



THE
SWORD AS WIELDED BY ISLAM
AND
CHRISTIANITY.

A COMPARISON

BY

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THE SWORD AS WIELDED BY ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY :

A COMPARISON.

Comparisons are generally odious, but my justification for the comparison referred to in the heading of this article lies in the fact that Islam and its Holy Prophet are repeatedly subjected to unjustifiable attacks by the Christian Missionaries while Christianity with the blackest deeds on its record is extolled to the skies. Christian writers are never tired of calling Islam the religion of the sword and Christianity the religion of peace, and all arguments showing the falsity of these two assertions fall only upon deaf ears. In a recent article published in the *Epiphany*, a missionary paper of free circulation, a Muslim writer showed that the Holy Quran nowhere enjoined or permitted the propagation of Islam by the sword and that Christianity at any rate had shed much more blood than Islam, but in the editorial comment upon that article there is a repetition of the same worn out objections that have been refuted hundreds of times by the Muslim writers. The paper moreover asserts that "Christians have *sometimes* been guilty of persecution, but they have no shadow of justification for it in the teaching of their master." The writer thinks it to be an easy way of escaping from the difficulty but it is not so easy as the writer might have thought.

Jesus, it must be clearly understood, came in fulfilment of the expectations of the Jews who considered the advent of the Messiah to be a sign of their supremacy and the subjugation to them of all the nations of the earth. They entertained to belief that the Messiah would lead them to conquer and subjugate the whole world. When Jesus first advanced his claim to Messiahship, he himself seems to have entertained similar thoughts. The throne of David was for a time aspired after and these hopes were only dispelled by the concluding events of the drama of his life in Palestine. Christianity had not the power to wield the sword in the days of its founder, and when it attained such power, it most unscrupulously used it for its advancement. Had Jesus the power to call a force into the field sufficient to overthrow the Roman empire or had he even a few thousands of brave disciples ready to sacrifice their lives at his word and had he then refrained from making use of that power there would have been reason to believe that his disciples who shed human blood quite unjustifiably in a later age when Christianity could command that power were not actuated to do so by the spirit of their master. But in spite of his apparent helplessness, Jesus did not despise the sword altogether. "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," he remarked

on one occasion, and the later history of Christianity shows clearly that however wide may have been the departure of the Christian nations from the other teachings of Jesus, they have been quite faithful to their master in acting up to the above injunction. There was none among them who being smitten on one cheek should have turned the other, or being compelled to go one mile should have gone two, or being sued for the coat should have given also the cloak, but there were hundreds of thousands of Christians who provided themselves with swords and used them for the advancement of Christianity. Jesus himself who had such an ardent desire that his soldiers should be provided with swords, though they might have even to sell their garments, had not the good fortune to see it done in his life-time, and accordingly he had not the occasion to direct them personally how to use the sword. But we can say with certainty what use he would have made of it if he had had the means to do so. I know that pious Christians do not like to hear any name applied to their master other than the Prince of Peace, though Jesus preferred to be called the Wielder of the Sword when he said, "I came not to send peace but a sword," but in the interests of justice and for the sake of comparison, I must refer to facts. Jesus was brought up in the Jewish law and he was well-versed in what were accepted in his time to be the inspired writings of Moses and the prophets. In religion, therefore, he was a Jew to the core of his heart. His faith in the Jewish Law was so strong that he thought it easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one jot or tittle of the law to be abolished. He plainly taught that "whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," (Mat. 5: 19). Therefore we can say with certainty that if Jesus had been able to wield the sword, he would have wielded it in the manner ordained by the Jewish Law, which says that "when the Lord thy God shall deliver them (the enemy) before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." A few chapters further on the commandment is given concerning an idolatrous city that "thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it in the midst thereof, and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof, every whit for the Lord thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again," (Deut. 13: 12-18). And again in Deut. 20: 16-17: "But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them."

Such would have been the course which Jesus would have adopted, and if the Christian reader is offended with this conclusion, he should peruse the history of the blood shed by Christianity. The Christian apologists tell us that Jesus cannot be held to be responsible for the indescribable crimes of bloodshed committed by his followers, but the master himself tells us that the tree is known by its fruit. Only on one occasion in his whole life Jesus thought that the circumstances were favorable for the recognition of his claims to be the king of the Jews, and on that occasion the meekness of the Sermon on the Mount was changed for the violence ordained in the Jewish Law. This occurred at the time of his entry into Jerusalem. He rode upon an ass to fulfil the words of a prophecy as Mathew tells us: "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold *thy King* cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," (Matt. 21 : 4, 5). The perusal of the narrative as recorded in the Gospels shows that Jesus was in momentary expectation of becoming a king. The masses certainly were under the impression that he was the promised king who should deliver the Jews from their bondage and his disciples also connected this circumstance with an earlier prophecy in which the Messiah is spoken of as the King of the Jews. "A very great multitude," we are told, "spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, and cries of "Hosannah to the son of David" were resounded in the streets of Jerusalem as he passed through them. On this occasion seeing that the multitudes sided with him, Jesus went into the temple where in a few minutes a strange scene was witnessed. He "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves," (Matt. 21 : 12). Of course he was incited to this violence by the impiety of those who had converted "the house of prayer" into "a den of thieves," but the question is what deeds of violence he would not have done on similar occasions if he had the means to wield the sword. It is not to be supposed that the Israelite prophets who slaughtered thousands of human beings did it unnecessarily. They had recourse to this violence because they could not uproot the evil of idolatry in any other way. Their motives were undoubtedly good as were also the motives of Jesus in turning the tables of the money-changers and driving them out of the temple by force. There is clear evidence in this circumstance that Jesus himself would have used the sword much in the same way as his followers used it, had he possessed the means to do it.

The *Epiphany* has made an attempt to explain away Jesus' injunction to his disciples to buy swords, and it is the quaintness of this explanation that tempts me to mention it here. We are told that

the swords which Jesus wanted his disciples to provide themselves with were the spiritual swords. In the words of the writer "where Christ speaks of a sword, he is speaking, not of a literal sword, but of the 'sword of the spirit.' He means that Christians are always and everywhere to carry on a warfare, both aggressive and defensive on behalf of truth and righteousness." We need not dispute this interpretation, but would humbly ask the learned exegete if the other words used in connection with the sword are also not to be taken literally. Jesus said: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," (Luke 22 : 36). Remember the sword is to be bought by selling the garment, and the close relation shows that both the sword and the garment belong to the same sphere. Now without contending that the sword here means the spiritual sword as the *Epiphany* asserts, I may venture to ask what the garment means. If the sword is taken to signify the spiritual sword, the garment must be taken to mean the spiritual garment. Jesus' advice to his disciples, therefore, was that they should sell their spiritual garments and buy the spiritual sword "to carry on a warfare both aggressive and defensive." But spiritually naked men are men devoid of true righteousness. Accordingly the injunction would mean that the Christians should depart from the ways of righteousness and defend their own innovations and attack other religions in whatever way they can. This interpretation does not render the injunction more edifying than if the sword was taken literally. Moreover it is difficult to understand why the Christians could not get the spiritual sword without selling the spiritual garments, and how the transaction was to be effected or how it was actually effected, are also points which must be cleared by the writer in the *Epiphany*. And he would also kindly explain whether the two swords which the disciples showed to Jesus immediately on receiving the injunction to buy swords were spiritual swords or literal ones, bearing in mind at the same time that on seeing these swords, Jesus expressed his satisfaction, as Luke tells us: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords, and he said unto them. It is enough," (Luke xvii : 38).

The Muslims, however, do not blame Jesus for having preached that swords should be bought by selling garments because in this he was only following the Israelite Law. He was one of the Israelite prophets and he cannot be blamed for giving an injunction in accordance with the Law which had been promulgated by Moses. It would be urged that Jesus preached love even to enemies and that, therefore, he was not following the Israelite prophets who preached hatred and vengeance, but the fact is that even Jesus' teaching of love towards enemies is taken from the earlier prophets. Solomon taught that "if thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink," (Pro. xxv : 21); and

David prayed to the Lord, saying : " If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy) " (Ps. vii : 4). Similarly, the teachings of earlier prophets are not devoid of the precepts of forgiveness and forbearance and Jesus only proclaimed the same teachings in a new garb. It is, therefore, an error to consider that the earlier Israelite prophets who fought against the idolaters did not inculcate love, kindness, mercy and forgiveness or that Jesus had no inclination to use the sword if a favorable opportunity had offered itself. Jesus Christ was a true Israelite, and accordingly while he promulgated the Israelite doctrines of love and forbearance, he was not averse to the Israelite methods of war, but on account of his rejection by the Jews he had not the means to employ those methods, though to show his adherence to that doctrine he gave it as his dying word to his followers that they should provide themselves with swords even though they might have to sell their garments. In support of this last assertion, I may state that the injunction to buy swords was given by Jesus just at the moment when he was expecting arrest and probably he thought that his faithful disciples would save him at the last moment by using their swords in his defence. A few hours afterwards Jesus was put under arrest but his hopes were not realized, for his disciples had not the courage to stand by him at this critical moment in his life and they all fled.

