrine to comfort and encourage those who feel drawn towards the truth. They may rest assured that the very fact that they desire to follow the guidance of God is proof that they are called of God. We are not here reading into the Qur'an any teaching borrowed from Christian theologians, but are simply trying to explain what the text of the Qur'an appears itself to teach.

Nowhere in the Qur'an are men taught that they must first become assured that God has chosen them as individuals, in other words, that God has willed their personal salvation, before they can of their own will accept His guidance. It is all the other way about. Men may rest assured that God has willed their salvation when they feel drawn towards Him, and, as an act of their own will, consciously yield themselves to His guidance.

None need ever despair of the mercy of God, thinking that the mercy of God is not for him. Even to Pharaoh, in his arrogance and sinful opposition, the guidance of God is offered.<sup>1</sup>

Another point in the teaching of the Qur'an on this question must now be considered.

God appropriates this mercy to whom He pleaseth. We read, 'It is not the desire of the unbelievers, either among those unto whom the Scriptures have been given, or among the idolaters, that any good should be sent down unto you from your Lord: but God will shew His special mercy to whom He will; for He is of great bounty'.<sup>2</sup> The 'mercy' here spoken of is not specially the mercy of guidance, but refers generally to the blessings of God; yet the truth taught in this verse does lie at the base of all the teaching of the Qur'an as to the appropriation by God of His mercy (His direction unto salvation) to those whom He pleaseth.

God is not moved by those considerations which might move men to grant or to withhold mercy. It is as He pleaseth, and not as man pleaseth or deemeth fit that He bestows His grace and mercy. And many passages in the Qur'an show that the thought which underlay the teaching of Muhammad, when he spoke of God's guiding whom He pleaseth, or leading into error whom He pleaseth, was that the conditions on which the direction and guidance of God become available and practically beneficial to the individual are of God's own choice. None can secure the direction of God on

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nazi'at (lxxix) 17-19; cf. Suratu Yusuf (xii) 37.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 99.

conditions and in circumstances other than those which God Himself has approved and appointed.

Faith in God and surrender to Him form the indispensable necessity on the part of the individual before he can receive the guidance of God. Apart from this condition God refuses to grant His guidance; nay, He may be said to withhold it and thus lead men into error. Those who fulfil the conditions receive His guidance; to those who do not fulfil His conditions, but in unbelief or arrogance turn from His grace, it becomes a means, under His providence, of leading them further into error. 'Many will He mislead by such (parables) and many guide, but none will He mislead except the wicked, who, after its establishment, violate the covenant of God'.<sup>1</sup> The following passage brings out the same thought, 'I will turn aside from my signs the proud ones of the earth unjustly'.<sup>2</sup>

Another series of passages must yet be considered ere we can close this section. There are passages which appear to teach that the unbelief or wickedness of man is because of a decree of God. Thus we read, 'And to every people have we sent an apostle *saying*; "Worship God and turn away from Taghut, there were whom God guided, and there were others decreed to err".<sup>3</sup> The original<sup>4</sup> of this last clause may be better translated 'and there were others to whom error was justly

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 24-51.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 143; cf. Suras ii. 36; vii. 37; ix. 128; x.100-1; lxxxix. xiv. 32, 58-60.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'n-Nahl (xvi) 38-9.

<sup>4</sup> وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ

appointed'. The appointment was not by eternal decree, but by judicial decision, because of their unbelief, or because of their own choice of evil.

Again we find, the following, 'But prepared of old for the infidels was this fraud of theirs; and they are turned aside from the path: for whom God causeth to err; no guide shall be for him.'<sup>1</sup> Here again, on looking at the original text<sup>2</sup> we find that the idea conveyed by the above translation is not fair. The phrase rather means, 'To those who have disbelieved their deceitful action has been made to appear attractive.' Some commentators even suggest that it is Satan who has made it to seem attractive, but even following the usual explanation that it is God who is the Agent, the words must be taken in the sense in which we see God's actions spoken of: 'Verily, we have ordained (literally, made) everything which is on the earth for its adornment, that we might make trial who among mankind would excel in works.'<sup>3</sup>

The verse xiii. 33 deals not with the divine decrees, but with the providential dealing of God, and is to be taken in view of what has already been said as to God's leading and misleading.

Another passage in which a similar expression is employed is found: 'Thus are the deeds of transgressors pre-arranged for them.'<sup>4</sup> Again we note that the original text<sup>5</sup> does not necessarily refer to any decree

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 33.

<sup>2</sup> زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-Kahf (xviii) 6.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu Yunas (x) 13.

<sup>5</sup> يَعْمَلُونَ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا

of God; and again some of the commentators refer to Satan as the agent. In either case the meaning of the passage is that whether by God (but not as the consequence of a predetermined decree), or by Satan, the evil deeds of the transgressors have been made to appear good in their eyes. Similar uses of the expression will be found.<sup>1</sup> In the latter passages the agent is admittedly God.

There is another passage in which, at first sight, the sense of the usual interpretation, or rather translation, appears to affirm clearly that God has decreed the unbelief of some. The passage is, 'Verily those against whom the word of thy Lord is decreed, shall not believe although there come unto them every (kind of) sign; till they see the grievous torment.'<sup>2</sup> The explanation of the expression is to be found in the thirty-fourth verse of the same Sura. 'Thus is the word of thy Lord made good on the wicked; that they shall not believe.'<sup>3</sup> The original text in each of these passages has nothing to say about a *decree* (the Arabic word in both is 'haqqat'), and the idea conveyed is not that God has decreed the unbelief of some, but that God has said, and that His word has been *verified* in the instances referred to, that they who *will* not believe, *shall* not believe. God's guidance and all His signs shall only harden them the more and lead them into error.

3. We now turn to ask, what does the Qur'an teach concerning the object of this purpose of mercy? What does God propose to do for man by offering him direction and guidance?

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<sup>1</sup> Suras x. 37; xxvii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu Yunas (x) 96-7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Suras xxxix. 71; xl. 6.

The object of the divine purpose of mercy is stated generally in such passages as the following:—

'Now is the right way made distinct from error whoever, therefore, shall deny Taghut, and believe in God, he will have taken hold on a strong handle, which shall not be broken; God is He who heareth and seeth. God is the patron of believers: He shall lead them out of darkness into light. ..'<sup>1</sup>

'He it is who hath sent down clear tokens unto His servant, that He may lead you out of darkness into light; for God is compassionate (and) merciful unto you.'<sup>2</sup>

The Creator, seeing man in the darkness of ignorance, knowing neither God nor how to worship Him, desires to bring man into the light of truth. To this end He purposes to instruct man concerning Himself and the way in which he may please Him. By this direction and instruction man is to be taught what he is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of him.

Without in any way entering here into the doctrine of God, as taught in the Qur'an, let us note that one of its main teachings is that God is merciful and forgiving. This means much more than that God possesses the attribute of mercy and that He is ever ready to forgive. It means that God desires that men seek forgiveness. And it is a part of the object of His purpose of mercy to inculcate and impress on man the fact that He desires to forgive — that He is not indifferent to man and his condition — but is ever on the outlook for the return of the prodigal. Yet, at the same time, Muhammad never lost

<sup>1</sup> Suratul'-Baqara (ii) 257-8.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Hadid (lvii) 9; cf. Suras lxxv. 11; xiv. 1, 5; v. 18; xxxiii. 42.

sight of the truth, which John the Baptist made the main theme of his preaching, that God is a God of justice and that man must repent and flee from the wrath to come.

