

(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

HINTS TO THE STUDY
OF
THE HOLY QUR-AN

BY

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The Lord's Prayer Contradicting Church Theology.

The more I think of the Lord's Prayer, [especially of its first portion], the more I am convinced of the prophetic insight possessed by its author, such insight as belongs only to a great Messenger from God. It shows that Jesus believed in man's possession of the high capabilities that may reveal in him some of God's features. His Kingdom in the Universe discloses beauty, sublimity, grandeur and splendour; they display themselves in a form consistent with solemnity, seriousness, and high-mindedness. They exclude the slightest idea of a vanity or lightness of character. The working of the Governing Hand also discloses transcendental knowledge and power over all things in Nature. Under His rule they bring forth their inherent faculties, when on their way to progress, thus working out the Great Design. There are also accuracy, exactitude, regularity, and punctuality to be observed in every manifestation of Nature, in obedience to the Great Will; all being the outcome of a premeditated plan, which takes necessary precautions also against all such

mishaps as may retard the progress of things to perfection. I have mentioned here only some of the salient features of the Divine Work, since the Kingdom of God could not come on earth unless its ruler—that is to say, man—possess the requisite qualities. And this is no impossibility. If the Qur-án sets God before man as his model, it also selects certain of His qualities for our imitation. Present-day culture has enabled us also to acquire them, though only to a limited extent.

But, could these excellent ethics and morals be owned or cultivated by us under those philosophies and theologies which do no good to the human race? Whether such teachings did or did not emanate from these great men who are believed to be their authors—and in my belief they, as true reformers and messengers from God, could not be responsible for laying down such principles—they, nevertheless, are passed on under their names. Buddha, they say, observed everywhere trouble and tribulation—the sequel of evil—and saw our liberation from it only in annihilation. His dictum may now be construed by some apologists as meaning self-renunciation; but the practice of the religiously advanced Buddhists has always made it synonymous with man's total divorcement from all worldly affairs. The old Brahmans could not see "Reality" in anything. All appeared to them a delusion—*Maya*—with man a self-deluded entity in the Universe. They advocated *tiyag*—separation from mundane things—as the

only means for achieving Reality and attaining happiness. A hermit who turned his back on the world, throwing down the burden of all the obligations which society had laid upon him as its member and retiring to the jungle for contemplation, was, according to Hindu theology, the best specimen of humanity.

I do not propose to discuss here the utility or otherwise of these "high-flown philosophies," but they seem to drench, with a cold douche, all the enthusiasm that could possibly actuate man towards achieving civilization in any high form. They may supply us with a good mental food for contemplation, but it is mental luxury only and baneful in its effects. It leads its followers to deprecate all such manly qualities as are necessary for the defence of our rights. It makes them an easy prey to others' aggression. Ancient India indulged in such philosophies, and produced literature that may be fascinating as literature, but no one can deny its harmful influence on the minds of those who took it seriously, seeing that it set them firmly against all the activities necessary in the field of material progress.

The Church in the West went a step further. It produced a theology in this respect even worse. It declared that man was born in sin. It asserted that he was an embodiment of evil and by nature incapable of any good. It was in pursuance of such beliefs that every effort to attain material progress was discouraged

and looked down upon with contempt in Christian lands in the Middle Ages. “Man was unworthy of the earth, and polluted this sacred footstool of God.” So Calvin and other theologians of his class thought of sin under the inspiration which they had received from Church dogma. Calvin longed for the day when some colossal earthquake would swallow up this loathsome personification of all that was abominable in the eye of the Lord.

Again I say, could such beliefs favour any progress on any line—whether material or spiritual? If sin means disobedience to the Law and is innate in us, we are of course incapable of obeying the Law. Such a condition of mind cannot produce any sort of civilization. It is “Obedience to Law,” which the word “Islam” literally means, that carries us to success.