There is a strange episode mentioned in the Gospels in this connection. When the disciples were commanded to provide themselves with swords, they told the master that they already possessed two swords, and Jesus considered them to be sufficient, though we are not told for what purpose. It was with one of these swords that Peter soon afterwards cut off the ear of one of the multitude which had come to arrest him. This was the only use to which one of the two swords was put. Probably some more blood would have been shed had not Jesus, on perceiving a great number of men " with swords and staves " and seeing his party in danger in case a struggle ensued, pacified the mob by ordering Peter to sheathe his sword. It is probable that Jesus was at first under the impression that taking him for an ordinary preacher, the authorities would send one or two men for his arrest, and accordingly he had prepared himself to meet the situation. Hence he expressed his wonder when he saw so many well-armed men who could easily overcome any resistance that his disciples could make, and exclaimed : " Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves ? " (Luk. xxii : 52). Of course it was quite advisable on the part of Jesus to give up his determination at the last moment, but the difficulty is that as a prophet his word regarding the sufficiency of two swords did not prove true. How is this difficulty to be solved ? I hope some of our Christian friends

would try to solve it. I may however mention here that history presents another instance of a great victory having been won with two swords. It was the victory won at the field of Badr by the Holy Prophet with 313 companions only who are said to have possessed only two swords. The enemy numbered over a thousand strong and they had among them Arab warriors of great renown. The Muslim society was in danger of utter destruction, for among the 313 the majority had never seen the field of battle before. But since it was a question of life and death for the Muslim society, therefore they had come into the field to defend themselves and their Holy Prophet trusting in God only for their victory. But though two swords did not prove sufficient for Jesus and his apostles, they wrought wonderful deeds in the case of our Holy Prophet and his companions. Was Jesus prophetically thinking of the swords of one greater than himself when he said: "It is enough"! Or did it happen that he had a vision in which he saw two swords gaining a complete victory with the assistance of God? for the prophets of God are sometimes made to witness events which happen hundreds of years afterwards. Before giving a definite answer to these questions, I wish to see what the Christians have to say as to Jesus' remark that two swords were sufficient.

Let us now consider under what circumstances and for what purpose Islam had to take up the sword. It is a beaten subject and instead of dwelling upon it at any length, I would refer simply to two verses of the Holy Quran which is admittedly the most trustworthy history. "Permission (to fight against the unbelievers) is given to those against whom the sword has been taken up, for verily they have suffered outrages, and God is certainly able to succour them: Those who have been driven forth from their homes wrongfully, only because they say, 'Our Lord is God.' And if God had not repelled some men by others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques wherein the name of God is ever commemorated, would surely have been destroyed!" (xxii: 40, 41). And again in a *sura* of about the same period the Holy Book says: "And fight in the way of God against those only who have taken up the sword against you: and do not go beyond this limit But if they desist, then verily God is Gracious, Merciful . . . but if they desist, then let there be no hostility save against the wrong-doer," (ii; 186, 188, 189). These two quotations are, I think, sufficient to show under what circumstances and with what object the Muslims were compelled to take up the sword. Their opponents had persecuted them most cruelly so long as they remained at Mecca and had at last driven them from their homes. But the Muslims were not secure even in the place where they had now sought shelter, for the unbelievers pursued them with the sword to deal a destructive blow to the small Muslim society. Thus it was at the most critical moment in the life of Islam that

permission was given to the Muslims to fight against those who had taken up the sword against them, but they were clearly told not to attack them first.

It would appear from the above that Islam did not take up the sword to compel the unbelievers to accept its principles but to defend itself. It fought not for its propagation but for its existence. In fact, the Muslims were as a mere drop in the ocean among the unbelievers and idolators. Numerous other verses of the Holy Quran bear testimony to the fact that Islam was opposed to compulsion in religion. It is in a chapter revealed at Medina, in a chapter in which permission is given to fight against the unbelievers as already quoted, that the golden principle is mentioned which both Judaism and Christianity failed to give. *La ikraha fid-din* says the Holy Quran which literally means that "there is to be no compulsion in faith," (ii : 257). With such a principle preached in clear words and that too at the very place where Islam had gained power, it is absurd to say that it took up the sword for its propagation. In another chapter also revealed at Medina and which undoubtedly belongs to the latest period of the Holy Prophet's life, we find the following verses: "God does not forbid you to deal with kindness and fairness towards those who have not made war upon you on account of your religion, or driven you forth from your homes : verily God loves those who act with fairness. Only doth God forbid you to make friends to those who, on account of your religion, have warred against you, and have driven you forth from your homes, and have aided your expulsion : and whoever makes friends of them, these, therefore, are evil-doers," (lx : 8, 9.) These verses show clearly that the Muslims were not fighting with the Arabs to force their religion upon them but the contrary was the case. The unbelievers were fighting against the Muslims to compel them to forsake their religion and the Muslims were only compelled to fight for their lives and liberty.

This proof is convincing for anyone who seeks to know Islam with a mind free from prejudice. But the Christian missionary's zeal for the advancement of the religion of Christ does not allow him to see things aright, and accordingly we find the writer in the *Epiphany* rejecting all this evidence, because he thinks that the passages containing these injunctions were abrogated by the ninth chapter. "Whatever Mohammad may have said at other times, this last *Sura* must be taken as the final expression of his mind." Before answering this, however, I beg the reverend gentleman's permission to apply his logic to the sayings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels. In the early days of his ministry Jesus laid great stress upon forbearance, and the Sermon on the Mount which marks the beginning of his career as a prophet carries the policy of non-resistance to an extreme and recommends the turning of the left

cheek on receiving a slap on the right, and the giving away of the cloak also when the coat is claimed and going two miles when compelled to go one mile. As disciples gather round him, a departure is made from this policy until at the last moment, immediately before his arrest and crucifixion, we find him directing his disciples to provide themselves with swords though they might have to sell their garments. According to the logic of the *Epiphany*, we can, therefore, say that all the teachings relating to forbearance and non-resistance were abrogated by the injunction to buy swords, and we can be sure to be right if we say that "Whatever Jesus may have said at other times, this last injunction must be taken as the final expression of his mind." Probably the later Christians who unscrupulously used the sword for the advancement of Christianity thus construed the teachings of Jesus as contained in the Gospels.

Coming back to the objection itself, however, we find that there is not the least truth in it. There is no principle which the Holy Quran has contradicted after establishing it once. Now the principle of religious freedom was promulgated throughout the Holy Quran and compulsion in religion Islam hated not only in the days of its weakness at Mecca, but also in the days of its power at Medina. Therefore, having established this principle once it could not have contradicted it afterwards, for it says: "Can they not then consider the Quran? Were it from any other than God, they would assuredly have found in it many contradictions" (iv: 84). Thus the Holy Quran claims to be free from contradictions which it could not if it promulgated contradictory principles.

In the ninth chapter of the Holy Quran there is nothing which contradicts any earlier injunction. In order to understand this clearly the meaning of some words must be explained. The first of these is the root *jahid*, various derivatives of which are used in the Holy Quran. *Jahada* is explained in Lane's Lexicon as meaning "he strove, laboured, or toiled; exerted himself or his power, or efforts, or endeavours or ability; employed himself vigorously, strenuously, laboriously, diligently, studiously, sedulously, earnestly, or with energy; was diligent, or studious; took pains or extraordinary pains," and its well known derivative *Jihad* about which the greatest misunderstanding exist is explained in the same work as meaning "the using, or exerting, one's utmost power, efforts, endeavours, or ability, in contending with an object of disapprobation." Nor does the word when used in the Holy Quran always mean fighting. It occurs four times in the twenty-ninth *Sura* which was revealed at Mecca and nowhere does it mean fighting. It also occurs in 31; 14, a Meccan *Sura*. In the *Sura Furqan*, also revealed at Mecca in the early days of Islam, the Holy Prophet is commanded to carry on the most powerful *Jihad* against the unbelievers where it means nothing but striving to the utmost to uproot erroneous doctrines. The words

fi sabil illah are also misunderstood. Literally they mean "in the way of God," but they are misconstrued by the *Epiphany* as meaning "for the advancement of God's religion," *i. e.*, the propagation of Islam. It is by this misrepresentation that the Christian writer in the *Epiphany* tries to prove that in the ninth chapter "the principle of persecution for the sake of religion is established, not in a special case, but for all time." These words, *fi sabil illah*, do not occur in the ninth chapter only, but they occur in previous *Suras* as well. They occur in passages in which the Muslims are plainly enjoined to fight only against those who took up the sword against them. In ii : 186, already quoted, we have *wa qatilú fi sabil-illah-illazina yugatiluna kum wa ta'tadu*, *i. e.*, "And fight in the way of God against those who have taken up the sword against you and do not go beyond this limit." Thus the same words which occur in the ninth chapter also occur in the chapters revealed earlier and passages in which the Muslims are plainly told not to fight against the unbelievers generally, but against those unbelievers only who took up swords to destroy the Muslims. Hence the conclusion that the ninth chapter enjoins the Muslims to persecute other people for the sake of their religion is erroneous because it is based on a wrong translation of the words *fi sabil-illah*. Nor does this phrase occur only in connection with fighting for the Holy Quran speaks of spending one's substance in the way of God (*fi sabil-illah*) when it means the giving of it away to the poor, as the following verses show : "The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of God. Those who spend their wealth in the way of God, and do not afterwards follow what they expend with reproaches or injury, shall have their reward with their Lord," (ii : 263, 264). Hence it is clear that *fi sabil-illah* does nowhere mean "for the propagation or advancement of God's religion," and this interpretation has been put upon these simple words to misrepresent the Islamic teaching. This phrase, as I have said above, literally means 'in the way of God,' and the only significance it carries is that a deed should be done for the sake of God and not for any personal motive or interest. Hence it is that the Holy Quran says deeds of charity should be done only in the way of God and not with the motive of laying an obligation upon a man or showing to others such deeds of charity. And when the Muslims are spoken of as fighting in the way of God, all that is meant is that they are fighting for the sake of God because the unbelievers fought against them to destroy God's religion, *i. e.*, Islam, and it was to defend that religion that the Muslims fought. Therefore, it is clear that neither the use of the word *Jihad* nor that of the phrase *fi sabil-illah* is by itself sufficient to show that any verse of the Holy Quran containing this word or phrase inculcated the propagation of Islam by means of the sword.