Sometimes the leading and guidance of God are spoken of in the Qur'an as being a leading and direction into peace. In the world men are in constant trouble, and the satisfaction derived from earthly pleasures and blessings are vain and transient and bring no true and lasting peace. God desires to bring to man the full and complete satisfaction of all his cravings both bodily and spiritual. This complete satisfaction is to be attained only hereafter, in the abode of peace. Hence God's purpose of mercy is sometimes described as being that of leading him unto the dwelling place of peace. 'Now have we plainly declared our signs unto those who will consider. For them is a dwelling of peace with their Lord, and in recompense for their work He shall be their protector.'<sup>1</sup>

'Thus make we our signs clear to those who consider. God calleth to the abode of peace, and He guideth whom He will into the right way.'<sup>2</sup>

The word of welcome which believers shall hear from God as they enter this blessed abode will be the word *Peace*, 'Peace shall be the word on the part of a merciful Lord, But be ye separated this day, O ye sinners'<sup>3</sup>

The experience of this peace commences here on earth in the enjoyment of the blessings of this life and the deliverance of the believer from trials, troubles, persecutions, and all else that may afflict him; as the

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-An'am (vi) 126-7.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu Yunas (x) 26.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu Ya Sin (xxxvi) 58-9.

wicked often share in the blessings of life, it is not these blessings in themselves that bring to the believer the experience of this peace, but the knowledge of God's favour in their enjoyment, and especially the knowledge of His forgiving mercy. Thus, very often the purpose of God is said to be that He may forgive men. 'He calleth you that He may pardon your sins, and respite you until an appointed time.'<sup>1</sup> 'O ye who believe, if ye fear God, He will make good your deliverance, and will put away your sins from you, and will forgive you: for God is of great bounteousness.'<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of God being to forgive men, He makes them to experience peace. This they do through meditation on God, by which we should understand, meditation on the attributes and character of God as He has revealed Himself, and on the manner in which He has shown His purpose of mercy to mankind. ' . . . Shall not (*men's*) hearts repose in the meditation of God?'<sup>3</sup>

Not merely so, but God manifests His presence specially to believers to encourage and strengthen them. 'He it is who sendeth down a spirit of secure repose (or better interpreted, *the Shechinah*, the manifestation of His Presence) into the hearts of the faithful, that they may add faith to their faith. . . '<sup>4</sup>

The blessings which are bestowed by God through His guidance and direction culminate in the entrance into Paradise, granted to the believer as the reward of his faith and obedience. We shall quote here only one

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Ibrahim (xiv) 11.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Anfal (viii) 29; see also v. 70; liv. 9; lxxi. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 28.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'l-Fath (xlvi) 4.

passage which speaks on this point. It is so well known that it is unnecessary to insist on it further. We have the words of the believing Egyptian urging his fellow-countrymen to repent and turn to the true faith. 'Whoso shall have wrought evil shall not be recompensed but with its like; but whoso shall have done the things that are right, whether male or female, and is a believer — these shall enter paradise . . . ' <sup>1</sup>

This entrance into paradise is spoken of in the Qur'an as being in itself the great 'Felicity', or the great 'Salvation'. (The word in the original is one and the same.) 'They who believe and fear God — for them are good tidings in this life, and in the next. There is no change in the words of God. This, the great felicity.' <sup>2</sup> In many passages the Qur'an speaks of the joys and pleasures which the believer shall partake of in Paradise, in sensuous figures, some of which scarcely permit of quotation.

We do not intend here to enter into the thorny question of the interpretation of such passages. The point that we desire to notice is that escape from the torments of hell and entrance into paradise are defined in the Qur'an as *the great Felicity, the great Salvation*, which God has prepared for believers.

All who have believed and have wrought righteousness may not only hope to enter paradise, but may look forward with confidence to having all their desires satisfied. But he who bringeth the truth, and he who

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 43.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu Yunas (x) 64-5; see also ix. 73; vi. 6; xl. 8-9; iv. 17; ix. 90,101, 112; xxxvii. 40-58; xlv. 51-7; xlv. 29; lvii. 12; lx. 12; lxiv. 9.

believeth it to be the truth: these are the God-fearing; whatsoever they shall desire, awaiteth them with their Lord! this is the recompense of the righteous that God may do away the guilt of their worst actions, and for their best actions render them their reward.'<sup>1</sup> We find the same idea: 'And there are grades for all, according to their works; that (God) may repay them for their works, and they shall not be unjustly treated.'<sup>2</sup>

The joys and blessings of paradise though a reward are yet a gift from God. Thus we read: 'We are your friends in this life and in the next; therein shall ye have that which your souls shall desire, and therein shall ye obtain whatever ye shall ask for, the hospitality of a gracious and merciful One.'<sup>3</sup>

The reward of paradise, then shall be 'with (or, in the presence of) their Lord'. What exactly Muhammad intended to convey by these words it is difficult to say. The words may mean simply that all the joys and pleasures of paradise proceed from God as their source and giver; but it may be that he intended to teach the truth that there could be no pleasure in paradise apart from the presence of God, and the conscious knowledge of His favour.

We find the following description of the state of the blessed; 'God promiseth to the faithful, both men and women, gardens, 'neath which the rivers flow, wherein they shall abide; and goodly mansions in the gardens of Eden; but best of all will be God's good pleasure in them.'<sup>4</sup> Thus, the greatest blessing will be the conscious

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'z-Zumar (xxxix) 34-6.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Ahqaf (xlvi) 18; cf. Sura xiii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-Fussilat (xli) 31-2.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu't-Tauba (ix) 73.

knowledge of God's favour, and the sight of God Himself. Again, on this point we do not desire to enter into, details, for it would lead us too far away from the subject of our present study. How the blessed shall enjoy the vision of God who is unseen is a point on which the theologians have not a little to say.

Yet while the vision of God, and the enjoyment of His favour are the supreme blessings of heaven, the Qur'an plainly teaches that there are lesser joys. All shall not receive alike. 'For God well knoweth what ye do.'<sup>1</sup> Looking at this teaching in view of what has already been said, we cannot help feeling that what the Qur'an really teaches is that according as one has lower or higher desires and longings, he shall receive lower or higher blessings.

This is the explanation which Ghazali gives in his exposition of the condition and the joys of the believer in paradise. For those who, without having ever really conquered the lower and sensual appetites, have yet sought to obey God, and fulfil His commands, there will be provided joys and pleasures suited to their carnal appetites, and their still existing earthly passions.

We have already seen in considering the doctrine of sin,<sup>2</sup> that according to the Qur'an, man has not fallen through sin into any condition from which he requires to be *redeemed*. We, therefore, are not surprised to find in our study of the doctrine of salvation no statement in any way akin to the Christian doctrine of redemption. It is true that sin requires to be atoned for, and it is often said that God atones or will atone for

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 97-8.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Qur'anic Doctrine of Sin* (C.L.S.).

the sins of those who believe and do good works; yet even in this there is nothing that can be said to approach in any way a doctrine of *redemption*.

Awakening, Enlightenment, Instruction, Direction — these are provided and are offered to man, and in their provision and bestowal on man is to be seen God's grace. Without His grace man would never attain, and thus, in a sense, the salvation which is offered, is the gift of God. But this grace is only helping grace. By it and through it a man is enabled to win for himself a right to the blessedness of paradise. Without it he would have no knowledge of God; he would not know how to please Him; he would be wholly unable to walk aright before Him, even were he to know the way; and after enlightenment and assistance enabling him to walk aright, man receives the right of admission into paradise only because he has fulfilled the conditions which God has determined to be necessary. It is not because the believer has become pure and holy through God's grace that he enters heaven. Entrance into heaven is wholly and solely the reward for his belief in God and his obedience to the divine commands, however imperfect that obedience may have been. It is quite independent of any moral change or improvement in the believer himself.

The blessedness of heaven is absolutely the gift of God. It is the reward offered to the believer for his faith and obedience, and in degree it is far above any merit which he may have gained; it is thus of mercy and grace.

So far as we can see from the Qur'an heaven is not a state or condition into which the believer grows

through the grace of God working in and assisting him, but simply a place wherein he receives a superabundant reward for all he may have been able to do by the assistance of God's grace.

The idea of salvation is thus entirely legalistic. The Abode of Peace is not in any sense within man, but without him. The Kingdom of God is the reward he receives, not the Spirit which fills him. Salvation is not a becoming, but a receiving.

## II. THE ATTAINING OF SALVATION

SALVATION is to be attained or worked out by man, but not in independence of God, His will, and His dealings with mankind. The subject, thus, naturally divides itself into two parts, and we shall first consider the teaching of the Qur'an on the way of salvation, looking at it from man's side, and thereafter we shall see what the Qur'an has to say of this way of salvation, looking at it, so to speak, from God's side. The Qur'anic doctrine of salvation will be found in the harmonizing of these two sides of Qur'anic teaching by what may be called a system of give and take, and in the supplementing of each by the other.