The author of the Lord’s Prayer cannot be held responsible for these Church tenets. If the Creator of the Universe is also the Source of all goodness, He could not be our “Father in Heaven.” A son, as an Arabic proverb says, is the secret of his father. He possesses inherently his father’s characteristics, good or bad, though it depends upon environment whether such characteristics be fully displayed or not. The son of wicked man is prone to reveal all the bad traits he inherits, though he may not do so in the face of public opinion. Healthy surroundings may convert him to a better state of mind. But his nature is that which he

received from his father. How could a creature, whose very nature is compounded of sin, come from the loins of the Heavenly Father? It is mere blasphemy even to imagine it, and a gross libel on the memory of him who laid down so broad a principle of goodness for his disciples when he taught them to approach God with this beautiful prayer. Such a sickening and repulsive creature, as Church theology makes out man to be, could not beseech his Lord for the appearance of the day when the Holy Kingdom, with all the Dignity, Grace, and Beauty thereof, shall come within his reach.

One may pass over these precepts as an accretion to the original teachings of the Great Master, but we fail to find any real purpose served by Divine Revelations if they remain silent on a subject so important in the working out of our civilization. They seem to remain unconcerned, and want us to remain so too, with the inestimable treasures of the universe. Everything in creation is purposeful,¹ and the purpose lies chiefly in its use to us; but if a religion from God did not open our eyes to this beneficent working of the Creator, His whole work would appear to be aimless. It would be to find fault with His Design if we thought so; therefore it ought to be the chief function of Divine Revelation to make us aware of His Gifts.² Some think that religion should not concern our mundane affairs. The "Kingdom of Christ is not of this world." Religion

1 The Holy Qur-án xxxviii. 27.

2 Ibid. iii. 189

came only to show us how to worship and glorify God and give Him thanks, or to provide ourselves with means for our own salvation. I will speak of salvation subsequently, but the Prayer of Jesus contradicts all such assertions. How could we pray for the Heavenly Kingdom to come on earth, if His own Kingdom had nothing to do with the things of that earth? We no doubt possess the worshipping instinct, but it has always found its gratification in directing our devotional feelings to some kind of deity even without any revelation prompting us to do so. From a stone to a son of woman, man has adorned various manifestations of Nature as his god, and he has been none the worse for it—seeing that he has been able to keep a certain moral order under any system of worship. The worship of idols has, at times, inspired him with noble and lofty feelings, like those which have been observed in the most worthy of the worshippers of God. Prayers addressed to images made by man's own hand have in their beauty, grandeur, and sincerity surpassed even the devotional utterances of the holiest monotheist while adoring the Most High.

Again, the circle of our gratefulness to our Creator would become inexpressibly widened with the increase of our knowledge of His Gifts to us.¹ We cannot thank Him for His creating us a plaything in the hands of sin and evil. Did He create us for an incessant

¹ The Holy Qur-án, iv,

struggle against evil that would carry us day by day to perdition? It would be most ungrateful of us if we thought so. On the other hand, when millions of things come within our knowledge so pregnant with benefit to us, our mind becomes filled with gratitude. Every discovery of these valuable treasures, so essential to our happiness and comfort, intensifies our sense of thanksgiving. And if Divine Revelation really demands thanksgiving from us to the Lord, it has failed in its purpose if it does not prompt us to make discoveries in the universe. We are saddled with various needs, which are ever on the increase. This fact enhances our anxiety and stirs our activities to look for some means of satisfying these needs; but our thanks to the Lord would know no bounds if we found what is needful for us already in existence, created by the Beneficent Lord out of His own goodness, thousands of years before we came to the shores of light.

Similarly our glorification to our Creator would be at its worthiest if we found His Hand working everywhere. Everything in the universe is a wonderful repository of unimaginable potentialities. They all move in the same groove for the completion of our happiness.¹ Would not our knowledge of their service to us enhance our sense of gratitude to the Lord? If glorification were one of the essentials of religion, we should miss a great thing were revelation to remain

¹ Ibid, xiii. 33-34; xvi. 64-71.

silent concerning it. It would do an immense service to the sacred cause if it made science a worthy pursuit for humanity.