The verses of the ninth chapter on which the allegation that Islam taught the propagation of religion by the sword is based may now be considered. The first verse pointed out in the *Epiphany* is ix : 41, which Rodwell renders as follows : " March ye forth, light any heavy *armed*, and contend with your substance and your persons on the way of God. This, if you knew it, will be best for you." This verse relates to the expedition of Tabook as the context shows. The expedition was against Heracleus who had made preparations for an attack with a mighty army. The Muslim expedition was thus only a counter expedition as even Muir admits. It was not, therefore, a case of undertaking an expedition to force any people to accept Islam, but to meet an attack of the Greeks. And when on reaching Tabook the Holy Prophet found that the Greeks had not advanced, he returned to Medina without engaging in a fighting which he would not have done if his object had been to force Islam upon any tribe. He had on this occasion 30,000 brave warriors with him and there were yet many idolatrous tribes in Arabia whom if he desired he could have easily conquered, but he did not do it. The expedition of Tabook was, therefore, simply defensive, and in the verse objected to the Muslims were enjoined only to join the Holy prophet in this expedition. That this verse with some preceding and subsequent verses was revealed in reference to the Tabook expedition has also been admitted by Muir. Hence the verse does not establish " the principle of persecution for the sake of religion."

The second verse objected to is ix : 73, which Palmer translates as follows : O thou Prophet ! strive strenuously against the mis-believers and the hypocrites, and be stern against them ; for their resort is hell, and an ill journey shall it be." The word *Jahid* which has been translated " strive strenuously " in the above translation is shown as meaning " wage war " in the *Epiphany*. But that this significance is not here true is shown by circumstances, for the Holy Prophet never waged war against the hypocrites although he knew them all very well as this very chapter shows. But as the commandment relates to the hypocrites as well as the unbelievers and no war was waged against the former, no war could be waged against the latter in consequence of this verse. It should also be borne in mind that this verse exactly in the same form occurs also in a previous *Sura* ; see lxvi : 9.

The third verse mentioned by the *Epiphany* as leading to the conclusion that Islam should be propagated by the sword has no bearing upon the subject at all. It is the 112th verse of the chapter and all that it says is that the Muslims are fighting in the way of God, which phrase I have already explained. It does not enjoin the Muslims to fight against the unbelievers on account of their religion,

but mentions only the fact that they are fighting. What was the nature of these fights has already been explained.

The fourth verse is the 124th verse which says; "O ye who believe! fight against such of the unbelievers as are near you." The injunction plainly means that as the Muslims were repeatedly put into trouble by the neighbouring idolatrous Arab tribes, therefore they should be fought against. The specification of the tribes that were near the Muslims in fact deals a death-blow to the Christian allegation that the principle of persecution for the sake of religion for all time is established by the ninth chapter of the Holy Quran. In fact, if the reverend gentleman had taken the trouble to read the verses in the commencement of this chapter, he would not have advanced these objections. This I say in spite of his assertion that he has read the ninth chapter carefully. If he had done so, only one verse would have convinced him that the Holy Quran was not establishing any principle of persecution. I refer to the thirteenth verse which says: "Will you not fight against a people who have broken their covenant and aimed to expel the Apostle and attacked you first." Does not this verse show clearly against whom the Muslims were required to fight? And how clearly does the same chapter make an exception in favour of others: "But this (injunction to fight) does not concern those idolators with whom you are in league, and who have afterwards in no way failed you, and yet aided any one against you," (ix: 4).

MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN HOLY WARS.

The teachings of Islam and Christianity as to the wielding of the sword have already been pointed out, and it remains to show which of the two peoples, Muslims and Christians, have shed blood without any justification for doing so. The Muslims, it will be admitted on all hands, began to fight when they were weak and persecuted by a very strong enemy, while the Christian began to fight when they had acquired strong temporal power by becoming possessors of the Roman Empire. Again, the Muslims fought against those who persecuted them, while the Christians first took up the sword against their own peaceful subjects only because they did not accept Christ as God. In fact, while the Muslims fought to put an end to religious persecution, the Christians established the principle of persecution for the sake of religion by their fighting. This is the most important and significant difference between the Muslim and the Christian holy wars.

It is a fact that during the first three hundred years after Jesus, Christianity, notwithstanding the facilities introduced by Paul, made no very great progress. During this whole time, the Roman Empire remained its centre of action, yet till the conversion of Con-

stantine, hardly one in twenty persons had accepted the Christian faith. Thus Gibbon writes :—

“ According to the irrefragable testimony of Origen, the proportion of the faithful was very inconsiderable when compared with the multitude of an unbelieving world. . . . The most favorable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome will not permit us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the empire had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross before the important conversion of Constantine,” (Vol. ii, Chap. xv.)

With the conversion of Constantine, the course of Christianity changed. At first by persuasion and then by persecution the ranks of Christianity began to swell. The persecuted became themselves the cruellest of persecutors. With temporal power in their hands, the Christians deemed it their duty to destroy idolatry. “ The ruin of Paganism,” says Gibbon, “ in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition ; and may, therefore, deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind. The Christians, more especially the Clergy, had impatiently supported the cruel delays of Constantine, and the equal toleration of the elder Valentinian ; nor could they deem their conquest perfect or secure, as long as their adversaries were permitted to exist. The influence which Ambrose and his brethren had acquired over the youth of Gratian and the piety of Theodosius, was employed to infuse the maxims of persecution into the breasts of their imperial proselytes.” Lecky says in his *History of European Morals* : “ A large portion of theological ethics was derived from writings in which religious massacres, on the whole the most ruthless and sanguinary upon record, were said to have been directly enjoined by the Deity, in which the duty of suppressing idolatry by force was given a greater prominence than any article of the moral code, and in which the spirit of intolerance had found its most eloquent and most passionate expressions. . . . The new religion, unlike that which was disappearing, claimed to dictate the opinions as well as the actions of men, and its teachers stigmatised as an atrocious crime the free expression of every opinion on religious matter diverging from them.” According to Draper, among the ecclesiastics “ the universal opinion was that it was right to compel men to believe what the majority of society had now accepted as the truth, and if they refused, it was right to punish them.” Of St. Augustine, the renowned Christian Father, Lecky says :—

“ For a time he shrank from, and even condemned, persecution ; but he soon perceived in it the necessary consequence of his principles. He recanted his condemnation ; he flung his whole genius

into the cause ; he recurred to it again and again, and he became the framer and representative of the theology of intolerance.

“ The arguments by which Augustine supported persecution were, for the most part, those which I have already stated. Some of them were drawn from the doctrine of exclusive salvation, and others from the precedents of the Old Testament. It was merciful, he contended, to punish heretics, even by death, if this could save them or others from the eternal suffering that awaited the unconverted. Heresy was described in Scripture as a kind of adultery ; it was the worst species of murder, being the murder of souls ; it was a form of blasphemy, and on all these grounds might justly be punished. If the New Testament contained no examples of the apostles employing force, this was simply because in their time no priest had embraced Christianity. But had not Elijah slaughtered with his own hand the prophets of Baal ? Did not Heseekiah and Josiah, the King of Nineveh, and Nebuchadnezzar, after his conversion, destroy by force idolatry within their dominions, and were they not expressly commended for this piety. St. Augustine seems to have originated the application of the words ‘ compel them to come in ’ to religious persecution.”

Thus had Christianity, as soon as it attained to temporal power launched out into the cruellest persecution of its own subjects who had in no way offended it. The cruellest Muslim monarchs were never guilty of such atrocious deeds. They may have shed much blood, sometimes even unjustifiably, but they were never guilty of the heinous deeds of persecuting people who had once settled under them peacefully. A Christian writer tells us that “ one illustration of the Mohammadan spirit is to be seen in the fact that whenever a country is conquered by Mohammadans, its churches and temples are taken by force and turned into mosques.” It is absurd to make such generalizations from one or two instances, when thousands of ancient churches or temples are still standing in countries conquered by the Muslims. But the fanaticism with which Christian priests and monarchs destroyed the Pagan temples of the Roman Empire, “ the most splendid and beautiful monuments of Grecian architecture ” is not paralleled in the history of the most savage people. This cruelty becomes the more heinous when it is considered that this demolition was not made in the excited moments of victory over an enemy, but it was the result of the cool deliberations of Christian monarchs and priests against peaceful subjects. The following account from Gibbon would give the reader a fair idea of the “ Christian spirit ” of bigotry fanaticism and persecution :—

“ A special commission was granted to Cynegius, the Prætorian prefect of the East, and afterwards to Counts Junius and Gandentius, two officers of distinguished rank in the West ; by which

they were directed to shut the temples, to seize or destroy the instruments of idolatry, to abolish the privileges of the priests, and to confiscate the consecrated property for the benefit of the emperor, of the church, or of the army. Here the desolation might have stopped; and the naked edifices, which were no longer employed in the service of idolatry, might have been protected from the destructive rage of fanaticism. Many of these temples were the most splendid and beautiful monuments of Grecian architecture: and the emperor himself was interested not to deface the splendour of his own cities, or to diminish the value of his own possessions. These stately edifices might be suffered to remain as so many lasting trophies of the victory of Christ. In the decline of the arts, they might be usefully converted into magazines, manufactures, or places of public assembly; and perhaps when the walls of the temple had been sufficiently purified by holy rites, the worship of the true Deity might be allowed to expiate the ancient guilt of idolatry.
 The laws of the emperors exhibit some symptoms of a milder disposition, but their cold and languid efforts were insufficient to stem the torrent of enthusiasm and rapine, which was conducted, or rather impelled, by the spiritual rulers of the Church. In Gaul, the Holy Martin, bishop of Tours, marched, at the head of his faithful monks to destroy the idols, the temples, and the consecrated trees, of his extensive diocese."