The purpose of God to save some precedes the actual working out of man's salvation, but this salvation itself is the result of the co-operation of the divine will with the endeavour of man himself. It is only in so far as man realizes this that he can work out his own salvation, God working in and through him.

Before proceeding further we desire to state that we do not in any way suggest that the order in which we are about to consider the elements or steps in this salvation is, as a matter of actual experience or necessarily, that order in which they must historically be found present in the experience of him who hopes to attain unto salvation.

The first essential which we shall consider is faith. He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and

that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him. The Qur'an has nothing to say to him who would seek to live a good moral life, and leave the question of belief in God and all that that implies, to the mercy and justice of God should He, perchance, exist.

It is unnecessary to quote passages which teach the existence of God. These are so numerous and so plain in their teaching that we may take them for granted. That God is, and that there is none other than He, is the fundamental teaching of the Qur'an. In order, then, that man may find or attain to salvation, he must first of all believe in God. The question of the doctrine of God does not come up for consideration here. It is *faith* in God which we here consider. This saving faith is not mere outward profession of belief in God, even accompanied by seemingly scrupulous attention to the duties incumbent on believers. This is seen, for instance, in the following passage: 'Say, Make ye your offerings, voluntarily or by constraint; it cannot be accepted from you, because ye are a wicked people, and nothing hindreth the acceptance of their offerings, but that they believe not in God and His Apostle, and perform not (*the duty of prayer*), but with sluggishness; and make not offerings but with reluctance. . . . They swear by God that they are indeed of you; yet they are not of you, but are a people who are afraid (*of you*)'.<sup>1</sup> Inward faith must lie at the foundation of all religious actions.

We find a statement which may be taken as a fair exposition of what according to the Qur'an is embraced within the scope of saving faith. 'O true believers, believe in God and His Apostle, and the Book which

<sup>1</sup> Suratu't-Tauba (ix) 53-4, 56.

He hath sent down to His Apostle, and the Book which He hath formerly sent down. And whosoever believeth not on God, and His Angels, and His Scriptures, and His Apostles, and the last day, he surely hath erred in a wide mistake'.<sup>1</sup>

According to this, which is, perhaps, the most general and most comprehensive statement to be found in the Qur'an as to what is required of those who would be saved, we see that there are five articles of belief necessary to salvation. 1. God, 2. His Angels, 3. His Books, 4. His Apostles, 5. The Last Day. Into the discussion of the details of these articles of faith we do not intend to enter. A point, however, which is most interesting to note in passing, is that (predestination), the sixth article of Faith, according to the teachings of the orthodox Muhammadan divines finds no place in this Qur'anic *Quicunque vult* and it cannot be truly claimed to be one of the necessary articles of faith according to the teaching of the Qur'an. That the doctrine of predestination is taught in the Qur'an, is, of course, certain. How it is to be systematically *stated* is doubtful. But that there is in the Qur'an any demand that it be held in any special form, or according to any special dogmatic statement of it, as an essential of saving faith, it is hard to believe and in our view impossible to prove.

Saving faith, however, includes more than even hearty inward acceptance of these five points. It includes *trust* in God. That is, it is a personal attitude towards this God, faith in whom is demanded. The believer must have confidence in God, and be willing to commit

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 135-6.

himself to Him, and to put his reliance on Him. 'Believers are they only whose hearts thrill with fear when God is named, and whose faith increaseth at each recital of His signs, and who put their trust in their Lord; who observe the prayer, and give alms out of that which we have supplied them. These are the believers.'<sup>1</sup>

Having this confidence in God, one must be willing to accept in all due submission, all that comes from His hand whether it be prosperity or adversity. 'There are some men who serve God in a single point. If good come upon one of them, he resteth in it; but if trial come upon him, he turneth him round, with the loss both of this world, and of the next. This same is the clear ruin.'<sup>2</sup> There must be no lurking thought of the possibility of the falsehood of the religion, nor any readiness to fall back to heathen ways and customs.

The first step which man is to take *in faith* is the step of repentance. We have already said that we do not intend to insist that faith comes before repentance; indeed, many passages in the Qur'an speak as if the order were repentance, faith, good works. Thus we find the words, ' . . . and they shall meet with evil; save those who repent, and believe, and do that which is right; these shall enter the Garden. . . .'<sup>3</sup> And elsewhere we see the same sequence of expression, as in the following. ' . . . I will forgive him who turneth to God and believeth, and worketh righteousness; and then yieldeth to guidances . . .'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Anfal (viii) 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Hajj (xxii) 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu Maryam (xix) 60-1.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu Ta Ha (xx) 84; see Suras xxv. 70-1; xxviii, 15; xxiv. 5; xl. 1; vii. 152; iv. 21; xix. 61.

While the Qur'an thus teaches clearly the necessity for repentance, it nowhere makes very plain wherein this repentance consists. That, however, it is repentance for evil done, and a turning away from what is now seen to have been wrong action or sin, we see from such passage as the following. 'Verily repentance (will be accepted) with God, from those who do evil ignorantly, and then repent speedily, unto them will God be turned.'<sup>1</sup> But, as we have seen in our study of the Qur'anic teaching on sin, that there is no clear idea of the heinousness of sin as injury or despite done to the love of God, so here we find no clear teaching that repentance involves contrition of heart before a loving Father, against whom man has sinned. Repentance is rather simply the recognition, accompanied by regret, that the course of action previously followed was not in accordance with God's commands, or was contrary to the best interests of the sinner himself.

We must, however, note that the Qur'an clearly distinguishes between asking for the pardon of sin and repentance. To seek forgiveness for a wrong done does not in itself involve repentance for the sin committed. And this distinction is a point which should be carefully noted. He who seeks salvation is not merely to ask for forgiveness, but is to repent. That is, he must resolve to quit the line of action which he has previously followed and make up his mind to enter upon a new line of action, one which is believed to be consonant with the will of God as revealed in the Qur'an. Thus we read, 'a book, whose verses are established in wisdom and then set forth with clearness (is a revelation) from

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 21; see Suras vii. 152; xvi. 120.

the Wise, the Knowing that ye serve worship none other than God, verily I (come) to you from Him charged with warnings and announcements that ye seek pardon of your Lord and then be turned unto Him.'<sup>1</sup>

Repentance is repentance towards God. It is not merely a turning over a new leaf, but a conscious acknowledgement of sin, requiring and involving confession of wrongdoing without which there can be no seeking of pardon and a turning to God. It is not merely a regret that the line of action which has been followed was wrong or mistaken, but an actual turning to God, with renewed purpose of mind and heart to serve Him.

Regret without repentance towards God is spoken of in several passages in the Qur'an. Some of these passages refer to regret in this life, as 'He (*God*) said, yet a little while, and they will soon repent them (literally *regret* their obstinacy). Then did the shout (*of the destroying angel*) in justice surprise them, and we made them like leaves swept down by a torrent.'<sup>2</sup>

Other passages refer to the regret and remorse of the unbelievers on the last day when they realize without avail the terrors of the punishment which has come upon them.<sup>3</sup>

True repentance includes a turning to God. It may therefore, be said that the Qur'an teaches the necessity of conversion.

Again, the fact that repentance and amendment are closely united in several passages shows that, according to the teaching of the Qur'an, true repentance implies

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Hud (xi) 1-3; see verses 54, 64, 92.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Mu'minun (xxiii) 42, 43; see also Suras xxvi. 157; xlix. 6; v. 34.

<sup>3</sup> See Suras x. 5; xxxiv. 32.

a turning away from the evil repented of. Thus we find the following, 'Those who repent and amend, and lay fast hold on God, and approve the sincerity of their religion to God, these shall be (*numbered*) with the faithful; and God will at last bestow on the faithful a great reward.'<sup>1</sup> 'Your Lord hath laid down for Himself a law of mercy; so that if any one of you commit a fault through ignorance, and afterwards turn and amend, He surely will be Gracious, Merciful'.<sup>2</sup>

The Qur'an knows nothing of continuing in sin that grace may abound. It holds out the hope of a ready forgiveness for even the inveterate sinner, that is, the sinner who falls again and yet again from grace; but it holds out no hope for him who continues in a course of sin without endeavouring to amend. All repentance must be accompanied by a resolve to amend, and must be followed by a genuine attempt at amendment and righteous living. Hence death-bed repentance cannot be accepted.

