

death the dignity of successor to the Prophet went over to Moawijah, who had his residence in Damascus.

Abu Bekr was victorious in Syria. Omar conquered Damascus and Jerusalem. One of his generals, Amr, subdued Egypt and northern Africa; another general, Chalid, was successful in Persia and the countries of ancient Assyria. Sauginary quarrels about the right order of succession did not bar the outward progress. Sicilla was conquered. Spain followed, and an attempt was made to subdue Gallia. This was frustrated by the victories of Charles Martell by Tours and Poitiers, 732. But on the shores of the Gauges and Indus Mohammedan kingdoms were founded. Even when internal quarrels seemed to threaten to break down the whole structure it was seen that it was held together as with invisible bands. There were at one period three caliphs at one time, one in Bagdad, one in Cairo, and one in Cordova. But the power of Islam was not broken by this fracture. New blood and life were poured into the body by the Turks joining. These continued the work of propagation. Constantinople was taken in 1453, and the victorious hords carried the Crescent as far as the walls of Vienna. The dignity of successor now went over to the Turkish Sultan, 1517. Selim I. added also to his titles of caliph and Chief Imam that of servant of the two holy cities.

It is true that the Saracens and the Turks found on their way most old, dead forms of governments, which were an easy prey to the hordes burning with religious zeal and fanaticism. But this does not, as has been shown, wholly account for their marvelous success. It can be accounted for on no other ground than to suppose unseen forces working through the instrumentality of men. For a prophetic description of these conquests see Revelations ix.

It is noticeable that Islam has not yet lost very much territory. Although Spain and Sicily and a large part of European Turkey are now lost, yet in the heart of Asia and Africa it is still progressing, even more so, it is said, than Christianity. It may be that Islam will yet prove a stepping-stone for some of those nations to some higher state of religious knowledge, to truth.

AL KORAN.

Al Koran are the holy scriptures of the Moslems. The word itself means "Recitation" or "Lecture." The book is a collection of doctrines, sermons, and precepts given by Mohammed as divine revelations, and constitutes the law-book of Islam. The present arrangement of the different chapters is not the work of Mohammed. He seems to have avoided any such collection of the whole into one volume, perhaps with the view of a final revision. But his successor, Abu Bekr, collected the existing fragments and completed the volume with such traditions that were still fresh in the memory. This work was never universally acknowledged, because

its discrepancies with other partial collections, here and there existing, were too apparent. The third successor, Othman, undertook an extensive revision and had a great number of copies written which were distributed among the various local authorities in the Mohammedan world. He also commanded all other copies of the Koran to be destroyed. But even in the purified form the volume is not free from contradictions, which, however, are no doubt satisfactorily explained by the theologians. I judge from analogy with Christian theologians, who generally "explain" everything. The division in 114 *suras* or chapters of unequal length is accidental and seems to have been done without reference to the connection of matter or chronology. As a consequence of this, the Koran is to occidental readers a very tiresome volume, but the Orientals, who in all their views and inclinations seem to be contrary to us, cleave to the book with a love and reverence hard to account for.

Koran is the basis of the theology as well as of the theoretic and practical jurisprudence of Islam. It is considered the standard of style and language of the Arabic tongue, and the Moslems are allowed to read it in Arabic. It is also the only textbook of the elementary schools, and it is considered a meritorious work to learn passages of it by heart. Many Moslems are able to recite the whole book, and they are honored with the title of *Hafiz*, a word which means "keeper, preserver, watcher," and is, in that sense, applied to God himself.

DOCTRINES.

The doctrines of Islam have as their basis such traditions as had been transplanted from Abraham to the descendants of Ishmael. Many of its doctrines and precepts are therefore in full harmony with the books of the Old and New Testaments, and it bears a striking resemblance to Judaism and Christianity. In other points, again, it runs in quite an opposite direction. The chief doctrines are three. The doctrine of the unity of the Godhead and of the divine mission of Mohammed are comprised in the creed, called *Kelimet shehadet*, or *Kelimet tanhid*, which reads: "There is no God (or Divinity) except God, and Mohammed is His prophet." To these two dogmas comes the third about retribution in the next world. Paradise and hell are two distinct religious ideas of the Moslems.

The chief and most important dogma, however, is that of the unity of God. The Koran says: "He is the God—one God the Eternal. He does not beget and is not begotten, and no one is like Him." With this declaration Islam forms, as it were, a square, and faces its opponents all round. It puts itself in opposition to the heathen, with their innumerable gods and goddesses; also to Judaism, which, according to Talmud, does not decline to honor some of their leaders—Ezra for instance—as "Sons of God," or their rabbis as "Lords." It opens its fire upon the "Christian"

churches with their Athanasian, mathematically impossible ideas of Triunity, and, what is worse, also upon the revelations of God concerning himself, by which we are taught to look to God as to our Father, our Originator. Hence, reconciliation between Islam and the other creeds seems impossible. The divergence on the first and fundamental doctrine is too great.

Among the qualities of God, omnipotence and omniscience seem to be foremost. Justice and holiness have only a secondary place. One characteristic feature which may be mentioned in this connection is that, according to Islam, God has pre-ordained everything. What happens must be. It could not have been otherwise. Every event was mapped out before its occurrence. This so-called fatalism (Arabic: *Takdir* or *Kismet*) seems to have been carried to its very farthest extremes by the Moslems. This doctrine helps them to bear pain, consoles them in misery, and enables them to yield gracefully to the inevitable; on the other hand, it tends to foster indifference, and weakens the mind when its full activity might, perhaps, have averted threatening dangers. Whence this dogma of fatalism comes is not very difficult to imagine. The first patriarchs had, no doubt, clear ideas of a pre-existence, as again revealed in these last days very fully and clearly. The accounts of the creation in Genesis and other passages show this. It is no difficult matter to perceive how this doctrine, transmitted from mouth to mouth through generations, without the guiding and preservative influence of inspiration, should finally become fatalism. It is distorted and misunderstood truth. It is the twin brother of the Augustinian-Calvinistic predestination.

Divine revelations come, according to Islam, through the medium of angels or inspired men. Gabriel is the chief of the angels; Mohammed is the chief among the prophets, and as such is referred to as "The Lord of Prophets," or "The Prophet of Prophets," using an Oriental construction analogous to "Song of songs," for instance. The other principal prophets are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The duties of these and other prophets are thus explained: Adam, "the pure in God;" Seth, "the messenger of God;" Noah (or Nuh), "the saved one of God;" Abraham (Ibrahim), "the friend of God;" Ismail, "the sacrifice of God;" Joseph (Jusuf), the "faithful in God;" Ahab (Ajjub), "the patient one in God;" Moses (Musa), "the word of God;" David (Daud), "the follower of God;" Solomon (Suleiman), "the confidant of God," and Jesus (Isa), "the Spirit of God," who is the great prophet after Mohammed. Each of the six great prophets, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed represented the will of God for a certain dispensation, each in turn being superseded by his successor. The Jews, they acknowledge, were true believers from the time of Moses to