We are told further how when Marcellus, a Syrian bishop resolved to demolish the temple of Jupiter in Syria, and the solidity of the temple defied the force of the strongest tools, the foundations of the temple were undermined by the fanatic bishop to carry out his resolve. The great temple of Venus at Carthage which had a circumference of two miles was converted into a church, as was also the majestic dome of Pantheon at Rome, and those who seek an evidence of the warlike spirit of Islam from the conversion of St. Sophia's church at Constantinople into a mosque need to be reminded of the numerous instances of similar conversions in Christianity. But if the Christians did not convert every Pagan temple into a church, the circumstance by no means redounds to the glory of Christianity, for, as Gibbon tells us, "in almost every province of the Roman world, an army of fanatics, without authority and without discipline, invaded the peaceful inhabitants: and the ruin of the fairest structures of antiquity still displays the ravages of those barbarians who alone had time and inclination to execute such laborious destruction."

It may be thought that though Christianity demolished Pagan temples and proscribed the religious practices of idolatry and persecuted the idolators, it did not shed much blood in forcing the new religion upon its subject people or that the alternative of baptism or of death was never actually proposed by any Christian

Emperor for his subjects. But this was due more to the slavish submission of the Pagans to their masters than to any want of severity on the part of the Christians. Gibbon says :—

“ Had the Pagans been animated with the undaunted zeal which possessed the minds of the primitive believers, the triumph of the Church must have been stained with blood ; and the martyrs of Jupiter and Apollo might have embraced the glorious opportunity of devoting their lives and fortunes at the foot of their altars. But such obstinate zeal was not congenial to the loose and careless temper of Polytheism. The violent and repeated strokes of the orthodox princes were broken by the soft and yielding substance against which they were directed ; and the ready obedience of the Pagans protected them from the pains and penalties of the Theodosian code. Instead of asserting that the authority of the gods was superior to that of the emperor, they desisted with a plaintive murmur, from the use of those sacred rites which their sovereign had condemned. If they were sometimes tempted by a sally of passion, or by the hopes of concealment, to indulge their favourite superstition, their humble repentance disarmed the severity of the Christian magistrate ; and they seldom refused to atone for their rashness, by submitting, with some secret reluctance, to the yoke of the Gospel. The Churches were filled with the increasing multitude of these unworthy proselytes, who had conformed, from temporal motives, to the reigning religion ; and whilst they devoutly imitated the postures, and recited the prayers, of the faithful, they satisfied their conscience by the silent and sincere invocation of the gods of antiquity. If the Pagans wanted patience to suffer, they wanted spirit to resist ; and the scattered myriads who deplored the ruin of the temples, yielded, without a contest to the fortune of their adversaries. The disorderly opposition of the peasants of Syria, and the populace of Alexandria to the rage of private fanaticism, was silenced by the name and authority of the emperor.”

For all these excesses committed by the Christians and their unjustifiable persecution of the idolators, no sensible person would accept the apology that they were impelled to such severities by their strong hatred of the superstitions and impure practices of idolatry. Their only desire seems to have been to swell the ranks of Christianity, not to uproot any evil. In fact, they had themselves adopted many of the evils of idolatry, the doctrine of trinity itself being of a Pagan origin. They persecuted the Jews with even greater fanaticism, and if the alternative of baptism or sword was not proposed in the case of idolators, it was proposed and in a most cruel manner carried into effect in the case of the Monotheistic Jews only because they rejected Jesus Christ. The horrible atrocities which were practised by the Christians upon the Jews are absolutely unapproached in cruelty in the history of the world. From the time when Chris-

tianity first obtained temporal power till very recent times, the Jews were persecuted in every Christian country and under every Christian government with relentless cruelty. It is impossible for me to give in a few lines an adequate idea of these horrible holy Christian atrocities, for, as Archdeacon Jortin remarks,* "the account of the Jews who have been plundered, sent naked into banishment, starved, tortured, left to perish in prisons, hanged and burnt by Christians, would fill many volumes." (vol. ii., p. 237). The conversions of Constantine to Christianity was the signal to them for a long course of persecution of the severest type. Constantine is said to have cut off the ears of the Jews who assembled to re-build Jerusalem while Eutychius adds that "the emperor obliged them all to be baptised and to eat pork at Easter," (Jortin vol. ii, p. 206). Constantine burnt all their cities in Palestine and slew all he could find, without sparing even the women and children. As the Christian empire gained strength, the persecution of the peaceful Jews became severer. "At Minorea," as Gibbon tells us, "the relics of St. Stephen converted in eight days, five hundred and forty Jews; with the help, indeed, of some wholesome severities, such as burning the synagogue, driving the obstinate infidels to starve among the rocks, etc." In Alexandria the Jews were "expelled from the city, their houses plundered, and their synagogues appropriated to the use of the Church." Justinian went still further, and according to Gibbon, "in the creed of Justinian the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers, and he piously labored to establish, with fire and sword, the unity of the Christian faith." Acts of violence were resorted to by bishops to compel the Jews to become Christians. In the beginning of the seventh century "ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of baptism; the fortunes of the obstinate infidels were confiscated, their bodies were tortured, and seems doubtful whether they were permitted to abandon their native country" (Gibbon). The council of Toledo in 663 issued the decree "that all the children of Jews should be taken away from their parents and put into monasteries, or into the hands of religious persons to be instructed in Christianity," (Fleury Hist. Ec., ch. viii.) The same council also enacted that a Christian convert found speaking to a Jew should be considered a slave and the Jew so spoken to should be publicly scourged. The fourteenth council of Toledo in 694 ordered "the abduction of Jewish children." In some cases the children of Jews were ordered to be imprisoned in monasteries so that by finding salvation in Christianity they might be saved from eternal damnation.

* The facts and quotations relating to these atrocities are taken from "The Crimes of Christianity," free thought publication.

In France a law was enacted in 615 by the Council of Paris by which no Jew could entertain a suit against a Christian until he had received from the bishop "the grace of baptism." In 630 a great number of the Jews were compelled to migrate on account of an ordinance which "enjoined all who disbelieved in Christ to leave that kingdom."

During the crusades the Jews were especially exposed to the horrible atrocities of the Christians. Gibbon says:—

"At Verdun, Treves, Mentz, Spire, Worms, many thousands of that unhappy people were pillaged and massacred, nor had they felt a more bloody stroke since the persecution of Hadrian. A remnant was saved by the firmness of their bishops, who accepted a feigned and transient conversion; but the more obstinate Jews opposed their fanaticism to the fanaticism of the Christians, barricaded their houses, and, precipitating themselves, their families, and their wealth into the rivers or the flames, disappointed the malice, or at least the avarice, of their implacable foes.

According to Milman, the frightful massacre of this race in all the flourishing cities in Germany and along the Rhine by the soldiers of the cross, seemed no less justifiable and meritorious than the subjugation of the more remote enemies of the Gospel." Basnage relates that at Worms the Jews sought refuge in the bishop's palace where they were given the choice of sword or baptism, and those who did not adopt the latter alternative committed suicide. At Treves, Jewish mothers are related to have stabbed their daughters when they saw the crusaders coming; at Bavaria twelve thousand Jews were massacred. Wherever the crusaders went, the poor Jews had only a choice between death and baptism. In England, their fate was as bad. They were plundered and massacred indiscriminately.

Hecker writes:—

"The noble and mean bound themselves by an oath to extirpate the Jews by fire and sword, and to snatch them from their protectors, of whom the number was so small that throughout all Germany few places can be mentioned where they were not regarded as outlaws and martyred and burnt. . . . All the Jews in Basle, whose number could not have been inconsiderable, were enclosed together in a wooden building, constructed for the purpose, and burned together with it, upon the mere outcry of the people, without sentence or trial, which indeed would have availed them nothing; soon after the same thing took place at Freyburg." And again:—

"At Spire, the Jews driven to despair, assembled in their own habitations, which they set on fire, and thus consumed themselves with their families. The few that remained were forced to submit to baptism; while the dead bodies of the murdered, which lay about the streets, were put into empty wine casks and rolled into the Rhine, lest they should infect the air. . . . At Strasburg, two thousand

Jews were burnt alive in their own burial-ground, where a large scaffold had been erected; a few who promised to embrace Christianity were spared, and their children taken from the pile. The youth and beauty of several females also excited some commiseration; and they were snatched from death against their will. Many, however, who forcibly made their escape from the flames were murdered in the streets."