The Qur'an does not appear, however, to distinguish between the repentance and conversion which occurs at the beginning of one's religious life, and that repentance and conversion which is the constant duty of the believer who finds himself ever failing or coming short in his attempts to please God. There may be a trace of this distinction in the use in some passages of the words *aba* and *awwab* instead of *taba*. In this connexion it may be noted that Job, David and Solomon are held up as examples of *believers* who set forth a true and noble example of repentance or turning

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 145.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-An'am (vi) 54.

towards God.<sup>1</sup> If any distinction is to be understood as implied by the use of *aba* instead of *taba* it is probably to be seen by noting that when the former word is used the repentance is regarded as having been made quickly after the committing of the sin.

However this may be, we may say boldly that, according to the Qur'an, there is no such experience on the part of the believer as that described by the word *regeneration*. Man not being *dead* in sin does not require to be born of the Spirit. All he requires is repentance and conversion, and God is ever ready to help him in the performance of these acts of merit, and ever ready to accept them at His hands when they are performed.

But repentance and faith alone are not, according to the Qur'an, sufficient to ensure salvation. They must be followed by and associated with good works. The view held by some Muhammadan theologians that he who repeats with sincerity the creed, 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God', thereby earns entrance into the blessings of the life hereafter is but a very defective way of maintaining that salvation is wholly of God's grace through faith. The Qur'an so persistently unites the three — repentance, faith, and good works — that it is difficult to believe that Muhammad ever thought that there could be any true faith apart from good works.

We come, therefore, to consider the place which, according to the teaching of the Qur'an, good works hold in the working out of the believer's salvation, and

<sup>1</sup> See Suras xxxviii. 16, 18, 29, 44; i. 31; xvii. 27.

first we shall look at the insistence of the Qur'an on the necessity of good works as the outward and visible sign of man's reformation, the evidence to the senses of his repentance and faith.

The passages in which good works are spoken of are very many. In almost every instance they are referred to in connexion with faith. We have already seen that the Qur'an knows nothing of repentance apart from a renouncement of evil courses, and here we may say that, similarly, the Qur'an knows nothing of faith without works. Belief in God and His revelation, and the doing of good works are so repeatedly united that it would almost seem as if Muhammad believed that faith apart from good works could not be truly said to exist. He never actually says so in so many words, but the continual and consistent union of the two in the description of what God demands of the believer, that is, of those who shall inherit salvation, can only be explained satisfactorily, if we understand that Muhammad meant to assert that the two are indissolubly united. Faith apart from works is a hollow sham, a vain hypocrisy.

As examples of those passages in which faith and works are spoken of together, we may take the following: 'But whosoever shall do good works, being a true believer, shall fear neither wrong, nor loss'.<sup>1</sup> 'Whoso shall do the things that are right, and be a believer, his efforts shall not be disowned: and surely we will write them down for him'.<sup>2</sup> There occurs the following, 'And they who believe and do the things that are right, shall obtain forgiveness and an honourable provision.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Ta Ha (xx) 111.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Anbiya' (xxi) 94.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-Hajj (xxii) 49.

As a final example, we shall quote 'Believers, now hath God sent down unto you an admonition, an apostle, who reciteth to you the clear signs of God; that He may bring those who believe, and do the things that are right, from darkness into light. And whoso believeth in God doeth the things that are right, and God will cause them to enter the gardens beneath which the rivers flow, to remain therein for ever, a goodly provision now hath God made for him'.<sup>1</sup>

The above passages are but a few of many in which faith and works are so closely united as to show that in practice the two are inseparable. To have faith without works is impossible. True faith must show itself forth in works.

Yet so far, we have seen only that works are the outward evidence of the existence of repentance and faith.

We must now consider the relation of faith and works so that we may understand what the Qur'an teaches as to the nature of their necessary union.

Do works simply follow faith? That is, are they but another step forward on the way of salvation, faith being the first step? Or are good works so closely connected with faith, so vitally united with it, that apart from it they cannot exist?

In a general way it may be said that, according to the Qur'an, good works which do not spring from faith cannot with truth be regarded as good works. It is not to those who do good works that heaven is promised, but to those who believe and do good works.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu't-Talaq (lxv) 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Suras xx. 3; xxi. 49; xxii. 1-10.

Works which are done without a true faith in God and submission to His revealed will, are unacceptable. Such works, far from being pleasing to God, will be brought to nought. 'This (shall they suffer), because they follow that which angereth God, and abhor what pleaseth Him; therefore will He make their works fruitless.'<sup>1</sup> It may be thought that the works here spoken of refer more naturally to the evil actions of the wicked which God will bring to nought; and the Qur'an not infrequently speaks of the actions of the wicked, specially those done with intent to injure or damage or oppose the true believers, as being overthrown by God and brought to nought, but it is probable that the reference here is to those actions whereby men in their unbelief and ignorance seek to make themselves well pleasing to God.

Even the good deeds of believers, if done without true faith and apart from obedience to God and His apostle, are by their want of faith and want of obedience made void. 'O true believers, obey God, and obey the apostle; and render not your works vain.'<sup>2</sup>

We see, then, that works must be the outcome of faith, and must be done in faith and in the spirit of obedience. In other words, they must have a moral value; otherwise they are of none effect. The mere performance of an action which in outward appearance corresponds to and resembles a 'good work', is in itself nothing. It is the inward motive and intention which makes the deed a true work of faith, and hence, a 'good work'.

These good works, however, are more than evidence of the existence of faith and repentance. They are, so

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Muhammad (xlvii) 30; see also verse 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 35.

to speak, an end in themselves; for they are counted for righteousness. Having faith in God and His revelation, the believer's aim must be to gain or attain to righteousness by a life manifesting submission, and a spirit of obedience to God and His Apostle, and by the performance of works of righteousness.

In this respect the attitude of the Qur'an is not far from the teachings of Judaism in the lifetime of Jesus Christ. The strict observance of the commands of the Qur'an in respect of conduct and walk covers a mass of actions the performance of which, in the right spirit, may be summed up in one word as righteousness. We find the following explanation of what is meant by righteousness. 'There is no piety in turning your faces (in prayer) towards the east and the west, but he is pious who believeth in God, and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures, and the Prophets; who for the love of God (*'ala hubbihi*) disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and for ransoming of captives; who observeth prayer, and payeth the legal alms; and who is of those who perform their engagements, when they have engaged in them, and who is patient under ills and hardships, and in time of trouble: these are they who are just, and these are they who fear the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

They who do such things are the righteous. Their good deeds are accepted of God, seeing that they are done in faith. 'Whoso shall do the things that are right, and be a true believer, his efforts shall not be disowned: and surely will we write (it) down for him'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 172.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Anbiya' (xxi) 94.

Here comes in the Qur'anic doctrine of justification. Justification is of works. These works must be the outcome of faith, but there is no such thing as justification by faith apart from works. According to a man's work and life, so is he justified or condemned, i.e. so is he held to be righteous or unrighteous.