Undoubtedly, we do need a moral code, and every religion gives us some rules of morality, but they are of no value to us. Even if we own but few things, it is to protect our earnings against usurpation and misappropriation that we do need some moral code for counteracting avarice and cupidity, and controlling the unbridled demands of passion and desire. These come into play when we see others possessed of things that we need, yet lack the energy to attain. In short, the promulgation of some moral code demands the pre-existence of the things which contribute to our comfort. But if our possessions are few, we do not need any evolved system of morality. A few rules, like those enunciated in the Ten Commandments, are sufficient to maintain order in society. This will necessarily cause all the moral and spiritual forces in us to remain in abeyance, but the Great Designer did not intend such state of things. If the working of the said forces is necessary to fulfil the object of our creation, how could the required condition be attained if we remained ignorant of the various resources of Nature? A religion without some suggestions to its followers as to how they may bring these gifts of God into human service cannot claim perfection for its teachings.

It may be said that those attainments were man's own business, that Providence became absolved from its duty when it created the things that we needed, and that it was our concern to find out how to use them. But the history of Modern Science contradicts such presumptions. The blessings of God remained unnoticed for thousands of years. Their benefits to us did not come into operation until the Last Word of God—the Qur-án—invited our attention to the task of developing Nature to our benefit.¹ Nay, we adopted a contrary course for want of any true light on the subject. Instead of reducing Nature to our service, we placed many of its manifestations on the throne of Divinity. They continued in their ministry to us in the capacity of servants, but we ascribed it to their Divine favour towards us, their abject worshippers—the hand-maid became the master of the house, and the master a menial. Man, with all his inherent faculties for the attainment of the required knowledge, could not reverse this unnatural state of things and put them right until Al-Qur'án came and opened our eyes to it. All our gods, it proclaimed, were our ministers and slaves. They were our subjects, and we their rulers. The Book went further. It declared that nothing in Creation was without its aim,² and that the said aim was conducive to our benefit. This gospel awakened the forces sleeping within us and in a short

1 The Holy Qur-án xliiii. 12-14 ; xlv. 12-14.

2 The Holy Qur-án, xxxviii. 27.

time we saw an upheaval of culture not known before. Under the inspiration of the Qur'án, Muslims laid the foundations of the Modern Sciences, which are progressing day by day. Without the knowledge of these sciences the prayed-for Kingdom of the Nazarene cannot grace the earth in its full glory !

Though this knowledge of Nature's secrets is indispensable, it is nevertheless liable to prove perilous to human peace and welfare if it is not controlled strictly by some moral and spiritual regime so evolved as to meet the requirements of an advanced material progress. That this is so is amply illustrated by modern progress in the West. All the blessings of God discovered in these days are employed by some to the destruction of others. The abundance of our riches has weakened our moral sense. Man prowls through life like a savage beast, devastating all the moral harvest as he goes. The Quranic Revelation foresaw this and provided a course. It kept our progress under a strict moral control. Wherever the Book invites us to bring the treasures of Nature to our service, it gives prominence to the cultivation of the moral aspects of our lives and characters as well. There is a very beautiful verse¹ in the Holy Qur'án which has been, and

1 "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth : Our Lord ! Thou hast not created this in vain. Glory be to Thee ! Save us then from the chastisement of the fire."—Al-Qur'án, iii. 189, 190.

will ever be, a true key to material progress. A humble recognition of the truth laid down in this verse would, if acted upon, carry us to the height of material civilization. The verse says that those who make researches in the realm of heavens and earth, and find out that there is nothing that is useless for us, and then bring each particular use as they discover it to the service of humanity, are men of true wisdom and understanding. But their wisdom and understanding will not become complete unless they keep God before their eyes in every moment of life—that is to say, unless all their words and deeds are after the mind of God. A person who would enter in the field of scientific researches, as the Qur'án desires that man with this moral equipment, will really and in the true sense of the words bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