In Spain, the Jews and the Muslims were equally subjected to horrible persecutions by the Christians on the accession of Ferdinand and Isabella. On the 30th March 1492, an edict was issued by the Christian monarchs that all unbaptized should leave the kingdom by the end of July. They were not permitted to carry with them any gold or silver. Lindo thus describes their sufferings:—

"The misery suffered by the unfortunate exiles is almost indescribable. Some of the vessels took fire, and they either perished in the flames or were drowned; others were so overloaded that they sank. Many were wrecked on barren coasts and perished with hunger and cold; those who survived were exposed to further troubles and misfortunes. Some captains purposely prolonged their voyage, to force them to buy water and provisions at any price they chose to extract from their unfortunate victims."

Some of these miserable exiles reached the coast of Genoa and would have perished there, but for the timely help rendered by some merciful Christians who proposed the alternative of cross and provisions or neither, and the poor wretches had at last to yield.

In Portugal, the same fate was reserved for this despised people. Don Emanuel married the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella on condition that he should expel all the Jews and Muslims from his country, and accordingly in December 1496, all unconverted Jews were ordered to leave Portugal within two months. Another edict of a later date ordered all Jewish children under fourteen to be taken from their parents and brought up as Christians.

This inhuman order was carried into effect by pious Christians and the horrible scene is thus described by Lindo:—

"It was a horrid and wretched spectacle to see tender children taken from the arms and breasts of their distressed mothers; fathers, who fondly held them in their embrace, dragged about to force them from their arms. To hear the cries, sighs, groans, lamentations, and female shrieks that filled the air was dreadful. Some were so distracted that they destroyed their children by casting them into wells; others, in fits of despair, made away with themselves."

But their troubles did not end here:—

"A fresh edict now went forth, that all children between fourteen and twenty should also be taken from their parents and baptised, and multitudes were dragged forcibly by their hair and by their arms into the churches, and compelled to receive the waters of baptism, together with new names, being afterwards given over to those who undertook

to instruct them in the Catholic faith. Next, the parents themselves were seized, and were offered to have their children restored to them if they would consent to be converted; in case of their refusal, they were to be placed in confinement for three days without food or drink. It is indeed wonderful that any mortals could be proof against so terrible and fiendish an ordeal; yet, to the glory of the Hebrew race, very many still remained unmoved. Resistance was, however, not to be tolerated, and it was, therefore, decreed that the same fate was to be meted out to the adults and to the aged, as had already been the portion of the younger members of the race of Israel. Amid the resistance, men and women in the flower of their days, or the decrepitude of age, were dragged into the churches and forcibly baptised, amid the mocking and exultation of an excited populace" (Mocatta).

These are only a few instances of the bloodshed by Christianity for its advancement. The bloody deeds of Charlemagne who spread Christianity with the sword, and the cold-blooded murder of the Muslims in Spain are two other notable instances showing that for a long time Christianity adhered to the principle of persecution for the sake of religion. The clergy were the chief advocates of this principle, and even where monarchs were sometimes willing to yield to the pitiable entreaties of their suffering subjects, the clergy used their influence to dissuade them from such a human course. When the Jews were ordered to leave Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, if they did not accept baptism, an influential Jew threw himself at the feet of the monarch, and offered a very large sum of money in consideration of the order being revoked. The king and the queen would have been prevailed upon, but the clergy so loved their enemies that they could not suffer them to live in a Christian country. Milmar says:—

"The Inquisitors were alarmed. Against all feelings of humanity and justice the royal hearts were steeled, but the appeal to their interests might be more effectual. Thomas de Torquemada advanced into the royal presence bearing a crucifix. 'Behold,' he said, 'him whom Judas sold for thirty pieces of silver. Sell ye him now for a higher price, and render an account of your bargain before God.' The sovereigns trembled before the stern Dominican, and the Jews had no alternative but baptism or exile."

Such is the record of Christian holy wars and such the conduct of those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel of Christ. And while every Christian country was blindly engaged in bringing people by force into the fold of Christianity, no voice was raised against the justifiability of these cruel and inhuman deeds. The whole of Christendom for hundreds of years considered the principle of persecution for the sake of religion as the most important doctrine of the Christian religion. If there had been only exceptional cases of such persecution or if they had been resorted to by some tyrant here and there and generally the Christians and their clergy

had used their efforts to suppress these diabolic persecutions and murder of innocents, we would have been willing to exonerate Christianity of the horrible crime with which it stands charged, but the circumstances under which these cruel persecutions were carried on only deepen the blackness of that crime. Christianity persecuted those very men who sought its shelter as the ruling power. It turned against its own helpless subjects who had not the means even if they had the will to make any resistance. It is a most ghostly picture of bloodshed and there is no parallel to it in history.

I will now consider the case of the Muslim holy wars. I have already said, and history proves this assertion, that the Muslims were compelled to fight against a powerful enemy who was carrying his persecution of the converts of Islam to the last extreme. The mighty persecution which was carried on against Islam by the unbelievers is not equalled even by the terrible persecution of the Jews by the Christians so far as the nature of the persecution is concerned. The number of converts was not very great and most of these became voluntary exile when they saw their opponents bent upon extreme measures of persecution. Twice the Muslims sought refuge in Abyssinia whither they were unsuccessfully followed by the Quresh. The third time a place nearer home was chosen for refuge and the converts, one and all, including the Holy Prophet himself, fled to Medina. The Quresh who had pursued them so far as Abyssinia could not allow them to propagate Islam unmolested in Arabia itself, and accordingly they now resolved to exterminate Islam by dealing a decisive blow to the Muslim society. It was at this juncture in the persecution of the Muslims that they were allowed to fight against their persecutors who sought to turn them away from the new religion. Ample evidence of this is met with in the Holy Quran regarding whose reliability there can be no question, have already referred to some of these verses. Here I may refer to a few more. In ii : 214, we read "But they will not cease to war against you until they turn you from your religion, if they be able." This verse shows clearly that the unbelievers had taken up the sword to persecute the Muslims and to force them to desert Islam and to revert to idolatry. The Muslims were very few compared with the unbelievers, but they defeated the unbelievers in several battle-fields. But the Quresh only became more exasperated and they were now bent upon destroying these Muslims by the sword. It was on account of the smallness of their numbers that some Muslims feared, and it is to this that the verses preceding the one quoted above refer : "War is prescribed to you ; but to this you have a repugnance : Yet haply you are averse from a thing, though it be good for you, and haply you love a thing though it be bad for you ; and God knoweth, but you know not" (ii : 212). The necessity of war on the part of the Muslims is also

explained in the 213th verse which says: "They will ask thee concerning war in the sacred month. Say: the act of fighting therein is a grave crime: but the act of turning men aside from the path of God, and unbelief in Him, and to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive out its people from it, is worse in the sight of God." Thus it was the act of turning the Muslims aside from the path of God and preventing them from the performance of their religious duties, for which the unbelievers unhesitatingly used the sword, that necessitated war on the part of the Muslims. Any sensible person would see that under these circumstances the ordinances relating to war were absolutely justifiable. The Muslims took up the sword not to force the unbelievers to accept Islam, but to resist being forced to desert Islam and accept idolatry.

Various other verses in the Holy Quran show that the one thing which the unbelievers desired to bring about by all their persecutions was to make the converts to Islam desert their faith. For instance, in iv: 89, we read "They (the unbelievers) desire that you should deny the truth of Islam as they have denied, and that like them you should also be unbelievers." And in ix: 2, we have "If they (the unbelievers) overtake you anywhere, they will prove your foes: hand and tongue will they put forth to injure you, and desire that you become infidels again." The seventy-fifth verse of the fourth chapter testifies to the same effect "But what reason have you for not fighting in the way of God, (i. e., for the defence of Islam) and for (the deliverance of) the weak among men and women and children (who are being persecuted by the unbelievers and) who say, 'O' our Lord! bring us forth from this city whose inhabitants are oppressors; and give us a defender from Thy presence and give us a helper from Thy presence." Consider also the following verses which show how many of those who were convinced of the truth of Islam were forced to remain unbelievers: "The angels when they took the souls of those who had been unjust to their own weal, demanded, What hath been your state? They said, 'We were the weak ones of the earth (and, therefore, could not resist the unbelievers).' They replied: 'Was not God's earth broad enough for you to flee away in? Except the men and women and children who were not able through their weakness to find the means of escape nor could they see their way to fly away. . . . Whoever flieth his country for the cause of God will find in the earth many refuges and abundant resources."