Man is so apt and ready to deceive himself that he cannot be a true judge of his own motives and the essential moral value of his good works. It is God alone who is able to judge, and in this judgment, He follows that which seemeth best to Himself; yet there is and can be no unfairness in this judgment. Each may be certain that God will not wrong him in the slightest matter. 'Hast thou not marked those who hold themselves to be righteous? But God holdeth righteous whom He will, and they shall not be wronged the husk of a date stone.'<sup>1</sup> The justice of God's judgment is brought out in many passages, of which we may quote the following as a further example. 'Verily thy Lord best knoweth him who erreth from His way; and He best knoweth him who hath received guidance. And whatever is in the heavens and in the earth is God's: that He may reward those who do evil, according to their deeds; and those who do good will He reward with good things. To those who avoid great crimes and scandals but commit only lighter faults; verily, thy Lord will be diffuse of mercy. He well knew you when He produced you out of the earth, and when ye were embryos in your mothers' wombs. Assert not then your own purity. He best knoweth who feareth Him.'<sup>2</sup>

As to the ground of justification-the explanation

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 52.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'n-Najam (liii) 31-3.

of how God can regard as just and declare to be just the believer who in himself is far from being just — the Qur'an has nothing to say. Justification is regarded simply as an act of God's mercy, and the idea of there being possibly any incompatibility between absolute justice and unconditional forgiveness never seems once to come up in the whole book. That Muhammad ever had this question rise up within his mind we can see no proof in the Qur'an. And it is at this point that the doctrine of justification as taught in the Qur'an appears to the Christian theologian to be superficial; and it is therefore sometimes said, not without a certain amount of truth, that there is no true doctrine of justification in the Qur'an, which simply asserts that if one repents and seeks to obey the divine commands, God pardons. This is, however, consistent with what we have elsewhere seen of the teaching of the Qur'an on sin.

We must next ask what the Qur'an has to say as to the motives which ought to influence a man in the performance of good works.

Such works when done in faith must be done *for the sake of* God, that is, with a desire to please God, and to gain His favour, and not for self-glory or temporal gain. This is to be seen clearly in such a passage as the following. "They who fulfilled their vows, and feared the day whose woes will spread far and wide, who though longing for it themselves, bestowed their food on the poor, and the orphan, and the captive, (saying) "We feed you for the sake of God only: we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks: A stern and calamitous day dread we from our Lord".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Insan (lxxvi) 7-10.

Yet while done 'for God's sake' that the believer may gain the approbation of God — such deeds must be accompanied by a certain moral act or attitude. This is seen, perhaps, most clearly in regard to alms-giving. Alms-giving, as in Judaism, is one of the principal of the means of attaining righteousness, but the giving of alms must not be considered as a mere outward act. He who in his alms-giving does not give sympathy, and perform an act of real self-sacrifice, cannot, according to the Qur'an, expect thereby to gain any righteousness. 'Ye shall never attain to goodness till ye give alms of that which ye love: and whatever ye give, of a truth, God knoweth it.'<sup>1</sup> The essence of alms-giving is self-sacrifice, self-renunciation. The following passage also brings out this idea very clearly. 'There is also a man who selleth his soul for the things which are pleasing unto God: and God is gracious unto (His) servants.'<sup>2</sup>

Good works are not merely a duty demanded of the believer, but he must ever aim to excel in them. The more he excels in all good deeds the more certain proof does he exhibit of the reality of his faith and his repentance and his desire to be pleasing to his Lord. Thus we find such passages as, 'And vie in haste for pardon from your Lord, and a paradise, vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing: who give alms alike in prosperity and in success and, who master their anger and forgive others: for God loveth the doers of good.'<sup>3</sup> 'Be emulous, then in good deeds. To God shall ye all return, and He will tell you concerning the subjects of your disputes.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Ali 'Imran (iii) 86.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 203.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu Ali 'Imran (iii) 127-8.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'l-Ma'ida (v) 53.

These good works in which men are to seek to excel each other, include honesty and upright dealing in business, kindness, gentleness, slowness to anger, a forgiving spirit, the spirit of mercy, perseverance and patience. In illustration of these demands on the believer, we may quote in addition to the passage <sup>1</sup> quoted above, such passages as the following: 'Worship God and join not aught with Him: Be good to parents, and to relations and to orphans, and to the poor, and to a neighbour whether kinsman or new-comer, and to a fellow traveller, and to the wayfarer, and to the slaves whom your right hands hold: verily, God loveth not the proud, the vain boaster, who are niggardly themselves, and bid others be niggards, and hide away what God of His bounty hath given them. We have made ready a shameful chastisement for the unbelievers, and for those who bestow their wealth in alms to be seen of men, and believe not in God, and in the last day. Whoever hath Satan for his companion, an evil companion hath he.'<sup>2</sup>

'Fill the measure, and be not of those who minish weigh with exact balance; and defraud not men in their substance, and do no wrong on the earth by deeds of violence.'<sup>3</sup>

'Who shall teach thee what the steep is? It is to ransom the captive, or to feed in the day of famine the orphan who is near of kin, or the poor that lieth in the dust. Beside this, to be one of those who believe, and enjoin stedfastness on each other, and enjoin compassion on each other; these shall be the people of the right hand.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suratu Ali 'Imran (iii) 127-8.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'n-Nisa' (iv) 40-2.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'sh-Shuara' (xxvi) 181-3.

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'l-Balad (xc) 12-18.

'But they to whom knowledge had been given said "Woe to you! the reward of God is better for him who believeth and worketh righteousness: and none shall win it but those who have patiently endured"'<sup>1</sup>

As far as we can see, the doctrine of the Qur'an is that through the performance of these good works, the believer acquires a certain disposition of heart and mind which is described as righteousness. This righteousness is more or less perfect according to the degree in which the believer has been able to advance in spirituality and moral rectitude; but never is, and never is expected to be, absolutely perfect, for the believer is not expected to attain to perfection in righteousness. But all shortcomings and lapses into sin and returns to a lower ideal are forgiven, if he again set before himself the higher ideal, and attempt once more to scale the heights before him. And in so far as he attempts to advance upward, he will to that degree find God merciful and ready to overlook his minor failings and his temporary lapses.

Thus the believer is regarded as righteous by God, not because he has been successful, to a greater or a less degree, in his endeavour to attain unto righteousness; but because he has with steadfast perseverance and reliance on divine help attempted to attain thereto. God readily and easily forgives and pardons the lesser sins and misdeeds of those who strive to fulfil His commands, and set their faces towards the cliff which they are called upon to surmount. He passes over much when He sees on the part of the believer a reasonable endeavour to live justly and to do mercy.

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Qasas (xxviii) 80.

But the Qur'anic doctrine of works does not stop here. It proceeds further until good works are regarded as being not merely the signs of an advance in spiritual life, that is, the fruit of the reformed life, but as a means of actually acquiring merit for the doer of them.

Good works, thus, come to be regarded as an atonement for evil deeds which have gone before, as well as for those which, so to speak, accompany them. Thus we find such passages as the following, 'Give ye your alms openly, it is well. Do not conceal them, and give them to the poor? This, too, will be of advantage to you and will do away your sins.'

It is usually alms-giving which is thus spoken of as being an atonement for wrongs done or for sin committed.<sup>2</sup> But the merit gained by good deeds in general is of value also as a counterpoise to the demerit of evil deeds.

We have already seen that even the true believer is not expected constantly to keep up to the ideal which he sets or which is set before him. It cannot but be that he fail and fall. Thus he has to his credit many good deeds but also on the other side of his account there stand against him many evil deeds. 'On that day men shall go forward in distinct classes, that they may behold their works. And whoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of good, shall behold it. And whoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil, shall behold it.'<sup>3</sup>

The life of the believer may be represented as a balance in which in the one scale there are good deeds

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 273.

<sup>2</sup> See Suras v. 91, 96, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'z-Zalzal (xcix) 6-8.

and in the other scale evil deeds. And as the one or the other scale is the heavier, so will the life and character and position of man be judged in the final account. It is difficult to believe that this way of judging is to be taken so mechanically as it often apparently is taken by the commentators and other expounders of the teaching of Muhammad. We must remember that the language used is figurative not to say poetical. The good deeds and the evil deeds are set one against the other, and the result, on the day of judgment, will depend on which outweigh the other. There is a certain modicum of absolute truth in this representation of things, if it be once admitted that one's fate or future depends on actual achievement, or, at least, on attempt at achievement. For in such a case it is absolutely necessary to strike a balance or average. The man's character is to be judged by the predominance of the good or the evil deeds. He whose evil deeds prevail over his good deeds is a wicked man, of evil character, even though now and then he may have done good deeds. He whose good deeds outweigh his evil actions is a good man, of good character, even though at times, or even frequently, he may have done evil deeds. The predominance of the good or evil actions furnishes the judge with a means of estimating what, in the main, and on the whole, has been the character of the man, and according to that character is he judged, and commended or condemned.

