

CHAPTER VI  
CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM<sup>1</sup>

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I. INTRODUCTION

**I**N the following pages a statement is presented of the values to be found in Islam and in Christianity. As we proceed to state religious values, it is important for the reader to bear in mind certain considerations:

1. "Values" is used to designate vital elements which contribute to the amelioration of individual or group life. This excludes purely relative "advantages" which the religious system may appear to display in contrast to some sector of heathen society. It excludes also features which strengthen the system, but strengthen it to no good for the life of its adherents. For example, polygamy may be prefer-

<sup>1</sup> AUTHOR'S NOTE.—My work in the following pages is original work, but not new. In the impossibility of writing a new treatise as part of the preparation for the missionary conference of Jerusalem, 1928, I was compelled to fall back on the published material in which, at various times during the past nineteen years, I have expressed the results of my study and reflection on Islam, and which now, after renewed and careful consideration, seemed to me to be still valid, and therefore "as good as new." All that was needed was a unifying and vitalizing plan of thought, and an editor gifted with both sympathy and originality. The former is supplied by the general thesis which has been conceived by those responsible for the program of the Jerusalem Meeting, and then communicated to the writers of the several preparatory treatises. The latter was vouchsafed to me in the person of my friend, Dr. W. A. Eddy, of the American University at Cairo. He has elaborated the plan of thought, collected and selected the material, and in certain important places supplemented it by the fruits of his own experience and reflection. I am infinitely beholden to him.

A missionary should indeed be heartily thankful to God for such an opportunity to offer to the members of a missionary conference representing so large a part of Christendom the net result of his thinking on the theme to which he has given his life. Its value will consist exclusively in what it draws forth from those who consider it.

W. H. T. G.

able to unlicensed promiscuity; yet in the light of the best social standards it is in no sense a value to be capitalized. Again, the Islamic law of apostacy is a defense of stone, which admits the recruit but prevents the deserter. As such, it facilitates the extension and retention of Muslim authority,—but it does not enrich life, and is not a value.

2. Values may be kinetic or potential. Some are operative to-day; others are matters of dogma and usage which are dormant. The extent to which a given value is operative or dormant will be indicated in each case.

3. The limits of space require that the religions be described in universals. This necessarily debars, to a large extent, facts which have only local application. The regional and sectarian variations of faith and practice must be very largely ignored. Similarly, in point of chronology, there will be no time to mark the stages through which the religious systems may have passed since the days of their founders. We will have in mind Islam and Christianity as they have developed historically.

In Islam, more important than the historic sects is the division into three communities of religious thought, which is now on the increase in the principal centers of Muslim culture: (1) The traditional school: reactionary, literalist, bigoted. (2) The liberal school: rationalizing, compromising, eclectic; sometimes, as in the case of the Ahmadiyya sect, openly aggressive. (3) The secular community: agnostic, materialistic, anti-religious, but socially bound to Islam. Obviously, the religious values hereinafter ascribed to Islam are not present equally in all three of these schools or communities. Yet this lack of unity must, in this brief statement, also be set aside. The liberal and agnostic groups, though active and audible, are numerically slight. It is safe to say that ninety per cent. of the Muslims in the world are still under the tutelage of the traditional orthodox Sunni school.

## II. VALUES IN ISLAM

### DOCTRINE OF GOD

The Arabian prophet came to possess a fervid faith in Allah—the One God. Not only did he come to possess it; it

came to possess him. He felt that he had experienced Allah, a living, absolutely all-powerful, and irresistible being. The same faith is shared to-day by his followers, with very varying degrees of reality and intensity. The language and imagery of the Quran and the Traditions in speaking of God often employ as startling metaphors and images as the Old Testament, and such language has been for the most part interpreted with prosaic literalism. While the ideas of love and pity are present (as indicated by the names "The Compassionate," "The Guardian," "The Forgiver," etc.), it is true generally to say that the predominating thought in the mind of the Muslim is that of the power of God. This power is conceived of as Omnipotent, Autocratic, Absolute, because Allah is the supreme, nay the only, Reality.

This faith in a living God who wills and acts is a vital element for the future of religion in Muslim lands. Moreover, it was never more needed in the "Christian" West than to-day; to import into Muslim areas a diluted notion of Divine Kingship would be a fatal error. The annals of history point clearly how irresistible Muslims have been, in conflicts of the sword, when engaged in a *jihād* against decadent or unspiritual Christians. In spiritual conflict a like burning faith is equally effective. It is true, on the other hand, that this faith energizes the Muslim only when it is in ebullition. At other times it sinks into a deadly fatalism which, instead of goading to action, paralyzes it. It needs the angel to trouble the pool.

A heavy price is paid by the Muslims for their worship of unconditioned might: it appears to involve the disappearance of both love and holiness in any full sense of the words. It causes no surprise, but only regret, to find that Islam has no place for atonement, for the fact of Atonement sprang from God's love and holiness. But the uniqueness and living supremacy of Allah have sounded forth from every minaret through the centuries and half way round the world.

The heart of every religion is its doctrine of God. When we strip the Mohammedan doctrine of Allah of all that is admittedly of theoretic interest, it would appear that what is of living significance to Muslims is this conviction of theirs that

Allah *is*, that He is more than a principle or an "influence not themselves," that He is a personal force, and that He has a definite relation to the world. This faith unquestionably affects the whole thinking and doing of Mohammedans. It may not always produce a particularly ethical fruit, but it is what to them matters. It gives them a steady, if stiff, *Weltanschauung*; it very often enables them to face loss, trouble, and adversity with complete stoicism. Though the length to which they have pushed deism might seem to imply a hopelessly remote deity, their conception of the unmitigated omnipotence of Allah brings Him virtually near;—for man is every way surrounded by, nay, himself exists through the immediate working of Allah's will and power. And though their conviction of the absolute "difference" between Allah's nature and attributes and their own logically leads to complete agnosticism, yet, as we shall see later, they find ways through which there is given them an approach to Allah and the unseen world: the way of revelation through the Prophet and His Book, and the way of mysticism.

Less clear, but by no means unimportant, is the teaching of Islam regarding the Holy Spirit; and for the Christian missionary who looks into the seeds of mysticism, this will be recognized as one which can grow and bear much fruit.

So rigidly have Muslim theologians fenced about the Oneness of Allah that they have begged the question of the Communicator of Allah's revelation to man; but the Quranic teaching at least permits, nay indicates, a mysterious special relationship between this Communicator and Godhead Itself. The Spirit of God is mentioned twenty times in the Quran. From these passages the following summary of the best mystical Islamic teaching about the Spirit is significant:

1. The Spirit is shrouded in mystery, and even to Mohammed "only a little" knowledge of It is given.
2. The Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of Allah, always linked to His name or to the personal possessive pronoun.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Quranic expressions are "The Spirit of Allah," "His Spirit," "The Holy (= Transcendent) Spirit," "The Spirit of the (divine) Holiness (= Transcendence)."

It proceeds from Him as breath from the body. The Spirit is above both men and angels, both in degree and in kind: it is even uncertain whether it can properly be said to be created.

3. The Spirit was breathed into man, thus establishing the uniqueness of man's creation and his dependence upon Allah for spiritual vitality. It was also breathed into the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4. The Spirit is limitless, capable of being infused into countless personalities without diminution or loss of identity.

The reader must be warned that the commonest (yet not the only or the noblest) interpretation of this teaching by the commentators is to identify the Spirit with one of the arch-angelic hierarchy. But Christians will find that they have been anticipated by some of the best Muslim mystics in suggesting a nobler solution. Mohammed himself wrote freely of the angels, whereas with respect to the Spirit he contrasts It with the angels and postulates a mystery. If his awful Visitant was none other than the Spirit, then It was a Being altogether higher than the angels, for he describes It as "endued with power, having influence with the Lord of the Throne, obeyed" (by celestials, surely). There results the noblest and most convincing interpretation attempted by Islamic thinkers: namely, the Spirit is a unique Being, above all creatures, related uniquely, intimately, and actively to the Lord of the Throne.

This teaching, though rare, to the multitude unknown, and even for adepts full of awesome and dangerous mystery, is a part of what Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. It seems clear that Muslim theologians, though following the way to truth, wavered when within a step of their goal out of respect for their commendable belief in the Unity of the Deity. They saw the transcendental character of the Spirit, even admitted (some of them) that It is uncreate, but hesitated to admit Its Eternity. In many of His attributes, the Spirit of the Quran is the Holy Spirit of the Bible, or at least the Old Testament, in all but name.

And to this we must add another point in connection

with the Islamic doctrine of God from which we can profit more than we have in the past. In the strange Muslim version of the Logos doctrine, Islam seems again to be groping after a truth which Christianity richly possesses. This doctrine, like that of the Spirit, is out of keeping with the general trend of Muslim theological thought and has been very embarrassing to the sincere theologians of Islam. According to this doctrine, Allah had, as one of His eternal attributes, a Word, which Word "became" a Book with a divine message. The nature of this pre-existence; the relation of that Word in eternity to that Quran in time; the question how to conceive the transition from the eternal to the temporal order;—these have proved questions metaphysically as perplexing to the Muslim as to the Christian theologian. But for that very reason they enable the latter to present the idea of the Christian Logos to the Muslim as something not inherently impossible, even if difficult of grasping; something the need of which Muslims themselves have felt and tried to import into Islam even against the whole trend of the system; something which, just because it is so entirely in line with all Christian thought, will be found in Christianity more fully developed and much more satisfying by just as much as a conscious Personality is of greater dignity than an impersonal Book. Again, the hints dropped in the Quran and the Traditions of a special Real Presence of God locally as well as morally (in the burning bush, in the "Lowest Heaven," and the like), might be used more than they are to press home the possibility of a Real Presence in Christ, and to urge its greater reasonableness by just so much as a sinless human body is of greater dignity than desert shrub or intermediate heaven.