Indebtedness of Religion to Science

These observations might not succeed in inducing a biased mind to realize that a Revealed Book is defective if it does not draw man's attention to Nature and urge him to explore its provinces, and there cannot be much point in a Revealed Book which fails to do so. The good so often claimed for religion—*i.e.* that of the maintenance and establishment of moral order in human society—is a thing which man has adopted voluntarily under the pressure of his own social environment. A thinking mind cannot nowadays deny the service that science has rendered to the cause of

religion. If belief in the Deity has been universally the *sine qua non* of religion from time immemorial, actual faith itself has been sadly in decay in our days. Science came to its rescue when modern culture was fast banishing it to oblivion. The former provided a real panacea for saving the latter when it was breathing its last in the West. It was on a retreating campaign, driven back before the ever-increasing onslaught of secularizing agents, that appeared in the forms of scepticism, agnosticism and positivism. (The last, though a truth, was based on wrong scientific data). Atheism was in full swing when a sudden discovery checked its course. Biology, a century before, could find no purpose whatsoever in the working of Nature. Its freaks and blunders, as they were then thought to be, had brought the various manifestations of Nature into existence. But scientific research in the universe discovered that there was governing principle which it called Order and Law. The so-called freaks and blunders in the light of new discoveries appeared as various ordered phases of an organized system. The preponderance of Law, and obedience to it, was seen in every stage in the progress of every created thing. It was not the dead matter of former biology, with no scheme before it, but something that evinced a character of Law-abidingness, even in its most nebular form. Obedience to Law was taken as its inherent quality. To avoid, therefore, the associations that the word "Matter" created in the human mind under the

teachings of the old-fashioned biology, a new name was proposed that might comprehend this significant attribute in the things of the world. The name chosen was "Law-substance," meaning something that assumed shape in order to answer the demands of the Law. Its supremacy in Nature became thus established. But it was also found that the said Law was a curious collection of antitheses. Each form of it prescribed a course antagonistic to the requirements of the other. Heterogeneity was everywhere, though it gave way in the long run to homogeneity. Conflicting elements worked in harmony to attain one end, a phenomenon which compelled biologists to believe in the working of "One Hand" that ruled Nature and brought its contrasts into concord. This state of affairs created a new creed that received the name of Monism, and further researches established the fact that all the activities of the Law-substance under Monism also disclosed some Design. Everything was bringing forth some specified object. The various components of the universe stood either in supplementary or complementary relation to each other; and all this was no mere accident, but in order to fulfil the requirements of a set Design. It also appeared that the accomplishment of the Design was not to be furthered in a haphazard way, for there was evinced intelligence, together with premeasurement and the prearrangement of the requisites so necessary for perfection. All these observations established another great truth. Evolution was

the order of the day. Everything, from its initial form up to completion, was pursuing an evolutionary course, and brought forth gradually all the qualities that had been reposed in it at its very creation. Science thus led us step by step to believe in Law, Monism, Design, Intelligence, and Evolution as chief indications of the Working Hand, Whose owner also appeared to possess complete knowledge of things with absolute power to rule over them and bend them to His Will. Consequently, belief in the existence of the Great Mind was confirmed, and the world began to adore the God of Nature, called "Allah" in the Holy Qur'án.

Monism is now an accepted verity in secular opinion, but there is yet a small gulf to be bridged between Monism and Monotheism. Now if we credit this Working Hand, of which we have spoken, with Intelligence and Design, as science compels us to do, we must need believe in the existence of some Mind that works wonders everywhere, since these features belong exclusively to mind. Monism plus belief in Mind's existence will create Monotheism.