Another figure employed in the Qur'an is that in which a man's good deeds are represented as being heavy and his evil deeds light. According to this figure, the greater the number of good deeds a man has to his credit the heavier will be his weight, his worth. The weighing

on that day *shall be* just; and they whose balances shall be heavy, these are they who shall be happy; and they whose balances shall be light, these are they who have lost their souls, for that to our signs they were unjust.'<sup>1</sup>

This figure brings out, after all, very much the same idea. It is character which is spoken of in the figure of the balances. Good deeds are those which are of weight, which tell and give character to a man, and for this he is accepted. The mere doing of what only seem to be good deeds and pious actions is of no avail. None must seek to justify himself. It is God alone who can tell whether the actions are of weight or not, for He alone knows a man thoroughly. Man may deceive others and even himself by outward piety. God alone can judge the heart.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, while faith is the necessary basis from which a man must start, so to speak, on his spiritual life, his happiness or woe hereafter depends on the amount of good works which he has done in faith, or the amount of evil which he has done in unbelief.

When once the balance has been struck, and he is condemned, his condemnation and punishment will be in direct proportion to the sum total of his evil deeds, in so far as they outweigh his good deeds. And, on the other hand, if the good has outweighed the evil, the approval and reward of the good man will be not only in direct proportion to the sum total of his good deeds according to the degree by which they outweigh his evil actions, but will far surpass what he has merited.

Having thus far seen what the Qur'an teaches on

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 7-8. See also Suras xxiii. 104, 105.

<sup>2</sup> See Suras iv. 52; v. 33.

repentance, faith, and good works, leading to justification, we now turn to see what it has to say, if anything, on the question of sanctification.

We note that this doctrine lies more in the background of the teaching of Muhammad than that of good works. In fact, in the teaching of the Qur'an sanctification is regarded almost as a by-product of good works. It can hardly be called, as represented in the Qur'an, an aim or object in itself. Sanctification is represented as being the effect on the soul or the character of the believer of a life of faith spent in good works. It would perhaps be better to say that the Qur'an has no doctrine of sanctification, but has in its place a doctrine of reformation.

This may be said because the Qur'an does not insist on the necessity of regeneration which can alone be the basis of any true doctrine of sanctification. This absence of teaching on the necessity of regeneration naturally arises from the view taken by Muhammad concerning sin, and the result of sin on man's nature.

Sanctification, according to the Qur'an, is the repolishing of a surface which has been marred and soiled, not the regeneration of a nature which has been ruined and which requires alteration. And yet from time to time in the Qur'an there appear gleams of light on this point showing that Muhammad suspected that there was more in the matter than was to be seen on the surface.

We may say that the Qur'anic doctrine of sanctification is based on the truth that man has a capacity for doing evil or doing good as a matter of choice. This we have already considered elsewhere, and it is unnecessary here to rediscuss the point. In the Qur'anic

teaching on this subject there is, however, no suggestion that the believer requires to be separated from the natural to the divine — a separation which lies at the root and base of the Christian doctrine of sanctification. For example, where we find the words, ' . . . now is he who hath kept (the soul) pure happy; and undone is he who hath corrupted it,'<sup>1</sup> what is spoken of is reformation and reformation alone. Were other passages in the Qur'an any clearer on this point, we might here read into this verse the idea of separation to God; but as the matter stands, we cannot do so.

We see, then, that what is incumbent on a man if he is to be a partaker of the blessedness of the future life and *be happy*, is that he *purify* himself. This purification of self consists chiefly in setting apart, or in separating to God that which is His due. As in alms-giving, the whole of one's property or possessions are purified (with this may be compared the New Testament expression 'Give for alms those things which are within; and behold, all things are clean unto you' Luke xi. 41 R.V.) so the man himself or his soul is purified by giving that faith and obedience which are God's due. When this is done the whole man is 'pure'. This maybe taken as the original meaning of the expression. Whether it carries in it any deeper meaning in this passage is doubtful.

In another passage we find the word *to purify* (*zakka yuzakki*) used in such a way as to show that it means the enlightening of man so as to make him capable of rendering to God what is His due. 'As we have sent unto you an apostle from among you, to rehearse our signs unto you, and to purify you, and to teach you the

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'sh-Shams (xci) 7-10.

book (*of the Qur'an*) and wisdom....'<sup>1</sup> The idea of the verse is that Muhammad has been sent to enlighten men and to urge them to follow such a course as will render them pure (*azyiya*). Those who are *pure* or *pious* are those who render unto God that which is His due, and they become *pure* in that sense of the word which we have already explained in connexion with alms-giving.

It will not be a matter of surprise to us, that the Qur'an exhibits no clear doctrine of sanctification, if we remember that it teaches no clear doctrine of regeneration, and is practically without any doctrine of the Holy Spirit as we shall see later.

Sanctification may be called the growth of which regeneration is the seed, and is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, renewing him and leading him upwards throughout his whole life on earth.

The Qur'anic doctrine corresponding to this is a doctrine of reformation, assisted, it is true, by God's grace; but where there is no clear doctrine of the Holy Spirit, there can be no adequate doctrine of sanctification.

The position of the Qur'an on this point is consistent with its position in holding, as we have already seen it does hold, that salvation is not a becoming saved, but an obtaining of escape from punishment and a reward for good deeds.

Having considered the teaching of the Qur'an on the attainment of salvation as viewed from man's side, we must now look at the question as viewed, so to speak,

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 146.

from God's side. We have already said that in repentance, faith, and good works, men, according to the Qur'an, require and experience the help of God. It is this point which we must now more fully consider.

God demands repentance and faith, but He assists men to repent and to believe. The operation of God's grace whereby He does this may be described as the bestowal of awakening grace, though we must remember that the distinction is nowhere clearly made in the Qur'an between the various operations of God's grace. To bring into view the position of the Qur'an on this point it may be well to re-quote some of those passages which we have already considered when speaking of the relation between the operation of man's will and the working out through man's actions of the divine will and purpose. 'Verily, this is an admonition, and whoso willeth, taketh the way unto his Lord: but ye shall not will unless God willeth: for God is knowing and wise.'<sup>1</sup> 'This (is) no other than an admonition to all creatures; to him among you who willeth to walk in a straight path but will it ye shall not, unless God willeth it, the Lord of the worlds.'<sup>2</sup>

Not merely has God, in His mercy and grace, vouchsafed to man a direction whereby he may know how to please Him and attain to salvation, but it is one of the effects of God's grace that man is inclined to will to accept the proffered mercy. In effecting this, God's grace, which, although it is one and indivisible, may be called awakening grace. It is wholly of God's mercy and grace that some are led to see their danger and

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Insan (lxxvi) 29-31,

<sup>2</sup> Suratu't-Takwir (lxxxi) 27-9.

turn unto the Lord with repentance and faith. None can turn another from the way of death into the way of life. 'Of God it is to point out "the way", some turn aside from it: but had He pleased, He had guided you all aright.'<sup>1</sup>

The presentation of truth to man and the appeal of the preacher and his exhortation to his fellowmen can have no effect unless the grace of God prepare and incline the heart to accept the invitation. The 'guidance' may be offered and made known to man without its being effectual; thus, 'God guideth whom He pleaseth'. In such a way and in no other can it be explained how when God's offer is made known to men, some accept it and others reject it. 'For God is surely the guider of those who believe, into the straight path.'<sup>2</sup> 'God guideth whom He will to His light.'<sup>3</sup>

These and similar passages teach that in some way, which, in the Qur'an, there is no attempt to define or even describe, the grace of God which is offered to all is not effectual in all. Those in whom His grace has acted effectually have been, by that very grace itself, awakened. But we must again note that this awakening cannot in any sense be described as regeneration. Man's capacity and desire for higher things has been quickened. The capacity and desire are clearly inherent, but require to be aroused. 'But God hath endeared the faith (*habbaba*) to you, and hath given it favour in your hearts; and hath made unbelief, and wickedness, and disobedience hateful (*karraha*) to you.'<sup>4</sup>

The meaning

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'n-Nahl (xvi) 9.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Hajj (xxii) 53.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'n-Nur (xxiv) 35,

<sup>4</sup> Suratu'l-Hujurat (xlix) 7-8; see also Sura lxii. 4.

of the verses is that it is God who disposes the heart of the believer towards the right way and causes him to hate that which is evil. Those who have passed through this experience are represented as knowing that this is so. They pray that God will continue to guide them 'on the straight path, the path of those to whom Thou (God) hast been gracious.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the grace of God, in some way which is never clearly defined, and by some operation which is never described, so works on the heart and conscience of men as to bring them to repent and believe.