#### VENERATION FOR JESUS

Islam is the only one of the great world religions to come after Christianity; the only one that claims categorically to supersede Christianity and deny its truth. On the other hand, it is the only other religion which tells anything about Jesus.

Islam has ever accorded to Jesus a high place among its prophets. This in itself is something. Moreover, Jesus is for Muslims a uniquely distinguished prophet on at least two counts: (1) He is acknowledged to be sinless in origin and spotless in character; (2) He is described as living in high heaven where He is an intercessor (*wagih*) on behalf of men. Many of the other teachings about Jesus are distorted and worse than useless; but surely, here is something of real value for the Christian missionary to build on. It has produced respect for Jesus, admiration for His example, and a willingness to admit His living power and influence with God.

Unfortunately, Jesus does not at all occupy so large a place in the common life and thought of Muslims the world over as He would merit in view of the high place accorded Him in the Quran. The truth is that Muslims do not think much about any of their prophets other than Mohammed. It is equally true, however, that this was not always so. Evidence exists to prove that in the centuries which preceded the Crusades, after which a hardening process sets in, the figure of Jesus, yes, even of the Crucified, was to thoughtful Muslims a vitally inspiring one. In those early days, His character had a marked ethical effect and the grace and beauty of His Person caused some Muslim hearts to burn within them. The most hopeful single note in the Islamic world to-day is the, to many, irresistible attraction of the Person of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

If the Muslim Allah is a cold and strange dictator when contrasted with the Christian God and Father, still less is the 'Īsā of the Quran identical with the Jesus of the Gospel. It is as though an imperfect artist, after a visit to Dresden, tried to draw the face of the Sistine Madonna from memory. The result would give no true copy, not even perhaps the faintest resemblance. Yet a true copy was intended. It was to have been the Sistine Madonna and no other. Only on

<sup>1</sup> Shauky, the noted poet-laureate of Cairo and a Muslim, has been taken to task by Muslim critics for adorning his poems with tributes to the beauty and glory of the Person of Jesus, and especially of the crucified Jesus.

allowing this assumption could a wise teacher point out where and how the work had so utterly failed. Imperfect, distorted, null beyond words to express nullity may be the Mohammedan's representation of our Jesus in his 'Isā. Yet it represents his honest, his earnest attempt, and the Christian cannot but begin on that understanding, and then try to show his friend feature after feature, lovely and glorious, of the true portrait. The mental image formed by Apollos of the Christ he preached at Ephesus may have seemed to Aquila and Priscilla extraordinarily unlike the adored Jesus whom they knew. Yet their dealing with Apollos is summed up in that gentle remark, "They took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." And so while the Figure before Apollos' eyes did not move, the mists that concealed It disappeared, and Its divine glory shone full out. The Islamic teaching about Jesus invites our sympathy in a similar way, especially as Christianity is, historically, partly responsible for the distortions, for Mohammed's source was the odds and ends of garbled Apocrypha. The Islamic teaching is not intentionally derogatory or antagonistic to the claims of Christ; it is an attempt to venerate and esteem Him. Muslims do not know that He is the Son of God, but neither did the Twelve Disciples, at first.

All these limitations do indeed enormously discount this "value"; so much so that it often seems to the Christian preacher that it would have been better if they had known nothing at all, rather than mis-know so much. It is indeed an altar to an Unknown Christ which Islam has erected, though it does not even know that He is unknown: and our approach must be Paul's,—“What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.”

#### DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Muslims, at any rate in unsophisticated lands and in country districts, are punctual and faithful in the performance of the ordinance of prayer. Solitary worshipers may be seen in the many-mansioned House of Islam:—camel-



driver in the desert, farmer in the field, boatman on his barge, porter on a bench in the railway-station, doorkeeper at the foot of the common stair, fisherman on the beach by the sea, traveler by the wayside. No one takes any notice of the sight or calls attention to it. Neither in passer-by nor in worshiper is there embarrassment or surprise.

In mosque-prayer there is genuine "equality and fraternity." The band of worshipers executes the ritual with machine-like precision: the Shaykh in his flowing robes leading; behind him in rows, shoulder to shoulder, well-dressed gentlemen, coarsely-clad workmen from the streets, Negroes, young boys. Thus has statutory prayer been performed for thirteen centuries; thus, without deviation, shall it be performed while Islam lasts.

Although pious Muslims have denied the charge, it is probably true that spiritual emotion is usually absent from these "duty" prayers. This is not to say that they are therefore universally vain repetitions. There is at least the discipline that comes with frequent and regular concentration upon the thought of God, or at least on a religious exercise, —a concentration achieved by Muslim worshipers even amid crowded traffic. Wherever he may be, the Muslim has learned, during his prayers, to be alone with himself; some of the Muslims to be alone with God.

But as a rule, not through the five daily statutory prayers does the element of feeling enter into Muslim devotions. The esthetic senses at least are stirred much more by the highly elaborate, ornate chanting of the Quran at feast or fast or festivity: an art the delight of which is born half of music and half of word, that gives him the element of uplift which in the West is found in storied window, in pealing organ, in melodies and harmonies that thrill and uplift the soul. The susceptibility of the Muslim to the reading of the Quran suggests that beauty in the reading of prayer or scripture in our own churches should be much more earnestly studied.

Much more emotional is the Zikr. The faces of the enthusiasts as they wildly sway, bow, or whirl in the mystic prayer-dance, with their rhythmic, raucous cries upon Allah, are

evidences of psychic excitement. But however valuable the Zikr may have originally been for devotion, it would seem to have degenerated badly through formulation and general use. The ecstasy attained is hypnotic, not spiritual. Its significance lies in the fact that it was once a powerful stimulus to real devotions, and might be adapted so as to become so again; and in the fact that its popularity with common folk would seem to prove a hunger for more ecstatic, heartfelt prayer on the part of the more devout and mystical minds which have never been satisfied with the prescribed devotional ritual. The Sufi life is not obligatory; it is voluntary, and as such gathers to itself the devotion and enthusiasm of those who are not content to fulfil only the letter of the law. The "Way" of the Sûfi is the mystic Pilgrim's Progress to perfection. The "Ways" of the various Sufi orders, all of them slightly different, with their Zikr rituals, also differing in their details, are the mode by which the soul can rise to a period of union with the divine All. These orders have had a prodigious development all over the Islamic world, but particularly in North Africa, in Turkey, and in Persia. To belong to them it is not necessary to enter a community life apart. The ordinary man can be affiliated to one or other of them, put himself under the spiritual direction of the local Head, and attend the local Zikrs. Thus millions of the commonalty of Islam, desert tribesmen, peasants, shopkeepers, tradesmen, feed their emotional life and find their chief interest in religion.

The value of the Muslim mystic's "Way" may well be questioned in relation to the "Truth" and the "Life." But contrasted with the rigidity of formal Islamic "ordinances," the "Way" does provide at least the ideal of life in and for God. And in actual practice it feeds, howsoever inadequately, the flame of emotional, fervent religious experience, without which there can be no real religious life at all.

#### PERSONAL ATTACHMENT TO MOHAMMED

Another aspect of the Muslim's religion which is unquestionably vital to him is his personal attitude to his prophet.

The clause "Mohammed is *the* Prophet of Allah" is at least as essential and significant an article of faith to him as "There is no God but Allah." The Muslim's devotion to his Prophet, his admiration and enthusiasm, nay his personal love for him, are intense realities. He feels a personal relationship to him; he is conscious of a personal gratitude for the ineffable services he has rendered. He believes that Mohammed suffered and sacrificed in loyalty to his mission. Sometimes he throws over theological or philosophical proofs of the truth of Islam, and points simply to the fact of Mohammed.

It was this devotion to the man Mohammed in the earliest days, it is this still to-day, that has made possible the development of Islam as a system of minute legalism and casuistry based upon the practice of that man even more than upon the word of Allah. It is remarkable to reflect how Christianity, which regarded its Founder as divine, never preserved, much less invented, minutiae concerning His daily life, and so was saved from enslaving itself to a new system of law; while Islam, the very religion which arose to protest against the excessive esteeming of any man, ended by binding itself hand and foot, and for all generations, to one man's dictation, in both private and public life.

The vitality of Muslim devotion to their prophet is reflected also in the progressive idealization of Mohammed's personality by his followers. With absolute unanimity from the first, Islam has vehemently insisted upon his impeccability in the teeth of the very text of the Quran and of the clearest historical evidence contained in the literary sources themselves. The adoration of celestial beings for his person and the marvelous response of all physical nature to his advent on earth, are the favorite themes of the *maulid* poets, who celebrate the Prophet's birthday. The later Mystics even advanced to an esoteric philosophy of the Prophet's cosmic significance, in which an archetypical pre-existence is asserted for him. And everywhere among the vital forces of Islam must be reckoned this ethical enthusiasm—an enthusiasm of devotion and loyalty to a personal, human, but wholly idealized leader.

Much is often made of the immediacy of the Muslim's relation to Allah. In practice this doctrine has broken down in favor of a mediator, Mohammed. Islam has felt the need of an intercessor, and it has fervently elevated Mohammed to that function. He is thought of as no mere passive instrument of Allah's revelation, but as a superman who brought to them the heavenly fire and was in turn their ambassador, to plead their needs and secure for them preference. What Moses was to the Israelites, Mohammed is to the Muslims, and more, for Mohammed is greater than all the prophets: he represents all the prophets put together.

That this feature of Islam contains possibilities of moral progress is undeniable. It is to be expected that its value to human life will increase in unconscious response to other and finer moral and spiritual ideals. The Muslim is seen groping for an intercessor who shall have been, also, an ideal man. One has only to substitute the Person of Jesus for the person of Mohammed to visualize the possibilities latent in this aspect of the life of Islam. Whether our duty is negative as well as positive, truthfully to point out the inadequacy of the real Mohammed as well as set forth Jesus Christ, is a very hard question. It is very difficult for us to do this in the right spirit, or at least to appear to be doing so. Some think that all Mohammed-criticism is best left to Mohammedans themselves, to time, and to truth.