Unfortunately, Dogmatic Theology gave such attributes to the Creative Agency that it failed to receive any support from the school of Natural Theology; nay, the former was regarded by many as an insult to human intelligence. The revolt was especially directed against the assertiveness of the Formal Church in the West, and disbelief in God was

its necessary outcome. Had it referred to the above qualities as the attributes of the Supreme Being, it could have suppressed all atheistic tendencies in humanity. Al-Qur'án, however, adopted the required course. The very first attribute that it gave to Allah—i.e. *Rabb*—includes the seven qualities mentioned below among its various other meanings. Besides, the Sacred Book in many verses refers to those qualities as salient characteristics of One Who created the Universe, thus establishing His Existence in a most rational way. It is for this reason that Muslims became more firmly fixed in their belief in Islamic tenets in consequence of the spread of Liberal Education, while other faiths suffered from its hands.

Here I give a few of the verses referring to the seven qualities to which I have alluded. The Book teems with such, and they will be discussed later on.

(1) God, the source of all the laws that receive obedience from everything in Nature.¹

(2) Monism.—“If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder; therefore glory be to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him).”² The verse in a very brief form refers to the nature of the laws working in Nature and antagonistic to each other in their requirements. Such were sure to create chaos in universe, had they not been under the control of the one hand.

¹ The Holy Qur-án, iii. 82.

² Ibid. xxi. 22.

(3) Design.—“ O men ! Serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so *that you may guard (against evil).*”¹ “ He it is Who created *for you* all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the Heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.”² It shows the object of the creation and the things therein. “ And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them *in vain* ; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve, then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire.”³ The words italicized by me refer to the design and object of the creation.

(4) Design and Intelligence and Monism—“ And your God is *One God !* there is no god but He ; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.” “ Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with which *men profit* and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds, and clouds made subservient between the heavens and the earth there are signs for a people *who understand.*”⁴ The verses show how various regions, working separately as regards each other in their own sphere, do converge to the same end, *i.e.*, profit of man. And the whole system displays an intelligent design.

1 Ibid. ii. 21.

2 The Holy Qur-án ii. 29.

3 Ibid, xxviii. 27

4 The Holy Qur-án, ii. 163-64.

(5) Evolution.—“Pharaoh said : And who is the one whom you call your Rabb ? He said : Our Rabb is He who gave to everything its shape, measure, and quantity of materials to bring it to its perfection and then put it on the right path to reach the goal.” “Pharaoh said : And who is your Lord, O Moses ? He said : Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).”¹ The verse refers to all the evolutionary stages.

(6-7) Knowledge of things and power like that of an owner rule over them. “.....whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His ; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission ? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases ; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tries Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.”²

The Kingdom of Heaven.

“Thy Kingdom come” is the pith of the prayer popularly known as the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus longed for the establishment of God’s Will on earth, as it was in Heavens ; for in this he saw the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom. His prayer still resounds in every corner of Christendom. Two thousand years have all but passed, and still the prayer has failed to receive any

1 Ibid, xx. 49-50

2 The Holy Qur-án, ii. 255.

response, according to the Church's interpretation, which identifies the prayed-for Kingdom with the descent of Jesus from on high. The recent disappointment of the Adventists in this respect, together with the new cosmogony which has lately arisen, tends to discredit the old beliefs. The earth is now believed to be but an insignificant speck in Infinite Space. No one now takes the universe for a "three-storeyed building consisting of heavens, the abode of God, the angels and beatified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions beneath it." The descent of Christ into Hades and his ascent into Heavens must therefore be taken in an allegorical sense, as is the practice with the most prominent Churchmen.

Astronomical truth, as accepted at present, leaves no room for a geographical Heaven. The new cosmography thus destroys faith in the physical ascent of Jesus, and with it goes the belief in his descent. Church dignitaries are now realizing the futility of such doctrines and see his second coming in the exhibition of Divine Morals by man. The Kingdom of Heaven will come and rule the earth when man, the lord of the earth, shall have decked himself in Divine garments. Jesus, in fact, prayed for the day when the King of Heavens will reveal His Morals to humanity. Man then will walk humbly with the Lord, and His Will be on earth as it is in Heavens.