The verses quoted above will give the reader a clear idea of the circumstances under which the Muslims fought. The holy wars of Islam were undertaken with an object exactly the reverse of that with which the holy wars of Christianity were undertaken. The Christians sought to force their religion upon the idolators and the Jews by means of the sword, and the Muslims only resisted being

forced to change their religion by the sword. Christianity began to fight when it had attained civil power, while Islam had to fight in the days of its weakness against mighty and powerful enemies. We further learn from the Holy Quran that the Muslims were required to fight only so long as religious persecution continued and they had to stop when there was no persecution. The Holy Quran states this plainly on several occasions. Thus ii: 193 runs as follows: "And fight against them until there be no more seduction from the truth and religion should be practised for God, but if they (*i. e.*, the opponents of the Muslims) desist (from persecuting the Muslims), then let there be no hostility save against the oppressors." As these words are often misconstrued, it is necessary to consider their significance at some length. The word *fitnat-un*, indicates originally a burning with fire, and hence affliction or a trial, or civil war or slaughter or seduction. As used in this passage it means seduction, meaning the seduction of the Muslims from the true religion. Rodwell translates it as "seduction from truth," and gives the alternative significance "civil discord" in a footnote, the latter phrase being explained as meaning "their driving you out of Mecca." Whichever of these significances is adopted, the meaning of the verse would be that the Muslims should continue to fight so long as they are persecuted by their opponents on account of their conversion to Islam. This is the true significance of this world as the context itself shows. But there is greater misapprehension regarding the meaning of the phrase *Wa yakun-addina lillah* which is ordinarily translated as meaning "and the only worship be that of God" or "God's religion (*i. e.*, Islam) only should prevail in the earth." This interpretation is clearly wrong, for it contradicts the very next words which say that "if they desist, then there should be no hostility against them, for hostility should be carried on only against the oppressors." Now if the Muslims were required to fight against the unbelievers until they all accepted Islam, the words "if they desist . . ." would not have followed the injunctions. The Muslims are enjoined to cease all hostilities if the unbelievers desisted from persecuting and oppressing the Muslims, and hence the words *yakunaddina lillah* do not carry the significance that Islam should be the only religion of the people. In consonance with the context these words only mean that there should be no hinderance in adopting the religion of Islam and performing its ceremonies. The Holy Quran, therefore, enjoined the continuance of war only so long as the persecution of the Muslims continued, and when perfect religious freedom was established, then there was no ground for carrying on religious wars. Resistance of persecution was, therefore, the only ground of Muslim Holy Wars.

That the words in dispute carry the significance pointed out above is also shown by the latter history of Islam. If the Holy Quran had given an injunction to the effect that the unbelievers should be fought against until they all became Muslims, the Holy Prophet would have been the first man to carry it into practice. Now it is a fact that these verses were revealed in connection with the earlier Muslim wars, and the only dispute about them is whether they relate to the battle of Badr or Ohud. But after neither of these battles do we find the Holy Prophet attacking the unbelievers first. The only instances on record show that the Muslims still defended themselves against the attacks of the unbelievers, as for instance in the famous battle of *Ahzáb* when a ditch was dug round Medina as the only measure of safety against a mighty attack of the idolatrous tribes of Arabia. Hence this battle is known as the battle of the confederates or the battle of the ditch. It was in the fifth year of Hejira and two years after the battle of Ohud, the latest time which can be assigned to the revelation of the verse under discussion that the Holy Prophet set out for a pilgrimage to Mecca with sixteen hundred companions. It was in the sacred months during which all hostilities had been suspended in Arabia from very ancient times and this custom was respected in the whole of Arabia so that no one dared to break it. But in the persecution of the Muslims the Quresh paid no regard even to this usage, and accordingly when the Holy Prophet reached Hudaibiyya, the Quresh opposed his further progress, and would on no account allow him to visit Mecca. A truce was drawn upon this occasion by which both parties agreed to discontinue all hostilities for a period of ten years. Such a truce was in perfect agreement with the injunction contained in the above verse if we adopt the right interpretation, for the Muslims were required to fight with the unbelievers only in case that the latter fought against them and persecuted them, but as they promised to cease hostilities and persecution of the Muslims, the Muslims also promised to cease fighting with them for a like period. But if the injunction is considered to carry the significance that so long as the unbelievers were not converted to Islam they should be fought against, the truce concluded at Hudaibiyya directly contradicted this Divine injunction which required that fighting should not be stopped until Islam was the religion of the whole of Arabia. These and many other circumstances show that the injunction was never considered by the Holy Prophet to carry the significance which hostile critics force upon it, and that it only meant that the Muslims should continue to fight until they were safe from the persecution of the unbelievers.

The later wars of the Holy Prophet did not differ in character from the earlier ones, and the Holy Prophet did not undertake a single

expedition to compel any tribe or people to accept Islam. Hostile critics make a difference between the earlier and later injunctions relating to war which occur in the Holy Quran, and while admitting that the earlier injunction related only to defensive wars or wars undertaken to resist persecution, they assert that the later injunction laid down the principle of fighting with the unbelievers to compel them to accept Islam. But if there had been any such difference in the injunction occurring in the earlier and later chapters of the Holy Quran, a similar difference should have been observed in the practice of the Holy Prophet and in his earlier and later undertakings. For, it cannot be doubted that it was the first duty of the Holy Prophet to carry out all such injunctions. Nay, the Holy Quran even tells the Prophet that the obligation to fight against the unbelievers lay only on him; "Fight thou in the way of God (*i. e.*, to defend Islam); no soul shall be compelled to fight except thyself, and urge on the believers, haply God will restrain the fighting of the unbelievers." (iv: 86.) Hence the injunctions to fight were addressed in the first instance to the Holy Prophet himself, and if we are unable to point out any difference between the character of his earlier and later wars, there can be denying the conclusion that the later injunctions like the former related only to wars undertaken to defend the Muslim society and to resist their persecution by the unbelievers. To show that there was actually no such difference, I need only refer the reader to the Holy Prophet's last expedition which was undertaken in the ninth year of Hejira. This expedition is known as the campaign of Tabook, and the larger part of the ninth chapter, in fact the whole of it from the 38th verse to the end, is devoted to it. It was in this battle that those who remained behind and did not join the Prophet's standard against the enemies of Islam were termed as hypocrites against whom the Holy Prophet was commanded to "strive strenuously" as remarked previous to this. Being the last of the Holy Prophet's campaigns it may be taken as the most typical of all the Muslim holy wars. We have, therefore, to see whether this expedition was meant to compel any tribe to accept Islam or whether it was to meet an attack of the enemy. To show this, I need not weary the reader by long quotations from historical works, as the two marginal notes made by Muir, "Gathering of Roman feudatories on Syrian border," and, "Mahomet projects counter expedition. Autumn A. H. ix," are sufficient to prove that the expedition was defensive.

Thus there is nothing to show that the Holy Prophet ever undertook any war to force Islam upon a tribe. Yet words occur in chapter ix in which the Muslims are told that if their opponents "repented and became steadfast in prayers and gave alms," then they were not to be interfered with, as by doing so they became the brethren of the Muslims. It is from this verse that the conclusion

is drawn that the Muslims are commanded to kill every unbeliever who does not accept Islam. How unnatural such a conclusion is, the reader can easily see. But as these words are often misunderstood and misconstrued, I deem it necessary to explain them at some length. For this purpose, I will quote the first few verses of the ninth chapter to show that nothing in this chapter leads to the conclusion of a general warfare against all unbelievers until they became Muslims.

1. "An immunity from God and His Apostle to those with whom you were in league among the idolaters.

2. "Go ye, therefore, at large in the land four months: and know that you cannot frustrate the power of God: on the other hand God will disgrace the unbelievers.

3. "And a proclamation on the part of God and His Apostle to the people in the day of the greater pilgrimage that God is clear of the idolaters as is His Apostle. If then you repent (of your oppression), it is better for you and if you turn your backs, then know that you cannot frustrate the power of God: and to the unbelievers announce thou a grievous punishment.

4. "But this concerns not those idolaters with whom you made a league, and who have afterwards in no way failed you, and not yet aided any one against you. Fulfil for them then your covenant until the time agreed upon with them: verily God loves the righteous.

5. "And when the sacred months are passed, then kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in every place of observation; but if they repent and are steadfast in prayers, and give alms, then let them go their way, verily, God is forgiving and merciful.

6. "And if any one of the idolaters ask thee for protection, then give him protection so that he may hear the Word of God, then send him to his place of safety. This, because they are ignorant people.

7. "How can the idolaters be in league with God and His Apostle, save those with whom you made a league at the sacred mosque. So long as they are true to you, be true to them; verily God loves those who fear.

8. "How! if they prevail against you, they will not observe either ties of blood or covenants. With their mouths they content you, but their hearts are averse and most of them are transgressors.

9. "They sell the signs of God for a mean price, and turn others aside from His path: of a truth, evil is it that they do.

10. "They respect not with a believer either ties of blood or their covenants, and they are the aggressors.

11. "Yet, if they turn to God and observe prayer and give alms, then they are your brethren in religion; and we make clear the signs for men of knowledge.

12. " But if, after alliance made, they violate their covenant and revile your religion, then do battle with the ringleaders of infidelity, so that they may desist, verily their covenants are as naught.

13. " Will you not do battle with a people who have broken their covenant and aimed to expel the Apostle and attacked you first? Are you afraid of them? God is more deserving that you should fear Him."

To understand these verses, it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances under which they were revealed. It was not the Meccans only who opposed the progress of Islam and persecuted the Muslims, but all the idolatrous tribes of Arabia were guilty of the same offence.