#### ISLAMIC FRATERNITY

Another reality of the Muslim's religious life is his pride in his religion, its position as the latest and last of the religions, its triumphs, its literature and its learning, its saints and its sages. It is this, and his consciousness of its universality for men of every color and every tongue, that account for one of Islam's most notable achievements: the sense of Muslim fraternity.

For Islam is by no means merely a personal religion; it is also, like Hinduism and medieval Catholicism, a great encyclopedic system intended to cover the totality of human life. It is a legal system: for the canon-law covers human

life down to its smallest details; it is a social system: governing those two subjects which lie at the basis of all society, sex and property, through its control of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. It is a culture: for it has produced a literature, an art, and a philosophy; it is a nationality: less so to-day, indeed, than a decade ago, but still there remains a conscious or unconscious sense of political unity, with its focus in the institution of the Caliphate. In idea and essence Islam is a veritable Church-State which takes charge of every Muslim in infancy, moulds his acts and thoughts at every stage of his life, weds him and buries him, and finally disposes of his property. Islam is well-nigh everything to the Muslim.

The hold which this system exercises upon its adherents is to be understood only in the light of Islam's many-sided prestige. There is theological prestige in being the company of the only true believers, in being the "chosen people." There is the prestige of the Prophet's leadership, of the world-wide fraternity, of the Mekka where all meet, of the Paradise which will be the Muslim's monopoly in the next world. All this creates an *esprit de corps* which has no room for any other loyalty, with the most gigantic inhibitions of blood, culture, sentiment, and habit to deter the inquirer after truth.

If there is one element which more than any other deserves our serious attention, and to some extent our admiration, it is this fundamental fact of Islamic brotherhood. However grave be its limitations, both in its spirit and in its negative applications, it is, on its own plane, a real achievement. It does introduce a factor of actual unity amid the clashes of color, race, nationality, and class. It is true that the light of this fraternity shows up most vividly only when faced with apparent antagonism from the West. It is also true that in itself it has done nothing to stop bloodshed and war even within Islam. But apart from all this, Islamic fraternity as a unifying factor is a real thing, and beyond all other things in Islam gives occasion for meditation and thought to all Christians, and especially to those

who might be inclined to stress Christian individualism at the expense of that "dwelling together in unity" willed by Him who was lifted up that He might draw all men unto Himself.

The admirers of Islam to-day say that it is the only working brotherhood available for this distracted world, the only unifying factor amid all its antipathies and frictions, the only feasible Catholicism. We can never allow this claim, for however generously we may concede to the Islamic fraternity idea our admiration, and find in it our rebuke, we cannot forget its fatal and even ghastly limitations. But it is utterly insufficient to disallow the claim merely in words. Islamic fraternity, that of a "chosen people," will be superseded in only one way, and for that we have a precedent: by the demonstration of a brotherhood which goes deeper, reaches further, rises higher, and embraces more widely. We shall come to this again.

#### SELF-PROPAGATION

It is a particular and well-founded boast with Mohammedans that, broadly speaking, Islam has propagated itself naturally and without the aid of missionary societies and apparatus; that Islam adds cubits to its stature without taking anxious thought. Their boast is that Islam is, in and by itself, a vast missionary society, and the spontaneity of Islamic expansion seems to them a sign of power, symbolic of a divine dynamo.

In truth, nearly every Muslim is a sort of missionary or emissary of Islam. The trader, or soldier, or official, when he enters non-Mohammedan territory does not "wait for an ordained man" to come along: he sees to it that some sort of praying-place is fixed upon, and there he gives to the surrounding people the witness of his picturesque devotions. He does not mentally and actually leave the business of that witness to some groaning missionary society with a perpetual annual deficit, several thousand miles away. The Muslim layman simply starts witnessing himself, and his witness (such as it is) is short and clear. And there is

something about his attitude and the tone of his witness which does succeed in conveying to that people that they are welcome to accept Islam, welcome to join him at that praying-place, to learn the picturesque drill of his devotions, and to repeat with him the creed of witness; and that if they are so disposed he will teach them something, however mechanical and formal, or see that they get taught. In short, there is something about his general attitude which suggests that although on principle he is unfraternal towards them (and occasionally hatefully and inhumanly so) as long as they remain outside, he will be fraternal as soon as they decide to step within. There is something about the attitude of every Muslim man, woman, and child which says "Welcome." This is the fundamental attitude we need to get back into the Church of Christ.

It is a painful process to contrast this with what actually obtains too often in our case, partly in consequence of the general Western attitude of aloofness which we more than fully carry with our religion, partly because of profound color-caste prejudice, and partly because of sheer misapprehension of our own religion.

The propaganda of the two religions is wholly unequal: simple for Islam, complex for Christianity. Islam is spread by lay missionaries who mix and intermarry with their converts, thus gradually and inevitably occupying the country. Christianity has been for the most part spread by "foreigners" for whom the race problem is no mere prejudice. For it is gravely to be doubted whether humanity is benefited, and whether God is served, by the mixing of white with black or brown or yellow. Be this as it may, so long as missions are chiefly "foreign," just so long will the cultural and biological advantages of assimilation be on the side of Islam. The problem, therefore, points urgently toward the shifting of missionary effort on to the native churches, where Muslim converts shall find a full and congenial home. For the modern method of missionary societies was not the early one, and the Islamic method is not the monopoly of Islam. It was the first method of the

Church; it continued long to be its method; and its greatest conquests were thereby won.

It is true that, to the eternal discredit of Islam, the Muslim missionary is capable of leaving the morals of his converts practically undisturbed. As one Muslim writer in Cairo put it (speaking more truly than he knew), "Christianity opposes, Islam follows, the current of human nature." This fact discredits Islam, but does not diminish the credit due to the Muslim missionary, who testifies to his religion, such as it is, and seeks its extension. It is probably true that of no other religion in the world can it be said that every believer is, to the extent of his own faith and practice, thereby a missionary.

#### LIBERAL TENDENCIES

More especially since the war, breaches have been appearing in the solid front of Islam. To a great extent these point to agnosticism and irreligion, rather than to a truer religious experience, and as such may be considered by some as being without positive value to the future of missions. It is a proof of dissatisfaction, and gives the promise of wide reform, and of the acceptance of a better way.

Already the note of dissatisfaction with the Quran can be clearly detected. Not forever has the Mohammedan been able to shut his eyes to the puerilities that fill so many of its pages, the *contradiction between its commendation of the previous "Books" and its still unexplained disagreement with those Books' contents*. These and other difficulties have long caused individual Muslims dissatisfaction and doubt. Already a critical theory, unreconcilable with the form in which the book is cast (throughout, a direct address from the Deity), has been attempted in India, while the rationalizings of the Ahmadiyya sect in England and elsewhere are notorious. The greatest effort is still made in the interests of orthodoxy, the attempt to square the Quran with science, history, and morality. But in recent years, thousands of intellectuals have thrown over the whole business, and, in private, regard the Quran with indifferent



contempt. These disclaim belief in any revealed religion, seldom if ever attend a mosque. They number many who are students in foreign schools, and especially those who have been educated abroad. What especially outrages and discourages the orthodox is that these freethinkers occupy the highest temporal posts, as, for example, in Turkey and Egypt.

Usually, these rationalists represent a defection from Islam. They do not mix in religious controversy; and though their attachment to cultural Islam remains, they ignore or discourage all theological issues. Already, however, there are indications of liberalism within the citadel. In Cairo, two noted Azhar scholars, Taha Hussayn and Abd-el-Razik, have published books in which the literary and historic infallibility of the Quran and the political aspirations of Islam have been directly challenged. And the Azhar has its own internal quarrels, with its personnel in two camps more or less corresponding to "modernist" and "fundamentalist." In those schools of Cairo which are patterned after the Western colleges, the Quran is something of a joke, and the student who quotes it in argument is publicly ridiculed by his fellows.

Dissatisfaction with the moral ideal presented by Mohammed's character is already beginning to be felt. One comes across Muslims who have realized that, side by side with the Traditions ascribing to the Prophet pious dictum and genial deed, there are stories which show that often he rose no higher than current Arab ideals and Arab practice. As incidents in the life of an Arab conqueror, the tales of raiding, private assassinations, and public executions, perpetual enlargements of the harem, and so forth, might be historically explicable and therefore pardonable; but it is another matter that they should be taken as setting forth the moral ideal for all time. As the mythical is sifted from the historical in the Traditions concerning the biography of Mohammed, the old idealizing of Mohammed will become more difficult.

Again, the mortmain which Islamic law has kept on the

*freedom of social and cultural development is resented by many a thinker and reformer. The veil, polygamy, the eternal inequality lying at the root of the conception of the Muslim State are, for the most part, things which reformers are burning to change, and concerning which the metropolitan Arabic newspapers use language which is neither ambiguous nor reverent. Nor need we think only of Turkey. In many centers of Muslim culture, Western secularism is openly advocated. There is a frank recognition of the fact that Christian nations are more advanced, even though credit for the superiority be not awarded to the Christian religion.*

This dissatisfaction with Islam does not mean a readiness to embrace Christianity or any other religion; but it does show self-criticism and the collapse of Islamic pride and assurance in proportion as the critical spirit spreads. The propaganda of the Ahmadiyya sect is an insolent and aggressive attempt by a few to find a new basis for strategy and for publicity intended for Western consumption; and it is doing great harm to the cause of Christianity by its unscrupulous libels on the Gospel and on Christ. But it captures few Muslims with its program (outside India); the normal step for the critic is from orthodoxy to agnosticism and secularism. In Cairo to-day, this step is for the young Effendi an easy one, for the culture and logic of the Azhar are despised, and even teachers of Arabic and of religion are discarding the religious garb. The diploma of the Azhar has depreciated until it has approached the vanishing point, and the graduate has difficulty in securing government employment. This, in a country whose state religion is Islam! This, in the university which has been for centuries the authoritative source of Islam's intellectual life!