Jesus could never have thought that the earth was not included in God's Kingdom. Everything in the

earth and on it, as far as its material growth is concerned, slavishly follows the Laws of God.¹ Man no doubt is a rebel against His government, and that chiefly where he follows his own discretion, otherwise he cannot afford to go against the Laws of God. Even atheists bow to them, though the atheists call them the Laws of Nature. The Divine Economy has blessed man with the power of discernment. He errs in its use, and becomes inordinate in his ways. Jesus, a true reformer from God, saw the real uplifting of man in his coming under the Divine colours. True baptism does not consist of dipping in water. This is just a symbol. It consisted, as the Qur'án afterwards explained, in dyeing oneself in the colours of God.²

The world, with all our concern in it, is a chaos if not subservient to moral order. There is no tranquillity or peace of mind anywhere in the human world ; while both these qualities are clearly to be observed in all other denizens of the universe, be they animate or inanimate, whether they possess intelligence or lack it. Ethics based on true morality can alone finish this ever-increasing struggle between man and man which is disturbing the human mind everywhere. Possession of earthly riches, though essential constituent of our comfort, does not secure for us the treasure of real happiness. This latter lies exclusively in the owning and exhibition of Divine Morals. For these we look in sacred scriptures and in the writings of great men. But

1 The Holy Qur-án. xxx. 30.

2 Ibid, li. 138.

our prejudices and passions handicap us here. We very often object to such moral tenets as come from other teachers. Fortunately, the true solution of this intricate problem is at last coming within our reach. The Qur'án, in the clearest terms, based its code of morality and ethics on Divine lines.¹ This truth is now dawning on the Western mind, which has begun to see true morality in the reflection and shadow of the Divine Attributes. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, as I said before, will become reality when man shall have equipped himself with Divine Morality. If Jesus prayed for its revelation from on high, as well as for knowledge of the way to achieve it, the Last of the Prophets has received it from the source of all goodness. The Qur'án, he claims, has come to grant us the Charter of the Heavenly Kingdom. It gives us an insight into all those Divine Morals which must be the foundation of our moral code. Prejudice and bigotry, doubtless will not allow many to accept Quranic teachings as the universal truth. But the Holy Book brings Nature to witness to its verities.² Islam does not dogmatize in anything. It appeals to Nature and refers to Nature's pages in support of its teachings. If the real happiness and peace of the world lie in subordinating our volition to the Will of the Most High, we ought not to have the message solely from the mouth of a fellow-creature,

¹ The Holy Qur-án, vii. 180; the opening chapter of the Qur-án. Muhammad says: "Dye yourself in the colours of Allah."

² Ibid iii. 190.

no matter what his claims may be. Our culture has enabled us to read the Divine Mind in the pages of His Divine Work, and in it lies the superiority of the Quranic teaching over all other scriptures. All its precepts and principles are illustrated and explained in the universe. Other persuasions may claim to prescribe the Divine Course for our conduct, but the manifestations of Nature are our only safe and true guide in such respect. Its pages, if read with the eye of the observation, disclose mighty and useful lessons that must needs bring us happiness and success. Nature, in fact, reflects the mind of Nature Creator.

Nature alone can provide for us a mould in which to cast our morals. The great function that a Book from God should perform would be to remind us of the lessons of Nature.

Scientific research is too slow to bring within our knowledge all that we require for our moral progress on such Divine lines as are disclosed by Nature, and indeed humanity has passed thousands of years without such knowledge. Divine Revelation therefore comes to fill the gap, thus says the Holy Quran.¹ It claims to have come to remind us of the Laws that are working in the universe—Laws that actualize all capacities and potentialities.