In the beginning the Holy Prophet used to preach to the pilgrims who assembled at Mecca from every part of Arabia, and thus Islam had become known to almost every tribe. But idolatry was so deep-rooted in their hearts that they all assumed an hostile attitude to Islam. In fact, no tribe could be friendly or even neutral to Islam without incurring the enmity of the Quresh who, as the guardians of the *Ka'ba*, used to warn the assembled hosts in the pilgrimage season against the new doctrines. Hence no member of any tribe could openly profess Islam though he might be inwardly convinced of its truth, and if any one dared to do it, he was sure to be prosecuted in the same manner as his brethren in faith at Mecca. Thus all the idolatrous tribes of Arabia, which annually assembled at Mecca, had necessarily assumed a hostile attitude towards Islam. When the power of Islam began to grow and the Quresh suffered crushing defeats in battle after battle, their allies from among the idolatrous Arabs made treaties with the Muslims which were often for fixed periods. But the unbelievers generally paid no heed to such agreements and inflicted injuries on the Muslims whenever they could. Especially was this the case when the Holy Prophet went on an expedition to Tabook with all his companions. These treaties were often made and broken by the idolaters, as the Holy Quran tells us in plain words. Thus we have in the eighth chapter of the Holy Quran the following description of these idolatrous tribes: " They with whom thou hadst leagued, but whoever afterwards break their league and have not the least fear in breaking it," (viii: 58). And again, " or if thou fear treachery from any people, throw back their treaty to them: as thou fairly mayest; verily God loves not the treacherous," (viii: 60). But the Prophet is clearly enjoined to make peace with them if they are inclined to refrain from making war on the Muslims: " But if they lean to peace, lean thou also to it; and put thy trust in God: He verily is the Hearing, the Knowing. But if they seek to betray thee, then verily God will be all-sufficient for thee," (viii: 63, 64.) And to the

same purport we have in a previous verse the following warning: "If you desired a decision, now hath the decision come to you (referring to the conquest of Mecca). It will be better for you if you give over the struggle, and if you return to war, we also will return to it; and your forces, though they be many, shall by no means avail you aught because God is with the faithful," (viii : 19).

It was under the circumstances narrated in the previous paragraph that the ninth chapter was revealed. The Immunity was declared as the last remedy for a people who every now and then broke their covenants and disturbed the peace of the Muslim society. When the opening verses of the ninth chapter were proclaimed to the idolatrous tribes who had assembled at the pilgrimage, the unbelievers told the Holy Prophet's messenger to inform him that they had already thrown back their treaties which they had made with him and that there was no covenant between them, but the thrusting of lances and the striking of swords. I will now take the verses one by one to show that the Holy Quran did not preach in this chapter any principle of persecution for the sake of religion. The first verse clearly speaks of an immunity to those idolaters with whom the Muslims were in league. The injunctions that follow, therefore, relate only to such idolaters, and not to the whole world, not even to all the idolaters. In the second verse the idolaters are told that they "Cannot frustrate the power of God" showing that the object of the idolaters in fighting against the Muslims was not to resist any supposed persecution by the Muslims, but to frustrate the power of the Muslims and to bring them under subjection to them to stop the progress of Islam by force. The third verse establishes two points. It shows that the proclamation was not addressed to all non-Muslims or to all the idolaters anywhere in the world, but only to the people that assembled on the "day of the greater pilgrimage," i.e., only to hostile Arabian idolatrous tribes. Another point which the third verse establishes is that in the war which was now declared against these idolatrous tribes, the charge of aggression could not be laid against the Holy Prophet, for it declares God and His Apostle to be "clear of the idolaters." The fourth verse shows that war was declared not even against all the idolatrous Arabian tribes which after carrying on hostilities with the Muslims for some time had then made a league with them, but only against such of these tribes as had failed their covenants which they had made with the Muslims or secretly aided other tribes to attack the Muslims. The fifth verse tells us that all the aggressions and oppressions of such idolatrous tribes were to be forgiven if they accepted Islam. These tribes were guilty of grave oppressions and excessive outrages against the Muslims, but the latter were commanded to show them a clemency at last if they embraced Islam. It was not a case of persecution for the sake of religion, but a case of forgiveness for the sake of religion.

The principle of forgiving one's bitterest enemies was carried into practice by Islam and Islam only. The unity of the religion of Islam established a relation of brotherhood and hence all past wrongs were forgotten. "Verily, God is Forgiving and Merciful" says the verse, thus impressing upon the Muslims the necessity of showing forgiveness and mercy to their enemies. The sixth verse even more clearly refutes the idea that the Muslims were fighting with the idolaters to force them to accept Islam. Even if a member of any of the idolatrous tribes that were at war with the Muslims sought protection, such protection was to be granted to him. If, as its enemies assert, Islam had taught the principle of persecution for the sake of religion, the injunction on this occasion ought to have been that an idolater falling into the hands of the Muslims should be forthwith beheaded if he did not accept Islam. The principle of "Sword or Islam" has no existence anywhere except in the minds of the hostile critics of Islam. For, here in the latest revelation of the Holy Prophet he is enjoined to give protection to an idolater belonging to one of the tribes at war with the Muslims, if he sought it. The Word of God was only to be preached to him and he was then to be sent back to his place of safety, leaving it to his choice to accept or reject Islam after that. Thus do the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet show that the principle that "there is no compulsion in religion" was preached by Islam for all ages and that it was never abrogated; even the latest revelation bearing testimony to its truth and endorsing it. The seventh verse states that the idolaters could not be in league with the Muslims, and the reason of this is explained in the eighth verse in which the question asked in the previous verse is repeated. The idolaters could not be in league with the Muslims, not for any fault of the latter, but because they would not, if they prevailed against the Muslims, "observe either ties of blood or covenants" and because their hearts were averse to any alliance with the Muslims and they desired to content them only with their words. Hence they broke their covenants again and again. When the Muslims wanted to avenge the wrongs done by them they made a treaty, and when they saw their attention turned in some other direction, they again oppressed the believers without regard either to the ties of blood or to the covenants which they had made. The ninth verse shows that the idolaters were not content with practising their own religion freely, but they compelled others to forsake Islam. They were fighting not because the Muslims compelled them to accept Islam, but because they desired to compel the Muslims to forsake Islam; not because they were prevented from practising idolatry, but because they did not like others to forsake idolatry. Their object, was, as the verse says plainly, to "turn others aside from the path of God," i.e., to prevent them from accepting Islam. The tenth verse repeats that when a Muslim falls into the hands of the idolaters,

they maltreat him and have no regard for ties of blood or their covenants. The eleventh verse again enjoins the Muslims to cease fighting with people who become their brethren in faith and forgive them all past wrongs. The twelfth verse says that if after making an alliance any tribe violates its covenant, its ringleaders must be fought against. And the thirteenth verse enumerates the three principal offences of the people against whom the Muslims were commanded to fight. These offences were their persecuting and expelling the Holy Prophet and his followers, their attacking the Muslims first and at last their breaking the covenants which they had made and thus again reverting to the persecution of the Muslims.

It will be seen from the above that the Holy Quran never enjoined or permitted the persecution of the non-Muslims on the score of their religion. The idolatrous Arabs had taken up the sword to destroy the Muslims and they were punished with the sword. And as there is no injunction in the Holy Quran to compel the unbelievers to accept Islam or to propagate it by the sword, so there is not a single circumstance in the Holy Prophet's life which should lend any support to such an assertion. It cannot be pointed out that any expedition was undertaken by him to force Islam upon any tribe. We even find him writing letters to the different potentates in the sixth year of Hejra, but in none of these letters did he threaten any monarch with making war upon him if he did not accept Islam. One of these letters has been discovered, and it proves conclusively that it was not "Islam or Sword" that the Holy Prophet offered but Islam only. The following is the translation of this letter which has been declared to be genuine: "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. From Mohammad, the servant of God and His Apostle, to Maquadis, the Chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance. After this, I invite thee to accept Islam: become a Muslim and thou shalt be saved; God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of the Copts." It appears from the most trustworthy traditions that similarly worded letters were written to many other monarchs. And the strongest of all facts is that no expedition was undertaken by the Holy Prophet after the revelation of the opening verses of the ninth chapter which is alleged by Missionary critics to proclaim the principle of persecution for the sake of religion for all ages. Had the Holy Prophet understood any verse of the ninth chapter to mean fighting with the unbelievers to convert them forcibly, he would have sent his armies in all directions. But notwithstanding that he lived for more than a year after the revelation of the ninth chapter and its announcement at the time of the pilgrimage, not a single battle was fought him. Does it not show what meaning the Holy Prophet himself attached to the injunctions of the ninth chapter.

As regards the wars of the earlier caliphs, none of these can be shown to have been undertaken to compel any people to accept Islam, nor can it be proved that any people were actually compelled to change their religion. These wars were necessitated by the aggressions of the Persian and the Roman empires. The Arabian tribes near the borders of these empires had accepted Islam, and it was the aggression of these empires on the frontier that led to wars between them and the Muslims. Had the Muslims undertaken the conquest of these empires with the object of forcing their religion upon them, there is no reason why they should have allowed perfect religious freedom to the non-Muslims in these countries after conquering them. It is a fact that in all the countries which the Muslims conquered, they allowed full religious liberty, and Islam was in fact the pioneer of the valuable religious freedom with which the world is now blessed. The spirit in which the Muslims conquered these empires is well illustrated in the following remarks made by a Freethinker in connection with the conquest of Jerusalem by Omar in 637 C. E. : " The great caliph entered without bloodshed, and conversed amicably as he rode along with the patriarch of the city on its antiquities. He granted the Christians the use of their churches and the free practice of their religion. His laconic decree is worth preserving : ' In the name of the most merciful God. From Omar Ebn Al Khattab, to the inhabitants of Aelia. They shall be protected and secured both in their lives and fortunes, and their churches shall neither be pulled down, nor made use of by any but themselves.' " The impartial writer adds : " The dignity and humanity of Omar, and the graceful chivalry of Saladin, who captured Jerusalem from the Christians in a later age, form a vivid contrast to the rudeness and ferocity of the soldiers of Christ " (Crimes of Christianity).