In one respect the revolt has gone far: political Islam is in disruption. Turkey's rulers have virtually repudiated the Mohammedan religion. Their defection has alienated Egypt and staggered India. Persia is Shia and separatist. Mohammedan India is in a strait between Indian and

Islamic unity. Among all these irreconcilable divisions, the Caliphate question has become an insoluble one, and so the visible symbol of Mohammedan unity is gone.

There remain for notice two other liberal tendencies whose value is definitely constructive. Muslims of all classes and in many regions are evidencing a tolerance towards the Christian missionary which is nowhere permitted in the Quran and was seldom practised a decade ago. The past ten years have been difficult ones in Mohammedan countries, but the fact is gaining recognition that it is secular politics that has been everywhere the factor of disturbance, and that missions and missionaries have been everywhere the moderating and alleviating factors, and sometimes the only ones. Mohammedans see that missionaries are free from the political and economic motives which appear to infringe their legitimate interests. In the welter of acerbated relations in Turkey and Anatolia, the missionaries were seen to be the one rallying-point of mutual consideration, understanding, and forgiveness. In Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt there has been wide recognition of the idea that the missionaries sympathized with true nationalism, and on more than one occasion they have been markedly exempted from anti-foreign demonstrations. The Gospel is now being preached freely in Muslim communities where less than a generation ago the preacher would have been ejected. Native Christians have a wide field for witness. Entirely apart from the number of converts made, Muslims have learned to respect, nay to love, at least some of those who bear the name of Christ.

And finally, the character of Christ does attract the Mohammedan, and is doing so more and more. Many a Muslim, when he has placed it fairly alongside of the character of Mohammed, has seen the immeasurable difference. One cannot measure the potential importance of this fact, should the question at issue between the two faiths tend to resolve itself more and more into a conflict between two ethical ideals, as lying at the root of the difference between the two theologies. It is along this line

that we have the best cause for hope that there is coming a real awakening of Islam.

#### BY-PRODUCTS OF ISLAM

The foregoing analysis of the values in Islam has been based upon Islam at its best. A statement of the defects in Islam would occupy greater space. The criticism most likely to be made is that we have been too generous.

But we can afford to be generous; Islam has been convincingly exposed by a cloud of witnesses, writing from wide and accurate observation. The moral and social failure, especially, forms now a familiar picture.

Among the social virtues possessed by the peoples of Islam, many are racial or national; some are to be credited to the influence of Islam itself. We simply list these latter at this point to complete the credit due to this rival religion:

1. Veneration of holy men. Every locality has its honored saints, men who, fulfilling the moral and ceremonial code of Islam, are accounted holy. This admiration for holiness, inadequate and formal though it be, produces a respect for virtue as the Muslim sees it.

2. Respect for parents and the aged.

3. Compassion, manifesting itself notably in patience with beggars and unfortunates, the giving of alms, and kindness to animals.

4. Resignation under affliction.

5. Abstinence from alcoholic beverages, gambling, and usury.

6. Abhorrence of idolatry.

7. Efficient religious education of all children.

### III. VALUES IN CHRISTIANITY

The following pages are likely to appear out of focus, unless the reader remembers that it is no part of our present task to evaluate the essentials of Christianity, but only to emphasize afresh those features of the Christian message and experience which are of first importance in the conflict

with Islam. There is no element of Christianity which is not needed desperately in Muslim lands, as elsewhere. We can note here only those elements which specifically cure the maladies and fill the voids created by Islam.

#### ENRICHMENT OF ISLAMIC HALF-TRUTHS

Before entering upon the more distinctive features of the Christian message, we bring together for brief consideration some of the vital elements of theology, which the preceding pages have shown to be already found in Islam, although dimly perceived and neglected or distorted.

##### *A. The Concept of God*

The conviction that the hard, deistic doctrine of God which Muslims profess is barren and dishonoring has steadily grown in recent years in proportion as it has been realized how non-moral are the notions of will and force in themselves. Power is nothing but a physical category, unless united ever and always with holiness and love. In fact, thinkers have come more and more to feel that loveless will-force is the contradiction, the very opposite of Christ's revelation of God. The Muslim must be freed from the dread of this inscrutable Despot, and taught to pray to "Our Father."

Islam by the shallowness of its ethical conceptions of Allah drives us to emphasize afresh these two burning attributes of God the Father: His holiness and His love. The dogma of Omnipotence must itself be thought out afresh and brought into relation with eternal values: unconditioned physical might being subordinated to God's ethical Omnipotence, according to which the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man, and the Cross becomes the sign of victory. It is true that the Christian does not profess to have fully solved the problems of the Will of God and the will of man, of universal love and the existence of sin and sorrow. But he must tolerate the philosophic antinomy rather than offer his faith to unrational, unmoral Almightyness. The Muslims must be led to enthrone God

morally at all costs. God is indeed One; God is indeed Almighty. But He who is not Holiness and Love is not God.

### *B. Providence*

Although, as we have seen, Islamic fatalism brings with it patience, resignation, and fortitude, its evil effects are consistent and far-reaching. "Allah wills it" is a noble sentiment only when we are sure of God's true attitude to any particular matter. In Islam *inshallah* and *mashallah* have resulted in a quietism and a laissez-faire attitude in the face of sin and social suffering that is intolerable. It is possible to admire the spirit, which accepts without murmur disaster in earthquake, fire, and flood; but when this passive spirit of acceptance is extended to preventible evil, physical or moral, then the concept of the Will of God must be challenged and revised. At the expense of appearing to obscure the proofs of divine Omnipotence, Christianity must insist upon God's desire for man's coöperation in reclaiming the waste places of this world. The Sacrifice on the Cross, His "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" His rebuke to Peter in the garden, nay, a hundred truths have taught the Christian what his Muslim brother does not know: that God appeals to man's love, but does not compel his obedience; that He seeks communion with man which shall be by man freely given. To the Muslim this seems like blasphemy,—that God in seeking man to be His co-worker should seem to be in need of him. To the Christian there is no other way. God's providence does indeed control all, but it is a providence of love, not of imposed and irresistible power.

### *C. Immortality*

The Muslim does indeed believe in and hope for a future life, in which there shall be reward and punishment. The belief and hope are real; but they are vitiated by the nature of the Paradise that is hoped for, and by the conception of the faith which is the passport into that Paradise.

At bottom Islam teaches that what saves is the creed,

“There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah.” The most criminal Muslim wins through to Paradise on the strength of this creed: he will have to suffer purgatorial or rather penal pains, to make up for the adverse balance in his account of deeds; but every Muslim will in the end be saved, whereas it is an open question whether any “unbeliever” will be. This points to a conception of faith that is in the extreme poor, unethical, and unspiritual. It is not “the faith that worketh by love” that is in itself a regenerating power because it means the surrender of the whole man to a perfect Being. Assent to a creed, observance of the ceremonial, performance of the fixed duties are sufficient. There have been times and places where Christianity has, unfortunately, seemed to make similarly barren demands upon its adherents; and the fact that some of the Oriental Churches in Muslim lands have tended to lapse into unfruitful “orthodoxy” does not help the Muslim to an ethical conception of salvation, or to a moral idea of the future life.

Again, there is little in the representations of Paradise given in the Quran itself to uplift the soul; it is first and foremost a garden of delights of either a gaudy or a sensual nature. Attempts have been made, it is true, to work up the more spiritual hints given in the Quran, and to spiritualize the gross imagery employed. The “beholding of the face of God” may be emphasized as the supreme joy of heaven. But the literalness of the sensual joys remains, and it is not permitted even to the Mystics to explain them away,—it is notable that even al Ghazzali, when elaborating the doctrine of the Garden for general consumption, outdoes others in sensuality. In fact, orthodoxy cannot go far in a spiritual interpretation; and the huge mass of Muslims always have taken, and always will take, the description of Paradise in a literal sense; and necessarily so.

There is simply no comparison between this sensual imagery and that of the book of Revelation. The latter is clean, beautiful, and simple: the spiritual antitype of every image is clearly indicated at every turn. It immediately

kindles spiritual emotions. The curse of the Quranic imagery is that its direct and significant appeal is carnal, and that it stimulates that in the Oriental which stands in least need of being stimulated.

The Muslim needs a spiritual heaven: a heaven achieved by a faith that responds to a grace both of which work by holiness and love; a heaven which begins on earth in communion with the true God, and which beyond the veil consists in the perfection of that communion.

#### *D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*

As we have seen, Islam has approached very close to a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, though this is in no sense a living doctrine which influences daily life; it is a purely theological mystery, the concern of theologians and mystics. But we have seen that implicitly, as well as to some extent explicitly, the teaching is present in the Quran. However garbled and impoverished it may appear, it must be remembered that the sources of this doctrine are the Old and New Testament teaching of the Holy Spirit, imperfectly comprehended by Mohammed. It is at once legitimate and urgent that these same Christian sources be invoked to clarify and vitalize the Islamic teaching about the Spirit.

It is the duty of the Christian to show his Muslim brother that the Spirit of the Quran, which was breathed into man, which led the prophets, which was imparted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, must be sought and will be found in the Gospel. It is an act of kindness to show that "the heavenly Commander, who moves the heavens . . . and is related to the Pure Being of God as the sun is related to essential light,"<sup>1</sup> is not a sort of second and inferior deity, but is God in our hearts. The glorious truth is that the Christian synthesis yields a true monotheism, which the Muslim dilemma does not. On the other hand, it is equally legitimate and urgent that we allow the mystical experiences of the greatest Muslims to have been genuine attempts to apprehend the mystery of the Holy Spirit. In humility and generosity

<sup>1</sup> al Ghazzali.



let us confess that He is a mystery; but that the only full revelation of Him is to be found in Christ.