It is for the above reason that the religion of anthropomorphic incarnate together with the belief in

See chapter lxxix. which recounts in brief wording the marvellous transformation wrought by Revelation in Arabia.

vicarious sacrifices for human salvation is at last vanishing. Such beliefs receive no support from Nature ; the only index of the Divine Mind, as I have said before, Monotheism must kill all dual or polytheistic creeds. Every working of the Hand Behind the Screen is admittedly transcendental and beyond human perception ; hence a belief in a “delimitated God” is, on the face of it, an absurdity. On the other hand, though the principle of sacrifice is working everywhere in the world, yet it tells us nothing about vicarious atonements. Things belonging to a low order are sacrificed at the altar of the high ; for in this lies their uplifting. But members of that high order do not immolate themselves for the salvation of the lower order. Inanimate matter, in the bowels of the earth, effaces even its name to secure its entry into the vegetable kingdom ; vegetables, through sacrifice, achieve locomotion and consciousness when they provide food for the animal kingdom.

Most of the animals, in their turn, when killed and brought to table, become transmuted into humanity. Members of the same order sometimes do sacrifice themselves for others ; but the sacrifice of the high in the interest of the low is something altogether unknown in the workings of Nature. Hence the doctrine of the “Epiphany”—God loved man so much that He sent His only son to save him through His blood—can no longer appeal to a student of Nature.

Similarly various other "isms," that the human mind has invented for its consolation from time to time, cannot stand the searchlight of modern culture. Their genesis lay in our efforts to secure pleasure and avoid pain. As our scheme to achieve success often becomes frustrated by causes beyond our control we ascribed our mishaps to some unseen agencies that were secretly working against our interests. We desired to court their favour, and therefore we deified them and approached them with every form of devotion. They became our gods and received from us worship and adoration. Our own passions sometimes joined themselves to the same category. Human lust and anger, for instance, have contrived to clothe themselves in Divine garments. They produced pantheism in its various forms, and countries from element-worship to manworship. Fetishism has swayed human belief in different shapes, but the study of Nature as it advanced showed its futility. It was Nature and its various elements that we worshipped to gain prosperity and avoid adversity, and our ignorance placed them on a Divine Pedestal. The Qur'án has exposed this error. It declares that Nature, with all its resources, was created to subserve our ends.¹ But our own ignorance of its ways and our misapplication of them, in consequence, brought calamity. To-day, scientific research has brought home to us the same

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xiv. 12—14,

truth. The gods of yesterday appear to us either as our equals or as ministers of our needs.

All such persuasions therefore as require allegiance to doctrine contrary to this truth are doomed to disappear. Religion as followed by every atom of Nature shall be our creed.¹ We shall no longer worship any man-made god. The God of Nature shall be the object of our adoration. It is for this reason that Islam is destined to be the future Religion of the World, for it encourages Science, looking upon it as its helpmate and comrade for the accomplishment of the grand design for which man was created.

If the sole object, therefore, of Science and Revelation is to enlighten us as to what will help us in claiming our birthright, there cannot be any antagonism between the two. False theolgy cannot go hand in hand with Science if the latter treads the right path. When folklore like that collected in the Bilical record was accepted as the Word of God, theology based on such writs must necessarily have been opposed to Science. The former, with all its power, would extinguish the latter. It did so in Europe in the Middle Ages, and would do the same again to-day if modern culture had not widened liberality and created the broadmindedness of the present times. But scientific discoveries are so vigorously and constantly shaking the Church beliefs in the West that the ever-