When man truly repents, God forgives and pardons. The pardoning of man is an act of free grace. It is unmerited by man, and is wholly of mercy on the part of God. Repentance and amendment are the conditions on which God grants this pardon, but they are not causes which induce God to grant it.

The repentance, the faith, and the amendment or reformation are all from Him, being the result of His gracious dealings with man; and this grace is bestowed on man that God may be able to forgive him and again receive him into favour. God's forgiveness, though thus unearned and unmerited by man, cannot be received and acquired by him unconditionally. He must become worthy of receiving it; yet he does not earn it. Nor is it given arbitrarily. That is, none is forgiven without fulfilling the necessary conditions; but apart from these conditions, nothing else is required. The forgiveness of God is, therefore, not mere indulgent goodwill which springs out of indifference to moral

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Fatiha (i) 5-6.

conditions. Yet there is, according to the Qur'an, nothing in the divine nature, as far as it is known by the revelation which he has made of Himself through His prophets and their teachings, which demands, in any sense, satisfaction; and there is nothing in man's condition which demands atonement other than repentance, faith, and good works. These atone and atone fully for man's sins.

It is true that in some passages, not a few indeed, it is said that God will atone for man's sins on certain conditions; but in these passages nothing appears to be meant by the word 'atone' which is not conveyed by the word 'forgive' or 'pardon'. When it is said in the Qur'an that God will atone for the sins of believers, nothing more is meant than that He will no longer lay their sins to their charge. He passes them by, and remembers them no more against the repentant believer who perseveres in his works of faith.

Thus, though there is a condition on which God forgives sin, there is no ground of forgiveness, nor is any ground of forgiveness necessary. God's mercy and justice are in no sense opposed, and the doctrine of the atonement is, to the believer in the Qur'an, nothing but foolishness.

Pardon and forgiveness are, therefore, absolutely of God's free grace. The very act of laying down a condition on the fulfilment of which God, so to say, agrees to grant forgiveness is an act of pure condescension. God has prescribed unto Himself mercy. He deals not with the sinner as he deserves, but has, of His abundant mercy, condescended to limit His just claims, and grant pardon; on His own terms and conditions: yet in doing

this, He manifested His loving-kindness and His longsuffering mercy.

The grace of God not merely awakens man and brings him to repentance and faith, but goes much further and may be described as sustaining grace. This the Qur'an clearly teaches. It is of the grace of God and His never failing mercy that the believer is kept true to his first ideals and his first endeavour. By God's grace he is enabled to overcome the many temptations to relapse which come upon him in the course of his life; and it is by God's grace that he is assisted in the steadfast performance of his duties as a believer.

Thus it was through God's grace that Muhammad himself was preserved true to his mission, and prevented from falling away. 'They had well nigh beguiled thee from what we revealed to thee, and caused thee to invent some other thing in our name; but in that case they have taken thee as a friend: and unless we had confirmed thee, thou hadst well nigh have leaned to them a little.'<sup>1</sup>

Similarly others also are sustained by God's grace and favour, and are kept true to the message of the divine revelation, and protected from the wiles of Satan. 'But for the goodness and mercy of God towards you, ye would have followed Satan, except a few.'<sup>2</sup>

In times of temptation and difficulty believers are urged to have recourse to God that He may keep them firm and steadfast. 'When some phantom from Satan toucheth thee, remember Him.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suratu Bani Isra'il (xvii) 75-6.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'n-Nis'a' (iv) 85.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-A'raf (vii) 200.

Lot is represented as recognizing the need of divine help to preserve him and his family from falling into the evil habits and customs of the citizens of Sodom. 'He said, I utterly abhor your doings: O Lord, deliver me and my family from what they act.'<sup>1</sup>

The general teaching of the Qur'an from beginning to end may be said to be this truth, that apart from God's help man can do nothing to please Him.

We have seen elsewhere that, according to the Qur'an, man cannot but fall from time to time into sin, but this falling away from grace is not because the grace of God cannot sustain him, but because, in the weakness of his nature, man cannot constantly lean on the divine grace. The grace of God is all-sufficient, but man's faith and perseverance are not steadfast, and never can be steadfast. Yet even when he falls, he may be restored.

God's grace may, therefore, be described as restoring grace; for it is of the mercy of God and by His grace, that the believer, when he falls away, is brought back again into the true path. 'Had not favour from his Lord reached him (*Jonah*), he had surely been cast forth on the naked (*shore*), covered with shame; but His Lord chose him and made him (one) of the just.'<sup>2</sup>

This grace of God, however, does not force the will of man, and restore him to the right way against his own determination to follow evil. There is a doctrine of irremediable falling from grace in the Qur'an. The believer who has fallen away from God may so struggle, against it that he becomes hardened in sin and cannot

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Anbiya' (xxvi) 168-9.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Qalam (lxviii) 49.

again find the way of repentance and faith. And when one deliberately sins against the grace and mercy of God, he falls without hope of recovery. 'This, because they believed, then became unbelievers; Therefore hath a seal been set on their hearts, and they understand not.'<sup>1</sup>

We have so far viewed the grace of God as awakening grace, as sustaining grace, as restoring grace, and now we turn to consider it from another standpoint. The purpose of God's gracious dealings with man is his sanctification or reformation.

The path which the believer enters on when he repents and believes has to be journeyed over. His salvation is not entrance into a stronghold in which the grace of God protects him, but the entering into a path along which he must daily take his journey travelling upwards from good to better. In this journey he requires increasing light and direction, and these through the grace of God are supplied. 'God will increase the guidance of the already guided.'<sup>2</sup>

God's grace may thus be described as sanctifying grace. The direction grows from more to more according to the obedience of the believer. God's grace is not merely something given to the believer at the time of his repentance, or even something which sustains him and keeps him true; it is something which leads him onward and upward and his course must be a constant advance in faith and obedience. It is of God's grace and 'inspiration' that believers advance in good works and in the performance of their religious duties. 'We also made them [Isaac and Jacob] models, who should guide (others) by our command; and we inspired

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Munafiqun (lxiii) 3.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu Maryam (xix) 78.

(*awhaina*) them with good deeds, and constancy in prayer, and alms-giving; and they worshipped us.'<sup>1</sup>

In this advance, the heart and inclinations of the believers are cleansed and purified, so that while formerly they were inclined to evil deeds and did them, their inclinations will now be towards good deeds, and they will be enabled by God's grace to perform them. ' . . . Save those who shall repent and believe, and do righteous works; for these God will change their evil deeds into good; for God is Gracious, Merciful.'<sup>2</sup>

The greater the endeavour of the believer to walk in the way of God, the greater will be the grace given him that he may advance. This appears to be the true meaning of such a passage as the following, 'And whoso maketh efforts for us, in our ways will we guide them; for God is with the righteous.'<sup>3</sup>

Yet with all that we have said of the teaching of the Qur'an on the operations of the grace of God, there is a want of clearness in the words which describe the dealings of God with the conscience and heart of the believer. This want of clearness is due to the fact that the Qur'an is wholly wanting in any satisfactory doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Muhammad had no true conception of how the Spirit of God works in the heart of man. He knew that repentance, faith and good works are not the result of man's unassisted endeavours, but are in some way dependent on the work of God's grace in the human heart but, since his doctrine of God, as we shall see, left no place for any

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Anbiya' (xxi) 73.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'l-Furqan (xxv) 70-1.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-Ankabut (xxix) 69.

conception akin to the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, he was at a complete loss for any mode of expression whereby he could explain how these operations of grace could be carried out.