### *E. Doctrine of an Intercessor*

The sages of Islam and the Quran itself teach that Jesus lives in Heaven, where He has some obscure function of intercession. But the complete denial of Christ's divine nature renders this wholly abstract idea of doubtful utility as *præparatio* for the Christian doctrine. It is rather in the Muslim's attitude toward Mohammed, a living and energizing loyalty, that we detect the soul's hunger for a mediator who shall be a High Priestly Intercessor. There is here without question an attitude of receptivity toward the need of a personal Saviour which will prove of great importance once the traditional distrust of Christian Trinitarianism is broken down. It is sometimes said that the Muslim deals directly with his God, and scorns any idea of a priesthood whatsoever. This is so in theory only. In practice, the veneration of local saints and prayers to them are only too regrettably prevalent and sincere; and the wistful, passionate dependence upon the personal leadership of Mohammed is everywhere a vital factor in Islamic life. From him they received the revelation; him Allah favored above all men, even to the extent of exempting him from moral obligations required of others. Here they feel is a real mediator; the last and greatest of all the prophets, "Al Rasûl," the one sent by God to them and for them.

This attitude is not to be ignored. It needs no words to prefigure the effect of transferring this reliance (a loyalty and sense of dependence felt by millions) from an Arabian warrior of dark passions and limited vision to the Sinless, Immortal Son of God and Son of Man for all time and for every place.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, AS EXPERIENCE

Islam worships no idol of clay. Allah is enthroned in the highest heaven, and He is a transcendental God. The problem of the Christian missionary is the reverse of his

problem when confronting anthropomorphic paganism: the problem is not to show that God transcends the material universe, and is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, but to show that He is also here, that He has communion with man, that He is touched with the feeling of man's infirmities.

The question of the doctrine of the Trinity must be squarely faced. Some sincerely feel that, on the contrary, it should be avoided by the missionary, and with this we might agree were it a matter merely of a philosophic definition of the Godhead. But to say this is to yield the field; for the testimony of the Church rings through the centuries that it is through the Incarnation, and through the Comforter, that Christians have come to know God.

Islam's reply to the missionary is not simply that the doctrine of the Trinity is intellectually unacceptable; it is not so simple as that. Its reply is that God is unknowable, and it is with the responsibility of leaving Muslims in this belief that we, at our peril, would slight the doctrine of the Trinity. With Muslims the Infinite comes to mean only the negation of the Finite. There is a popular jingle current in Cairo which tells a sad tale:

"Whatever conception your mind comes at,  
I tell you flat,  
God is *not* that."

Islam is philosophically agnostic, and revelation is only a formal and mechanical link between incompatibles. The orthodox position is that man may perceive certain of God's attributes (*sifât*) but he can never in any sense whatsoever know God's essential nature (*zât*). If some such idea may possibly be conceded for the Old Testament dispensation, the heart and substance of the New Testament dispensation is the revelation of God's essential nature, through the Incarnation, and through the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and so in the Holy Trinity; and that these (experienced, not merely defined) are God in the human heart. The missionary can not but preach the Trinity.

But practical work among Muslims brings out with tre-

mendous significance the vital connection which should exist between high theology and life. Unless these two are connected in the mind and life of the preacher, it is a useless task trying to improve the theology of the Muslim. The Unitarians give us valuable warning that the Trinity is not the first doctrine to be preached to Muslims; rather the last. Their experience must lead them to it, or nothing will. It is by following Our Lord like Peter that they will of their own accord testify, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"; or by observing Him and His sacrifice that, like the centurion, they will comprehend, "Truly, this was the Son of God." For us, however, it is to be remembered that they are not likely to arrive at an experience of God unless we preach and experience the Trinity.

Contact with unitarian, deistic Islam forces the Christian to work out his theology experimentally. Consider the Eastern Churches which so lamentably failed to stay or stem Islam. What is their key-note? It is "orthodoxy." To the average Eastern Christian "orthodoxy" conveys a purely intellectual and metaphysical significance. If there be any ethical reality underlying the *filioque* controversy, it may reside just here, that the Eastern Churches thought only of the transcendental origin of the Holy Ghost, and left out of their creed the fact that, dispensationally, He is mediated to us ever, always, and only by the glorified Jesus Christ. The "Catholic" Churches of the West have shared this danger of considering the Trinity first and foremost transcendently, and equally so have those Churches which vow allegiance to Calvin and Luther. Such an attitude is helpless against Islam.

Who can tell what moral results will accrue, when we allow the Trinity to dominate the devotional life of the heart, as well as our theology? Who shall gauge the debt we may yet have to confess to Islam, if that great antagonist prove finally to have compelled us to explore unknown depths of the riches of the revelation of the Triune God?

## THE INCARNATION AND ATONEMENT IN CHRIST

In saying that the Christian message must ever center in Christ, and in Christ crucified, the center of gravity is not thereby made to fall outside God; nor is the content of our last section negated, but rather confirmed: for Jesus Christ, and in particular Christ crucified, is the definitive projection of God upon the world of space and time.

The Gospel invites a man to begin with this projection, and straightway he will find himself transported into the heart of the Eternal God.

The imperfections of the Muslim theology will compel the Christian preacher to emphasize this Gospel message all the more earnestly. But these same imperfections should also cause him to make sure that his message of Christ crucified is spiritual and ethical through and through, and that it is ever addressed directly to the conscience, will, and heart; otherwise Incarnation, Atonement, and Trinity will just be three more theologisms for intellectual assent, which would leave the life unchanged and the man unsaved. It is most healthy that Islam should drive us to this.

The cardinal mistake of Islam, as we have seen, and the cardinal point of difference between it and Christianity, is that the former conceives the relation between God and man to fall wholly within the physical category (with the result, of course, that it makes men things, not persons); while Christianity insists that men are persons, and that the relation between them and their Creator must be fundamentally moral. The forces, therefore, which God exerts on man will not be purely physical in character, a contest of strength with strength; nor yet merely psychical, as though it were a contest between a strong intellect and a weak one, but moral. And from this spring profoundest differences between what Islam regards as befitting to Deity and what Christianity regards as such. Once master this fundamental difference and everything explains itself. In that which Muslim eyes regard as weakness, Christian eyes see power. What the Muslim admires as power seems to the Christian

under certain circumstances as sheer weakness—the weakness of the autocrat who displays physical force in a delicate moral case where it is utterly out of place. All these differences of view culminate in the Cross, which (rather than the Incarnation) is the battle-ground between the two faiths. To the Muslim, as to the carnal Jew, the Cross is a blasphemy, the very embodiment of weakness and defeat; to the Christian it is the very symbol of moral strength and victory, and through it he has learned to say “the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

In this work of love and redemption through suffering the Godhead is one—Father, Son, and Spirit: “God so loved the world.” The Incarnation says, “God was in Christ”; the Atonement adds, “reconciling man unto Himself.”

The Atonement is thus seen to be a work springing from the very nature of God, not an external action which had to take place before God could forgive. We do not so much say: “God could not forgive and save the sinner apart from the Atonement wrought by Christ.” We rather say: “None but a God who is so loving as to bear man's sin in eternity, and to bear it incarnate in time, could forgive and save the sinner.” The Atonement in Christ, or the Incarnate Son, is indeed the means whereby we attain salvation. But it is not an external means, an external plan, to enable God to do what His own nature could not do. It is rather, so to speak, an internal means, a transcript of the internal work in the heart of the Godhead, without which we could not have been saved. God, being as He is, could not but bear, could not but yearn, could not but be incarnate in His Word, could not but come into conflict with sin on the earthly stage in this Incarnate One, who as man suffered to the last possibility the action of sin in Himself—a death of agony in body and darkness in soul.

Nothing but perfect holiness could have involved such cost as the Passion of God in eternity and in Christ. Nothing but perfect love could have borne it. Therefore, in the Cross holiness and love, wrath and pity, justice and mercy meet together and kiss one another.

### THE CHARACTER OF JESUS OF THE GOSPELS

Much could be written concerning the need to correct Islam's distorted teaching about the earthly ministry of Jesus, which has been suggested in a previous section. But with respect to the character of Jesus, we must pause to note an opportunity and a challenge.

1. A challenge; because it is only our faulty presentation of the character of Christ that explains why the Muslim, while he allows to Jesus every grace, seems to turn to Mohammed when he thinks of the attribute of strength. True, the category of physical force is a veritable obsession with Islam. Yet a doubt remains: has our portraiture here done violence to the divine original? From any unworthy suspicion of weakness that Figure must be cleared. Its divine energy, exhaustless vigor, and resistless power must be given their proper emphasis: *Ecce vir!*—not the less, but all the more so because He was so perfectly gentle with little children, so uncondescendingly courteous to women; so understanding with the weak and the fallen; and so tender in every relation of friendship and love: *Ecce homo!* And the story of His Passion may not, and must not, be represented in the telling as feeble passivity. Rather must that one idea, insisted on by the master-hand which drew the picture in the Fourth Gospel, be insisted on also by us: namely, that through and in every detail He was royal and divine, proving in His own insulted body that the weakness of God is both more majestic and stronger than the strength of man: *Ecce rex!* What in fact but very strength itself could have made and left His royalty the uppermost impression, after a night and a day of unresisted mishandling? Can we allow the impression to rest with Muslims that strength is with Mohammed: the impetuous, vacillating victim of his own lust for power and for women, rather than with the Jesus of the Gospels whose purity, endurance, and courage never faltered?