Even the later Muslims were never guilty of the heinous deeds of bloodshed which are recorded in the history of Christianity. Muslim monarchs may have invaded and conquered countries sometimes from a desire to extend their empires, but when they once conquered a country, the inhabitants of which settled peacefully under them, they never persecuted them for the sake of religion. They never demolished their temples or interfered with any of their religious ceremonies. There was no country in which they did not govern people professing other religions, but far from oppressing or persecuting these people, they granted them full liberty in the performance of their religious ceremonies. If we desire to institute a comparison between the spirit of Islam and the spirit of Christianity on the basis of the conduct of the followers of these two religions in wars, the crusades afford us best material for doing so, and the following quotations from European authors may be safely considered as conclusive against Christianity on this point.

The crusades were Christian holy wars in the sense of being the outcome of religious fanaticism, but the world has never seen unholier wars than these. Gibbon tells us of the crusaders that "in the dire necessity of famine, they sometimes roasted and devoured the flesh of their infant or adult captives." Cannibalism had no horror for these meek soldiers of Christ. Nor did the holy wars help to keep them chaste. One passage from Michaud is sufficient to show the extent to which licensé and corruption were spread among them : " If contemporary accounts are to be credited," says the Christian historian, " all the vices of the infamous Babylon prevailed among the liberators of Sion. Strange and unheard of spectacle ! Beneath the tents of the crusaders famine and voluptuousness formed a hideous union ; impure love, an unbounded passion for play, with all the excesses of debauch, were mingled with the images of death."

The scenes of bloodshed were horrible. At the falling of Antioch, a general slaughter of the Muslim inhabitants were made, " The dignity of age, the helplessness of youth, and the beauty of the weaker sex, were disregarded by the Litan savages. Houses were no sanctuaries ; and the sight of a mosque added new virulence to cruelty," (Mills). At Marra, to the barbarity of a similar general slaughter was added the horror of cannibalism. And when at last Jerusalem was taken and the goal reached, blood and carnage also reached a climax. Gibbon thus describes the scene :—

" A bloody sacrifice was offered by his mistake votaries to the God of the Christians ; resistance might provoke, but neither age nor sex could mollify, their implacable rage ; they indulged themselves three days in a promiscuous massacre ; and the infection of the dead bodies produced an epidemical disease. After seventy thousands Muslims had been put to the sword, and the harmless Jews had been burnt in their synagogue, they could still reserve a multitude of captives, whom interest or lassitude persuaded them to spare," (Vol. vi, p. 459).

Michaud thus describes the scene after the conquest when the excitement of war was over :—

" All the captives whom humanity or the lassitude of carnage had at first spared, all those who had been saved in the hope of a rich ransom, were slaughtered. The Saracens were forced to throw themselves from tops of towers and houses ; they were burnt alive ; they were dragged from their subterranean retreats ; they were haled to the public places and immolated on piles of the dead. Neither the tears of women, nor the cries of little children, nor the sight of the place where Jesus Christ forgave his executioners, could mollify the victor's passion."

Mills thus gives an account of the butchery :—

" The subjugated people were therefore dragged into the public places, and slain as victims. Women with children at the breast,

girls and boys, all were slaughtered. The squares, the streets, and even the uninhabited places of Jerusalem, again were strewn with the dead bodies of men and women, and the mangled limbs of children. No heart melted into compassion or expanded into benevolence."

The earlier scene, immediately following the capture of Jerusalem, is thus described by the same historian :—

"Such was the carnage in the mosque of Omar, that the mutilated carcasses were hurried by the torrents of blood into the court; dissevered arms and hands floated into the current that carried them into contact with bodies to which they had not belonged. Ten thousand people were murdered in this sanctuary. It was not only the lacerated and headless trunks which shocked the sight, but the figures of the victors themselves reeking with the blood of their slaughtered enemies. No place of refuge remained to the vanquished, so indiscriminately did the insatiable fanaticism of the conquerors disregard alike supplication and resistance. Some were slain, others were thrown from the tops of the churches and of the citadel."

After some time Jerusalem was taken back by the Muslims under Saladin, and the humanity of the Muslims presents a vivid contrast to the brutality of the Christian crusaders. The following remarks from the pen of a Freethinker are sufficient to convince any unprejudiced reader that in practice Islam was far more mild than Christianity. The author of the Crimes of Christianity says :—

"Saladin defeated the Christians at Tiberias in July, A. D. 1187 and advanced to Jerusalem. Unwilling to stain the venerated city with blood, he offered the people money and settlements in Syria if they would capitulate. They refused, but prayer was a poor defence, and after several days' fighting they threw themselves on his mercy." The following passage from Gibbon is then quoted :—

"He consented to accept the city and to spare the inhabitants. The Greek and Oriental Christians were permitted to live under his dominion; but it was stipulated that in forty days all the Franks and Latins should evacuate Jerusalem and be safely conducted to the seaports of Syria and Egypt: that ten pieces of gold should be paid for each man, five for each woman, and one for every child; and that those who were unable to purchase their freedom, should be detained in perpetual slavery."

The author then goes on to say :—

"Saladin paid the ransom of thousands of the poorest himself. Malik Adel followed his example, redeeming two thousand. Eventually only about an eighth of the inhabitants were unredeemed, and many of these embraced Mohammadanism. Unlike the brutal crusaders, who massacred without distinction of age or sex, Saladin melted with compassion at the tears of women, and when they

begged of him their fathers, husbands, and brothers, he granted their request and loaded them with presents. Michand pays a warm tribute to this noble infidel.

“He rendered to the mothers their children, and to the wives their husbands, among the captives. Several Christians had abandoned their furniture and most precious effects, and carried on their shoulders their old and enfeebled parents or their sick and infirm friends. Saladin was touched (*attendri*) by this spectacle, and recompensed with his charities the virtue and the piety of his enemies. Taking pity on all unfortunates, he allowed the Knights of the Hospital to remain in the city to tend the pilgrims, and those who were prevented by grave maladies from leaving Jerusalem.”

“Gibbon justly says that ‘in these acts of mercy the virtue of Saladin deserves our admiration and love.’ Saladin’s humanity was in striking contrast with the villainy of the nearest Christian prince. ‘Many Christians who left Jerusalem,’ says Mills, went to Antioch: but Bohemond not only denied them hospitality but even stripped them. They marched into the Saraconian country and were well received.’”

I need not cite any more authorities. The comparison between the Muslim and the Christian religious wars not only shows the baselessness of the charges against Islam and the Muslim monarchs, but it also proves that the charges of cruel persecution for the sake of religion and of shedding human blood quite unjustifiably lie against Christianity. No Christian was ever put to death by a Muslim ruler on the score of his religion, but thousands of innocent Muslims were butchered by the Christians in Spain and elsewhere simply because they refused to accept Christianity. And while hundreds of mosques were turned by the Christians into churches, only rare instances can be pointed out in which the Muslims converted Christian churches into mosques. In fact, a single instance is sufficient to show the difference between the spirit of Islam and that of Christianity. When Omar conquered Jerusalem, he not only did not convert the church into a mosque, but even when requested by the patriarch to perform his devotions there, refused, and afterwards gave his reason for it, saying: “Had I yielded to your request, the Muslims of a future age would have infringed the treaty under the color of imitating my example.” But when the same city fell into the hands of the Christians for a short time, they converted the mosque into a church, and the place was afterwards consecrated by Saladin when Jerusalem was again conquered by the Muslims. And in conclusion I may again quote the same impartial writer, I mean the author of the Crimes of Christianity:—

“Nor did Mohammad himself ever oppress the Christians who would live at peace with him, As Gibbon observes, he ‘readily

granted the security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods, and the toleration of their worship.' Christian churches were allowed in Mohammadan States, though it is safe to affirm that no Christian State would have tolerated a Mohammadan mosque. Even in India the Mohammadan conquerors 'spared the pagodas of that devout and populous country.' The Arabian caliphs gave freedom to all the oriental sects. The patriarchs, bishops, and clergy, were protected in their domestic jurisdictions by the civil magistrate. Learned Christians were employed as secretaries and physicians; they were made collectors of the revenue and sometimes raised to the command of cities and provinces. When Saladin recaptured Jerusalem from the crusaders, he made a distinction between the Latin and the Greek and Oriental Christians. The former were treated as captives of war, but the latter were permitted to remain as his subjects, and to worship their gods in their own fashion. Nor has this tolerant tradition been since violated, for to this day the Jews and Christians of the Turkish Empire enjoy the liberty of conscience which was granted by the caliphs, and many a fugitive from Christian bigotry has found shelter with the 'persecuting Mohammedans.'

The result of the Christian crusades is thus summed up by the same author:—

"Fighting the infidel abroad heightened the spirit of bigotry and sharpened the sword against the heretic at home. Jortin remarks that the thirteenth century saw 'hanging and burning for God's sake become the universal practice.' Milman also observes that the Holy War strengthened the doctrine that 'The unbeliever was the natural enemy of Christ and of his church; if not to be converted, to be punished for the crime of unbelief, to be massacred, exterminated by the righteous sword.' Besides the incalculable evils they directly caused, the crusades led to the slaughter of the Northern pagans, the massacre of the Albigenses, and the other wholesale cruelties with which the Papacy afterwards desolated Europe."

I have stated only the facts and I leave it for the reader to draw his conclusion and see for himself whether it was Islam that acted upon the principle of persecution for the sake of religion and converted people by force or Christianity, and which of the two shed human blood mercilessly and unjustifiably. Christianity has learned the lesson of toleration from Islam, though it ungratefully blames its benefactor for crimes of which it was itself guilty.