The operations are recognized, the result of them is acknowledged, but the manner of them remained incomprehensible. They were not, to Muhammad's mind, simple acts of God in no way to be distinguished from His acts of creative power whereby He brought into existence the world and all that it contains: for while he clearly saw, on the one hand, that they were the operations of the will of God, he acknowledged, on the other hand, that they were conditioned by the acts of men.

In this, Muhammad, while being very much at one with a great deal of the teaching of the Old Testament, yet fell very far short of the conception of the Old Testament as to the manner of the working of God's Spirit.

In the Old Testament, the 'Spirit of God' is the means whereby Jehovah has dealings with men. From its operations men receive wisdom, skill, understanding, insight into divine truth. Through its workings in their hearts men are sanctified. Throughout the Old Testament, it is true, the Spirit is never personal; yet Jehovah acts personally through the Spirit.

The Qur'an, on the other hand, simply attributes to God directly all these operations of the Spirit, without being in any way able to explain how they are carried on. There seem at times to be gleams of light breaking through the darkness, but they are not sufficient to light up the path of the seeker after truth. Thus we find a remarkable expression: 'It is He who sendeth down

a spirit of secure repose (*al-sakinata*) into the hearts of the faithful, that they may add faith to their faith.'<sup>1</sup> And we read, 'Thus did God sent down His spirit of repose (*sakinatahu*) upon His Apostle, and upon the faithful, and He sent down troops which ye saw not.'<sup>2</sup>

On Sura ix. 26, Sale comments in a note as follows, 'The original word is *sakinat*, which the commentators interpret in this sense (tranquility); but it seems rather to signify *the divine presence*, or Shechinah appearing to the Moslems.'<sup>3</sup>

In this connexion we cannot do better than quote from Geiger's *Judaism and Islam* (pp. 36, 40). 'Sakinat the Presence of God — 'In the development of Judaism in order to guard against forming too human an idea of the Godhead, it was customary to attribute the speaking of God, when it is mentioned in the Scripture, to the personified Word of God, as it were embodying that emanation from the Deity which came in Christianity to a veritable incarnation. In like manner also when in the Scriptures the remaining stationary, or the resting of God is mentioned, something sensibly proceeding from Him is to be thought of. This is especially so in the case of God's dwelling in the Temple; and this "emanation of the Godhead," to adopt the speech of the Gnostics, was called on this account the Shekinah, the resting. From this derivation Shekinah came to be the word for that side of divine providence which, as it were, dwells among men and exerts an unseen influence among them. In the original meaning, namely, that of the

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Fath (xlvi) 4.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu't-Tauba (ix) 26; see also ix, 40.

<sup>3</sup> See also Oehler's *O. T. Theology*, vol. i, p. 201; Sell, *The Historical Development of the Qur'an*, pp. 193-9.

Presence in the Temple over the Ark of the Covenant between the Cherubim, the word is found in Sura ii. 240. In the sense of active interposition and visible effectual rendering of aid it occurs in Sura ix. 26, 40. In the sense of supplying peace of mind and at the same time giving spiritual aid it is found in Sura xlviii. 4, 18, 26. It is remarkable that the word appears in three Suras only (but several times in the two last mentioned), and with a somewhat different meaning in each; and it seems here again, as we remarked above on the word *darasa*, as though outside influence had been at work, i. e. that the use of this word by other people seems to have influenced Muhammad at the time of the composition of these Suras.'

The question of the use of the word '*sakinat*' in the Qur'an must come up again, however, when we consider the teaching of the Qur'an on God; so we may at present pass on.

Taking the teaching of the Qur'an on the Spirit as a whole, we cannot but feel how wanting in clearing Muhammad's conception of the Spirit of God was; and therefore we need not be surprised to see how wanting in definiteness is his teaching concerning the Means of Grace.

With a brief consideration of the teaching of the Qur'an on this point we shall close our present study of the Qur'anic doctrine of salvation.

In borrowing this expression — the means of grace — from the vocabulary of Christian theology, we must premise that the words have not here exactly the same content. We mean here those ways and means whereby the believer can come into the actual experience of the presence of God, and can, as it were,

appropriate for himself the grace of God offered to him as a help towards his salvation.

According to the teaching of the Qur'an, the principal duties of the believer are five. They are: (1) Tashahhud the recital of the creed, 'there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah'. (2) Prayer — the five stated daily prayers. (3) Fasting — especially the fast of Ramadan. (4) Alms-giving — the payment of certain legal dues. (5) Pilgrimage.

These five duties, to which we may add a sixth, the reading or recital of the Qur'an, may be called the Muslim means of grace as prescribed by the Qur'an.

If for a moment we leave our study of the Qur'an and turn to look at Muhammadanism as it at present exists, we find that while these duties are taught and practised throughout the Muhammadan world, other means of grace are to be found in general employment in all Muslim lands. We refer, of course, to the devotional exercises of the Dervish Orders.

The Qur'an, as we have seen, teaches that God offers His grace to mankind. This mean that Muhammad recognized the possibility of some kind of intercourse between man and his Creator. God could speak to man's heart and conscience, and influence him; and conversely, man could experience the working of God's Spirit within him, and thus have a sense of His Presence and a feeling of communion with Him. Yet the Qur'an nowhere explains when, and how, and where this grace is to be found and appropriated. In other words, it never tells man how he may become the recipient of this Grace which, throughout, it maintains is absolutely necessary to his spiritual life.

Muhammad, it is true, advocates and enjoins meditation and prayer, and promises help and direction which are the result of the working of God's grace in the human heart, to those who seek Him. 'Your Lord saith, Call upon me, and I will hear you.'<sup>1</sup> ' . . . And [God] will guide to Himself him who repenteth, and those who believe, and whose hearts rest securely in the meditation of God; shall not (*men's*) hearts repose in the meditation of God?'<sup>2</sup> 'Rehearse that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Book (*of the Qur'an*): and be constant at prayer: for prayer restraineth from the filthy and blameable; and the remembering of God is surely a most important (*duty*).'<sup>3</sup>

From such passages as those quoted above, as well as from what we know of the practice of the prophet from other sources, it is clear that the exercises of the Dervish Orders, though not founded on the direct injunctions of the Qur'an, and though dependent largely on non-Muhammadan influences for their development, are yet not antagonistic to its teachings and spirit.

Indeed it is chiefly through these observances and devotional exercises that the Muslim seeks to have intercourse with God, and partake of His grace, and so feed his spiritual life.

So great is the place of Mysticism in Islam that Professor Macdonald is able to say with truth, 'With us (Christians) what is called the Inner Light has appeared here and there, in one form or another, at one time or another; but it has never for the general body of Christendom,

<sup>1</sup> Suratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 62.

<sup>2</sup> Suratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 28.

<sup>3</sup> Suratu'l-'Ankabut (xxix) 44; see also Suras vii. 203; iii. 36; xxxix. 24.

been the dominant element in the basis of the faith. In Islam that position has been reached.<sup>1</sup>

While Sufiism (mysticism) holds such a central place in the life of Muslims, yet it is a fact that it is not merely not an essential part of Islam as taught in the Qur'an, but is really outside the sphere of orthodox Muhammadanism.

The Dervish Orders<sup>2</sup> have so little essential connexion with Muhammadanism, that, as Professor Macdonald states,<sup>3</sup> some of them are not merely ready to accept Christians as members of their fraternity, but have nothing in their ritual which would prevent a Christian from retaining his faith and yet becoming a member of the Order. This is enough to show that while these orders are now formally a part of the Muslim Church, there is little, if anything, in the life of the Fraternities which is based on the distinctive teachings of the Qur'an. Sufiism, indeed, can hardly be called a growth or development of Muhammad's teaching. It is rather an addition made to fill a want, which all sincere Muslim seekers after truth appear to have found in the system of doctrine and practice taught in the Qur'an.

And thus we come back to the statement already made, that while the Qur'an teaches that man requires and may find the grace of God, it never explains how that grace is to be appropriated by the individual; and so, while telling man that God is not afar off and is to be found, it, nevertheless, leaves him to seek after Him, if haply he may find Him.

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<sup>1</sup> *Aspects of Islam*, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of these see Sell, *The Religious Orders of Islam* (S.P.C.K. and C.L.S.).

<sup>3</sup> *Aspects of Islam*, p. 155.

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