2. An opportunity; because the character of Jesus does attract the Muslim, an attraction which has been noted

already as one of the most hopeful signs of awakening in many parts of the Islamic world. And there is one feature, especially, of the Gospel doctrine which makes His leadership doubly attractive. The contrast between their dead Prophet, lying in his splendid tomb in al Medina, and the Christ who rose triumphant from the grave, and lives to make perpetual intercession, is found time after time to strike Muslims very forcibly. Many a simple man and woman has, even without definitely quitting Islam, found the sheet-anchor of a new life of faith in the one thought: "The dead Prophet; the living Intercessor."

#### CHRISTIAN PRAYER AND MYSTICISM

In respect to devotional life, Christianity has too often failed to impress Islam, though it is precisely at this point that we should be able to contribute much. The paradox is a strange one, and most unfortunate: Muslims, worshiping an inscrutable God, are ever scrupulous to pay Him reverence; prayer is a sacred business not to be attempted without ablutions, executed according to a reverential ritual, with postures of awe, and with absolute concentration of attention. The chanting of the Quran and the Zikr is cultivated with elocutionary and rhythmic proficiency that takes years to attain. Christians, on the contrary, often seem to approach their God with less respect than they are accustomed to show in the presence of a government official. That we who profess to know God and to walk with Him, whose church treasuries are rich with mystic experience and glorious liturgy, should fail to make it appear that we delight to honor Him with every known resource of art, and every true sign of awe and reverence, is a real tragedy; and in the neighborhood of critical Muslims, a costly one. Our services are too frequently notable for slovenly or uninspired and uninspiring Scripture-reading, the use of low-grade hymn music, sometimes more vulgar in quality than the melody of street-songs, and, on the part of the congregation, for irreverence in posture and attitude, and painful lack of attention and concentration. In spite of all fear of ritualism, we shall nevertheless do well

to hold fast to outward and spiritual reverence, even to the minutest detail in the externals of worship. Let us bring dignified and inspiring music from the West, or none at all. Let us seek for and use the best music of the Orient. Let us apprentice ourselves and our people to the art of reading the Scriptures in public with some of the beauty which the Muslim attains with his Quran. As for those who lead in prayer, let them not lead in public prayer if they have not prepared its spirit and its diction with searchings of the heart. When we have such a chance to show Muslims the secret of freedom and spirituality, combined with reverence and order, in public prayer, it is infinitely regrettable that we often give merely the impression of presumptuousness, slovenliness, and irreverence.

The hold which mysticism has upon Muslims, and the reality of the part it plays in their religious life, cannot be exaggerated. The subject suggests that Christian mysticism should be more deeply studied with a view to seeing whether its message would not definitely appeal to those to whom the mystical element in religion is the most cherished of all. Of all the subjects which Western missions and missionaries to Islam have as a whole solidly neglected, the knowledge of Christian and Islamic mysticism is the most notable, and possibly the most significant.

#### CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

The brotherhood preached by our Lord in the parable of the Good Samaritan is wholly unknown to the Muslim to whom "neighbor" and "brother" do precisely mean—consciously, officially, and admittedly—his co-religionist and him alone. That unique charter of a universal tenderness and serviceableness which Jesus gave in this parable has not been fully appreciated even by the followers of Christ; but the parable and the fraternity it sets forth are Christian because they are found in Christ, and non-Mohammedan because such a concept was simply beyond the mental and spiritual reach of Mohammed and of orthodox Islam. The Islamic fraternity, both as con-



ceived and as practised, is narrow and intolerant. The Christian fraternity, so magnificently realized in the first centuries, is to-day broken to bits, but the ideal is still the only hope for humanity. We offer it to Muslims with absolute faith and confidence, acknowledging at the same time that Christendom has failed miserably to realize it in the modern world.

Let us not be blind to the disadvantage which Christian disunion places upon the Christian missionary to Islam. The failure of our religion to leaven Western commercial and political life, its failure to leaven modern philosophy are grievous hindrances to its reception in the East. The bitterness of war between "Christian" nations is eloquent. The indescribably divided state of the Church, and the horrors for which the persecution of Christian by Christian has been responsible are a real stumbling-block to the Muslim. Each little community, however insignificant, apparently ascribing to itself alone all orthodoxy, intensely aloof, and hostile to its neighbor; plural patriarchs for the same see, plural altars for the members of the Body while they live, and plural graveyards for them when they die,—even in death hugging their own isolations, and elbowing each other out into the cold. What sights could be more pitifully ridiculous, if they were not such an utter shame? "Become a Christian? What sort of Christian?" . . . "Was your Christ born twice, and did He die twice?"—such are the questions which the Muslims ask.

We may as well let Islam alone unless we are prepared to offer to it and to the world a fraternity which is higher and nobler than the ghost of it which haunts the ruins of the City of God. It is no use merely to point with scorn to the bickerings of the sects at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The challenge comes straight to us in our own organizations to prove to Islam that the unity in Christ is to us more precious than denominational prestige,—that to be "reformed" is to have grasped, and to be living, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Failure here on the part

of Protestants is more shameful, because less intelligible, than among the older churches with their vested properties, their traditional jurisdictions, and their organizations stiffened by tradition and hardened by isolation and oppression.

The level of Islamic fraternity is not an elevated one; compared with the level on which the mind and purpose of Jesus Christ worked it is a low one indeed. But it is a much higher one than the level of much of what passes for Christianity. We have nothing in the institutional Christianity of the West to approach the system of Islamic fraternity. We have only the Spirit of Jesus, the only asset of the Church. And, were Jesus but a law-giver or an ideal philosopher of the past, our despair must needs be complete. But just because He lives, Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and forever, then forever is Christ greater than Christendom. Before we can win our Muslim brother to the fellowship of the Twelve with their Master, we must issue to Christians and to Christian missions the call "Back to Christ"; back to Galilee and the parable of the Good Samaritan; back to the charter of Catholicism inscribed under Mount Gerizim with one poor Samaritan woman as witness, and sealed under Mount Zion "at a place called Calvary"; back to the revolution wrought in and by Paul and the apostolic band when Jewish exclusiveness was smashed through, when religious caste was finally broken, and the prophecy of Jesus to the Samaritan woman was realized in living form, and translated into the Catholic Apostolic Church; back to the limitless brotherliness of the Spirit of Jesus.

#### CHASTITY AND FAMILY LIFE

The effects of Muslim sex morality and the consequent degradation of womanhood and family life have been often described, always with restraint. Those who live in Muslim lands know that the full unvarnished truth is usually unprintable. It is necessary here only to emphasize the fact that the conditions are far from being

merely geographical, climatic, or racial; that Islam is directly responsible for the entrenchment of unbridled sensualism, partly through its permissions, partly through its spirit and symbolism, and partly through its confusion between legality and morality. It is incredible, were it not a fact (for example) how the typical erotic literature of Islam begins, as a matter of course, with the time-honored invocation of Allah and prayers for the Apostle of God. The sanction given by the Quran and Muslim law to slave-concubinage and unilateral divorce-rights is notorious. The sharp and early emphasis on sex within the Muslim home checks family life and love, and tends to produce a wrong sex bias and attitude. The segregations involved in the harem system create a homosexual atmosphere that leads all too often to homosexual vice.

In all the perplexities of the problem of sex, both social and individual, one thing stands out clear: that the incessant sounding of the sexual note in the Quran, the Traditions, the canon-law, and in the poetry, literature, theology, and entire system of Islam tends to make impossible the highest individual, family, or social life—unless, of course, under the influence of Western ideals these things are ignored. In its attitude of man to woman, of woman to man, both primitive and historic Islam seem clearly to have missed both dignity and beauty, and to be far from having secured happiness: because it made woman in every way a prisoner of sex, till man came to regard her as the slave of his passions, instead of as the human partner of his life. In so doing, of course, Islam claims to have accommodated itself to the facts of human nature, and accuses Christianity of having sinned against human nature in commanding impossible renunciations. Such accusations may indeed lead Christianity to take stock of itself, and to see whether its true assertion of the paramount necessity of self-discipline may have led to negations and abnegations which are no part of the message of Him in whom the totality of human nature was sanctified. But apart from the corrective of exaggerations

of asceticism to which criticism may lead, the fact remains unshaken that the relation of man to woman and of woman to man which was made possible by Jesus Christ is in truth the sanest as well as the purest, the strongest, and the most perfectly human. The Spirit of Jesus teaches that the highest and the happiest solution of the sex problem in society is won by chivalry toward woman and by out-and-out acceptance of the subordination of impulse to self-discipline, and that this self-discipline is made possible by Jesus for whoever wills its possibility. We may confess penitently that corporate Christian fellowship is to-day less real than Islamic fellowship, but we may claim confidently for the Christian family throughout the centuries the contrast to Islam that is the contrast between light and darkness. Here, love has been brought to earth, and human relations have been refined and sanctified by the Spirit of Jesus. Here is and always will be an ungainsayable message to Islam.

#### BY-PRODUCTS OF CHRISTIANITY

Among the *fruits of the Spirit* most admired and needed in Islamic countries, the following deserve special attention:

1. Dignity and freedom of womanhood. The economic and social equality of woman with man.

2. Dignity of labor. Especially the service of the lowly by the "upper" classes. (Community service in hospital, school, and dispensary by Christian ladies is a revelation to Muslims.)

3. Works of mercy. The preciousness of the individual life; gratuitous medical, sanitary, and philanthropic services;<sup>1</sup> unremunerated consecration of energy, time, and money to the relief of the distress of total strangers.

4. Ethical freedom. Christian stress on character: the spirit instead of the letter of the moral law. Eternal

<sup>1</sup> Islam in the Middle Ages was, in cultural centers like Cairo, in advance of the Islam of later centuries in these matters. It is now relearning the old lessons from the Christian West.

principles of integrity instead of Islamic enslavement to obsolete social ordinances.