1 The Holy Qur-án, xxx. 20.

increasing onslaughts have almost overwhelmed the mind of the Churchman, who now sees the protection and maintenance of his faith only in the cessation of scientific progress. The Bishop of Ripon wished to see Science take a holiday for the coming ten years. His lordship, in fact, needed a breathing-space that might enable the Church to trim its sails to meet the coming storm. Modernization in Church theology till now has provided a workable instrument for achieving the desired end, but now it looks like losing its efficacy in the face of present-day culture. Science has recently disclosed certain truths in so invincible a manner that, detrimental as they may be to Church tenets, they admit of no 'modernizing' effect on the part of the Church. They have gained favour with the human mind and are certain to vanquish their adversaries. In this connection the efforts of the present-day Modernists in the Church are especially noticeable. They have changed their religion altogether. Their Christianity is quite a different thing from that of the Church. But they try to look to the old faith for countenance. In their attempt to put their house in order and purge it of all that crept into it from paganism, they are not only clearing off the old furniture, but are refurnishing it with things quite uncongenial to the very atmosphere of the old house. Muslims, however, welcome these efforts, as they see in them the restoration of Faith to its original purity, which is no other than Islam. Islam is not

'Mohammedanism,' though the Holy Prophet preached it some thirteen hundred years ago. He, in fact, restored religion to its pristine beauty, and brought it into conformity with the religion observed by Nature.

We cannot enough admire Jesus when we find that the real object of the Revelation disclosed in his prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heavens," can be but the one and only object of Revelation. The whole universe obeys the Will of the Lord in its progress and development. The Divine Object in the creation of the world would be accomplished when the Mighty Atom of Nature, *i.e.* man, should succeed in subjugating his discretionary powers to the Will of the Creative Agency.¹ Happiness will rule the earth when the human race shall have become aware of and observed the ways of the Lord in His governance of the universe.

Science keeps ever the same object before her in her researches, but her progress is too slow to afford us, in our generation, any clear view of what the end is to be. The Great Designer did not delay by looking to the day when Science shall have succeeded in its efforts. Man must know His Will for his guidance on the earth, whether the knowledge comes to him through Science or Revelation. It was God's pleasure, nevertheless, to set us on the right path in this respect. He sent His messages to this end from time to time.²

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xx. 30.

² Ibid, ii. 38 ; vii. 38.

Thus the world saw great Teachers of Religion in every time and every place.¹ The door of Revelation, therefore, could not be closed until the required knowledge should have become complete. This was the purpose of the Qur'án, which in itself brings the fulfilment of the Nazarene prayer.

All Revelations have unanimously preached one truth. They have proclaimed that man was created after the image of his Creator. But the Qur'án was more explicit in this respect. It defined the position of man in the clearest language. It declared him to be the vicegerent of God on earth.² Science arrives at the same conclusion. It calls man the lord of the universe. If this is the object of his coming into the world, he cannot be true to his position unless he rules the earth on Divine lines. Revelation must therefore come to give him hints in the performance of his duty. The Arabic words *Ilham* and *Wahy* for inspiration convey the same idea. They mean hints from Above to aid man in the accomplishment of the Great Design. He, as God's viceroy, must exhibit Divine Morals. He cannot do so unless and until he knows what they are. If this were not the object of Revelation, there would have been no need of it. Devotion and Glorification by prayers and offerings which are no doubt the chief theme in every religion, are not mere formalities. True worship lies in implicit loyalty and obedience to

1 The Holy Qur'án, xiii.8. 2 Ibid, ii, 35; vi. 166 xxvii. 62; xliii. 60

God's way.¹ The recitation of a few sacred words accompanied by prescribed gesticulations are of no avail if their purport is not worked out in daily life. Singing hymns at the top of our voices is quite useless if our conduct does not bear testimony to what we profess in those hymns and prayers. A Revelation from Above could not claim finality,² as the Qur'án does, unless it inspires us with the true conception of Godhood.³ We have to fight under the flag of God, and we must know His colours. It is by our knowledge of those colours that the dead image of the Lord would become reanimated. It would then establish the Heavenly Kingdom on earth; man would no longer pray for it, but praise Him and give thanks to Him for His Revelation as the opening chapter of the Qur'án teaches.

1 The Holy Qur-án, ii. 21.

3 Ibid, xxix. 45, 49

2 Ibid, vi. 116.