5. Impetus to social progress. Christian patronage of the arts and sciences; the ideal of education and opportunity for all.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Though our task has been purely expository, we cannot conclude without noting with regard to the methods of missionary enterprises the two central lessons derived from a comparison of Islam and Christianity in conflict:

##### THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

The justification of missions to Islam is not to be found in the superiority of Western culture or theology or even morals, however genuine such superiority may be; but rather in the fact that Islam is predominantly a religion of the letter, Christianity the religion of the spirit. But if so, then our religion, as preached to the Mohammedan, must indeed be a religion of the Spirit,—of the "Spirit of Jesus." The phrase is pregnant to the last degree: not the manner of Jesus, not a "spirit of service similar to His,"— but "the Spirit" of God which was in Him, and which through Him is the divine Means of Grace to-day. We have nothing else to give the Muslim unless we give this. Most futile, most disappointing, and most foolish of all quests would be that which were only to seek to substitute for one ritual another, for one system another system, for observance of one series of ordinances another series. Christianity has always cut its most pitiful figure when seen trying to meet Islam with Islam's weapons, or competing with it on its own ground. Nothing but the Spirit can bind and free Islam. Let the church that does not believe in the Holy Ghost save herself the trouble of attempting the conversion of Islam. The Spirit of the Father in Jesus Christ,—we have nothing else to give Islam that is not corruptible: no, nothing.

## A SPIRITUAL HOME FOR CONVERTS

Missions hitherto have been the work of a corps of enthusiasts at home and abroad, rather than of the Church of Christ itself. The missionaries, howsoever they may identify themselves individually with native life, are still foreign: foreign by language, nationality, and culture, above all foreign incurably in the identification of them as members of the Western community which still exploits Eastern rights and displays Western greed and vice. The negative testimony rendered to Christianity in Muslim lands by secular Europeans and Americans has put the conversion of Islam by foreign missionaries alone almost beyond the reach of the imagination.

But even though every Westerner in Muslim lands became an unofficial missionary, the battle would still be unwon. There are deep barriers of color and temperament that cannot be scaled successfully. And the problem of a real welcome to the Muslim convert, a welcome which would make him feel that he had found his real home, would still be unachieved.

The question which supremely matters is, "How far is the native Christian community which we have raised up a home for those who turn from Islam to Christ?" Oriental Christians must become the front-line missionary force, and the *Oriental church-community must become a home for those who find Christ*. These two things constitute our supreme task, our highest ideal, our fairest hope. Only in nurseries of their own people can new-born souls thrive. This is especially true in a Muslim mission-land. The brotherhood of Islam, however imperfect, means much to those within. Since this is so, it is obvious that unless we can receive them with a brotherhood that is higher, better, more spiritual, warmer, in a word, truer, they will marvel how we have the face to preach to them at all. And contrariwise, a people so familiar with the idea of brotherhood will appreciate the real thing when they see it.

But the difficulties to be cleared away before the native

congregations can act as missionary societies and as homes are very real. (1) The historic development of religious communities in the East has turned them into "nationalities," exclusive, suspicious of converts, antipathetic to neighboring communities. (2) The age-long oppression of the Christian minorities by Islamic state authority, ever haughty and cruel, has made the native Christian shy of recruits from Islam. (3) Christian communities have been often disappointed by converts who were insincere or unstable, till to-day it is a common experience to find native Christians who disbelieve utterly in the possibility of converting Muslims at all. While such an attitude lasts, we do wisely to expect few converts from Islam to Christianity,—we do not deserve, we could not assimilate more than a few.

If this analysis be true, we who are building up native churches should concentrate attention on changing the thoughts which have been, for these valid historical reasons, warped too long. For thoughts are practical things: they are the mother of actions. While we in our haste to act perhaps call thoughts unpractical things, native Christian mothers are busy instilling the old thoughts, suspicions, and prejudices into another generation of children, which will inevitably produce the old actions and attitudes, and deepen the chasm which separates the native Christian from his Muslim neighbor. We need on the field a thought campaign, such as has been waged successfully so many times in history. The great idea, "My church as a home for Muslim converts," must inflame our Oriental congregations with missionary zeal. How to light this flame throughout the Muslim world and to keep it burning should be our immediate concern. The result of this alone would make the Jerusalem conference a turning point in the enterprise of retrieving Islam for the Christ of God.

**Volume I**

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MESSAGE IN RELATION  
TO NON-CHRISTIAN SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT  
AND LIFE**

**Volume II**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Volume III**

**THE RELATION BETWEEN THE YOUNGER AND THE  
OLDER CHURCHES**

**Volume IV**

**THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE LIGHT OF RACE  
CONFLICT**

**Volume V**

**THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN RELATION TO INDUS-  
TRIAL PROBLEMS**

**Volume VI**

**THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN RELATION TO RURAL  
PROBLEMS**

**Volume VII**

**INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COÖPERATION**

**Volume VIII**

**ADDRESSES ON GENERAL SUBJECTS**



THE JERUSALEM MEETING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

MARCH 24-APRIL 8, 1928

VOLUME I

The Christian Life and Message in  
Relation to Non-Christian Systems  
of Thought and Life

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

New York City: 419 Fourth Avenue

London: 2 Eaton Gate, S. W. 1

1928

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INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL  
NEW YORK CITY

PRINTED BY THE RUMFORD PRESS  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, U. S. A.

## PREFACE

This volume contains the account of the discussion at the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council on the Christian Message in its Relation to *Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life*, the material on which that discussion was based, and the official statement of the Christian message upon which the Council unanimously agreed. Preliminary papers on the relation of Christianity to the several non-Christian religions, and to the system of thought and life which has been designated *secular civilization*, were written by men widely known for their scholarship and experience.

The spirit of the inquiry to which these writers addressed themselves may be discerned in two paragraphs of the statement prefaced to their papers:

"The mission of the Christian Church in the world stands or falls with the conviction that the revelation of God in Christ is something unique, possessing supreme value, and providing a real and satisfying answer to the problem of the meaning and purpose of life and a complete response to the needs of men everywhere. The question of the message with which the Church has been entrusted, and of the contribution which it may bring to the lives of those who have not yet heard or heeded it, touches the heart of the missionary movement. To meet the perplexities on this subject which are found to-day both in Western Christendom and in the rising churches abroad, especially among the younger generation, a fresh inquiry and statement regarding the distinctive character of the Christian message in relation to non-Christian systems is urgently needed.

"To afford the help that is wanted such an inquiry must not remain within the region of merely intellectual argument and definition. It must penetrate into the deeper regions of the things by which men live. 'The strength of Christianity,' it has been well said, 'consists in its being primarily not a view, but a life, a spiritual, religious life, requiring, implying definite doctrine concerning God and man, and their relations to each other, but never exhausted by these doctrines in their collectivity, inexhaustible though these in

their turn are by their union with the life of the spirit, their origin and end.' It is in regard to the vital forces of religion that a clearer and deeper understanding is needed."

These papers have been revised by their authors in the light of the record of the Jerusalem discussions.

This volume contains also an account of the discussions both in the plenary sessions of the whole Council and in the different sectional groups which dealt with the special religions in their relation to Christianity. The general discussion by the Council, as a whole, of the preliminary papers and the central theme of the message was followed by five sectional meetings dealing respectively with Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Secular Civilization so that the discussion in this conference was very similar to the debate in the full Council meeting. It was intended that each of these section conferences should arrive, if possible, at findings to be submitted to the Committee on the Message. Only the conferences on Buddhism and Islam resulted in such findings. Accordingly in the chapter reporting these sectional meetings these findings are presented and in the case of the other three sectional meetings a brief summary of the discussion is supplied.

Certain issues were shown by the discussions to be of such importance as to demand fuller treatment than they received in the preliminary papers. Additional essays have been written on these subjects and are included in the present volume.

This volume contains, as indicated, the statement on which the Council after long discussion and much searching of heart united in its endeavor to express its conviction of the grounds of the world-wide Christian evangelistic movement, the motives which inspire it, the spirit in which it should be carried on, and the end at which it should aim.

A word of appreciation must be added in recognition of the assistance given by Dr. Robert E. Speer in the editing of this volume, especially with reference to the material to be included and its arrangement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE.....	v

### PART I: PRELIMINARY PAPERS

#### CHAPTER I

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM.....	3
--------------------------------	---

THE REVEREND NICOL MACNICOL, LITT.D.

*Secretary of the National Christian Council, India, Burma, and Ceylon*

THE HINDU SITUATION—THE APPROACH TO HINDUISM—WHAT HINDUISM IS—Ritual and Caste—Pantheistic Hinduism—*Karma* and *Māyā*—Victory Over the World and Victory Over Sin—Three Contrasting Aspects—Divine Grace and the Supply of Moral Energy—Religion as the Devout Life—CONCLUSION—POSTSCRIPT—Emphasis on Governing Ideas in Hinduism—Traditional Practices of Hinduism—The Message

#### CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY AND CONFUCIANISM.....	43
------------------------------------	----

THE REVEREND JOHN LEIGHTON STUART, D.D.

*President of Yenching University, Peking, China*

THE APPROACH—THE MAN CONFUCIUS AND HIS AGE—THE EFFECTS OF THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF CONFUCIUS ON CHINESE CHARACTER—CONFUCIANISM AS A RELIGION—ANCESTOR WORSHIP AND WORSHIP OF CONFUCIUS—CONFUCIANISTS' DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY—POINTS OF CONTACT—THE HEART OF THE MATTER

	CHAPTER III	PAGE
RELIGIOUS VALUES IN CONFUCIANISM.....		66

THE REVEREND D. WILLARD LYON, D.D.

*Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, China*

THE BACKGROUND The Meaning of the Term "Confucianism"—Was Confucius Interested in Religion?—To What Extent Has Confucianism Been Regarded as a Religion?—PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING CONFUCIANISM—The Way of Nature, or *Tao*—The Moral Constancy of Nature—Man's Natural Tendency to be Good—SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN CONFUCIANISM—*Li*, or Propriety—*Ch'eng*, or Harmony with Nature—*Chung*, or Loyalty—*Shu*, or Thoughtfulness for Others—*Chuntzu*, or the True Gentleman—*Jen*, or the Sum of the Qualities Which Make a True Gentleman—IDEAS IN CONFUCIANISM REGARDING MAN'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES—Man a Responsible Social Being—Right Living the Highest Art—The Family the Basic Unit of Social Morality—The State a Larger Family—World Brotherhood the Ultimate Goal—IDEAS OF THE SUPREME BEING FOUND IN CONFUCIANISM—The Term *T'ien*, or Heaven—The Term *Shang Ti*, or Ruler Above—The Supreme Being Held Inaccessible Except to the Few—Meaning of the Two Terms To the Ancients—Meaning of the Two Terms to the Educated Classes of To-day—Christian Criticisms of the God-Idea in Confucianism—ANCESTOR WORSHIP—CONFUCIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY—Difficulties Which Confucianists Meet in Their Approach to Christianity—Contributions which Some Chinese Christians Believe Christianity Should Make to Confucianism—Contributions Which Confucianism Can Make to the Development of Christianity in China—What Attitude Should Christians Take?

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.....	95
--------------------------------	----

KENNETH J. SAUNDERS, M.A., LITT.D.

*Professor of History of Religion, Pacific School of Religion,  
Berkeley, California, U. S. A.*

DIVERSE VIEWS OF BUDDHISM—THE QUEST OF THE HISTORIC ŚAKYAMUNI—THE LIVING FORCES OF BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY—A Document from Ceylon—The Buddhist Outlook in China—The Situation in Japan—CONCLUSION—The Personal-

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
ity of Jesus—The Fourth Gospel—The Social Ethic of Jesus— The Cross—APPENDIX A—APPENDIX B: What I Believe— APPENDIX C: Modern Tendencies of Burmese Buddhism	
CHAPTER V	
CHRISTIANITY AND NORTHERN BUDDHISM . . . . .	151
THE REVEREND A. K. REISCHAUER, D.D.	
<i>Professor in the Theological Department, Meiji Gakuin, Tokyo, Japan</i>	
THE RELIGION OF ŚĀKYAMUNI—MODIFICATIONS IN THE ESSEN- TIALS OF ŚĀKYAMUNI'S TEACHINGS—The Emergence of the God- Idea—Change in the Ethical Ideal—Change in the Estimate of Human Life—THE RELIGION OF PRESENT-DAY BUDDHISTS— The Masses—The Recluse—The Liberal Buddhist—The Free- thinker—CONCLUSION	
CHAPTER VI	
CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM . . . . .	191
THE LATE CANON W. H. T. GAIRDNER, B.A.	
<i>Formerly missionary of The Church Missionary Society, Cairo, with the coöperation of</i>	
W. A. EDDY, PH.D.	
<i>Lately Professor in the American University, Cairo</i>	
INTRODUCTION—VALUES IN ISLAM—Doctrine of God—Veneration for Jesus—Devotional Life—Personal Attachment to Moham- med—Islamic Fraternity—Self-Propagation—Liberal Tend- encies—By-Products of Islam—VALUES IN CHRISTIANITY— Enrichment of Islamic Half-Truths—The Doctrine of the Trinity, As Experience—The Incarnation and Atonement in Christ—The Character of Jesus of the Gospels—Christian Prayer and Mysticism—Christian Brotherhood—Chastity and Family Life—By-Products of Christianity—CONCLUSION— The Spirit of Jesus—A Spiritual Home for Converts	
CHAPTER VII	
SECULAR CIVILIZATION AND THE CHRISTIAN TASK . . . . .	230
THE REVEREND RUFUS M. JONES, LL.D., D.D.	
<i>Professor of Philosophy, Haverford College, Haverford, Pa.</i>	
THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD—HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIFT—THE EMERGENCE OF SCIENCE AS A RIVAL—VALUES	

OF LIFE IN NON-CHRISTIAN CIRCLES—THE SYNTHESIS OF TRUTH THAT IS NEEDED—NATURALISM INADEQUATE—OTHER SECULARIZING TENDENCIES—SECULARISM INADEQUATE—THE CALL FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND STATESMANSHIP—MOBILIZATION OF SPIRITUAL FORCES—THE NEED OF A CONVINCING LABORATORY EXPERIMENT—THE NEED OF A COMPREHENSIVE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE—CHRIST'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR OUR DAY—THE NEED OF A NEW CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH—THE NEED OF A FRESH VISION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD—JERUSALEM, 1928

## PART II: THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER VIII

THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSION..... 277

ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D., LL.D.

*Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*

INTRODUCTION—RECENT DEVELOPMENTS—THE NEED OF A CLEARER AND MORE COMPREHENSIVE VIEW—THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE VALUES IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS—In General—In Relation to Confucianism—In Relation to Hinduism—In Relation to Animism—In Relation to Islam—SYNCRETISM—WOMAN AND THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE—SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY—STUDENTS AND CHRISTIANITY—LATIN AMERICA AND THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE—SUMMARY

### CHAPTER IX

REPORTS OF THE SECTIONAL MEETINGS..... 312

REPORT OF THE SECTIONAL MEETING ON HINDUISM—Findings—Points Brought Out in Discussion—REPORT OF THE SECTIONAL MEETINGS ON CHRISTIANITY AND CONFUCIANISM—Introduction—Is Confucianism a Religion?—Are Confucianism and Christianity to be Considered as Opposing Forces?—Ancestor Worship—Weaknesses of Confucianism—Contribution of Christianity to Confucianists—FINDINGS OF THE SECTIONAL MEETING ON CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM—Attitude—The Message—FINDINGS OF THE SECTIONAL MEETING ON ISLAM—Our Approach—Spiritual Values in Islam—The Issue Between Islam and Christianity—Presentation of the Christian Message—The Implications and Application of the Christian Message—Special



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Difficulties—The Urgency of the Hour and the Call to Action—  
REPORT OF THE SECTIONAL MEETINGS ON CHRISTIANITY AND  
SECULAR CIVILIZATION—Effect of Secularization on Ancient  
Civilizations—Reaction in Germany Against Materialism—  
Christianity and Communism in Europe—Effect of Seculariza-  
tion on Labor Problems—Religious Skepticism in the Philip-  
pines—Underlying Causes of Secularization in England—  
Decline of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America—  
Demand for Concrete Expression of Spiritual Ideals—The Sit-  
uation of the Church in Sweden—Opposition of Inherent Quali-  
ties and of Nationalism—Youth and the Cure for Secularization  
—Christianity and the Exploitation of the East by the West—  
Egoistic Civilization vs. Altruistic Civilization—Concluding  
Statement

PART III: SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

CHAPTER X

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE RELIGIOUS VALUES OF  
THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS? . . . . . 345

ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D., LL.D.

*Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian  
Church in the U. S. A.*

INTRODUCTION—ATTITUDE AND APPROACH—Human Reality and  
Personal Relationships—Real Values—These Values Not a  
Supplement to Christianity—Uniqueness and Superiority of  
Christianity—The Christian Tradition—THE REDEMPTION OF  
VALUES

CHAPTER XI

A STATEMENT OF THE CASE FOR EVANGELIZATION 368

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM TEMPLE, D.D., D.LITT.

*Lord Bishop of Manchester, Archbishop-Designate of York*

CHRISTIANITY AND THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION—THE  
UNIQUE REVELATION OF THE BIBLE—THE BIBLE AND THE  
GOSPELS—CHRISTIANITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND  
—CHRISTIANITY AND SECULAR CIVILIZATION—CONCLUSION:  
THE CASE FOR EVANGELIZATION

## CHAPTER XII

## THE EVANGELISTIC DUTY OF CHRISTIANITY.....

THE REVEREND JOHN A. MACKAY, D.LITT.

*Religious Work Secretary of the South American Federation of Young Men's Christian Associations*

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST—THE RICHES OF CHRIST—The Perfect Pattern—The All-Powerful Transformer of Character—The Incarnate Revelation of God—HOW PRESENT THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE?—Win a Right to be Heard—Present that Aspect of Christ Which the Situation Requires—When Necessary, Rid the Presentation of Ritual Accompaniments

## PART IV: THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE.....

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS—OUR MESSAGE—THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE—THE SPIRIT OF OUR ENDEAVOR—THE CALL TO THE WORLD—CONCLUSION

## INDEX.....

# Part One

## PRELIMINARY PAPERS

PUBLISHED IN PREPARATION FOR  
THE JERUSALEM MEETING

*Except in the case of statements and recommendations adopted by formal vote, the International Missionary Council is not responsible for the opinions or statements expressed. The preliminary papers were distributed in advance of the Jerusalem Meeting to all the delegates for their information. None of these papers was formally presented to the Council and no action was taken by the International Missionary Council in reference to them. Since the Jerusalem Meeting, with such information regarding the discussion as was obtainable, the authors have revised these papers in so far as that seemed desirable to them. Two papers in this series deal with Buddhism: Dr. Reischauer deals with Northern Buddhism, particularly as manifested in Japan; Dr. Saunders gives the greater part of his space to Southern Buddhism but writes also out of his experience of Buddhism in other fields. It will be observed that on certain points the two writers are not agreed, especially, perhaps, as to the meaning of Nirvana, and also on certain aspects of the Buddha's own teaching. In a realm where the best authorities differ, it has seemed well to leave these divergent views to be studied side by side. Because of the greatly lamented illness and death of Canon Gairdner, his paper on Islam was submitted to his colleague, Dr. Eddy, who made only such alterations as Canon Gairdner himself had suggested.*