

THE VITAL FORCES OF CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.—VII

IT is not now necessary to demonstrate that there are vital forces in Islam. The preceding papers in this series, all by men who are no mere theorists or book students but of long and intimate contact with the facts of Mohammedan life, have made that plain beyond all cavil. And it will even be seen, I think, that the closer in these writers has been their contact and the deeper has been their understanding, the fuller has been their appreciation of the spiritual realities lying behind their subject. It is easy to see the superficialities of a religion—its hypocrisies, formalities, inadequacies—but it takes patience and sympathy to pierce underneath it to the leading of the One Spirit and to find in its votaries, as we so often may, the *anima naturaliter christiana*.

I have no such claim to be heard as these writers can show. My personal contact with the East is measured by months and not by years. The sources on which, for my impressions, I must now draw are, on one side, the writings of Mohammedan theologians—mystics, dogmaticians, philosophers—and, on another side, that *mare magnum* of popular literature mirroring in the ideas and events of the lives of the masses the final results, working down into the common soul of Islam, of all those aspirations, constructions and dialectic searchings. Such books must always, for the home-staying student, take the place of contact with the Moslem world itself, and the best known of them all is, of course, the *Arabian Nights*. They do not mislead nor misinform, as does that contact so often until it is controlled, and as still oftener do books of travel,

and I would bear my testimony now that when I did meet the Moslem world face to face, the picture of its workings and ideas and usages which I had gained from these romances, poems and religious tales needed modification in no essential point—almost, even, in no detail. I need hardly add that to attain this result complete texts must be read. Islam must be taken as it is; otherwise it is not Islam.

But how, to such an onlooker, does the situation present itself? Broadly, I am in agreement with all that has preceded in these papers on the religious life in Islam. It is needless here to rehearse the details. On two elements only in that life, and these paradoxically confronting one another, I would feel like laying more stress. First, the prayer-meetings of the dervishes, the so-called *dhikrs* or *zikrs*, and all the emotional religious life of which these are the public and concerted expression. Only those, on the one hand, who minimize the part which religion plays in life can disregard these its normal vehicles. And only those, on the other, who have actually, and with open mind and heart, witnessed these acts of worship and, still more, have talked—soul to soul—with men who have felt these influences personally and could describe them—only these can really weigh how enormous a part they hold in stimulating, deepening and purifying the religious consciousness. Undoubtedly there lie in them also great dangers. All manifestations of religious emotion are surrounded with possibilities of hypocrisy, self-delusion and abandonment of self-control. But those who know the theological literature of Islam will remember how elaborately its clearest and most spiritual minds have dealt with these dangers, and those who have witnessed a *dhikr* with any understanding must have seen how completely the presiding sheikh was controlling all the manifestations and steadying the thoughts of the worshippers who were taking part. Of course this takes no account of the public and spectacular *dhikrs* either got up for tourists or connected, like those at the

display of the *kiswa* embroideries in Cairo, with the great formal ceremonies of the faith. These can be utterly empty of religious content and mislead as to the real nature of what they travesty, which is a coming together of earnest minds to worship Allah in spirit and in truth. Of such I do not speak here.

Nor can it be said that, in spite of all the care, theoretical and practical, of theologians and leaders, *dhikrs* never have evil consequences. They most unfortunately have. No one can play with his emotional life without risk of acquiring the knack of auto-hypnosis; and, if of a weaker nature, practising it as a spiritual dram-drinking. The risks are there and are real, and the consequences sometimes follow. But, however that may be, the importance of the *dhikr* as a vehicle of the religious life cannot be exaggerated, and it might be well for missionaries to consider to what extent and in what forms it could be taken over into Christian worship for the use of their converts or as a means of evangelizing. That converts from Islam miss its stimulus and suggestion is certain, and the singing of hymns—especially to western tunes and in western metres—cannot take its place. This leads naturally into a large subject, a discussion of which cannot be attempted here. Briefly it is that the Christian Church will need to face the problem of the full orientalizing and arabizing of its language and forms of expression. Far too often these are stamped by Moslems as un-Arabic, and of necessity they cause an initial repulsion which has to be overcome. Even the native Christian Arabic of Syria repels a Moslem, though he might often find it hard to say against exactly what turn of phrase his objection lies. But the naturalizing of the *dhikr* for Christian purposes is a much wider matter than any mere use of words, and involves deeper difficulties. I would only now most earnestly commend the consideration of it to all in any way concerned.

With the *dhikr* connects immediately another Moslem usage. It is the reciting of the Most Beautiful Names of

Allah. This, also, has its two sides, a formally empty and a personally devout, and at the first of these, unfortunately, most observers of Islam stop. But the nourishing of the religious life on the contemplation of God is an essential part of all religions, and that contemplation has, from the very beginnings of Islam, moved round the names and epithets applied and applicable to Allah. From the Sunday School books and Bible helps of our youth—before it was thought that religion consisted in the higher criticism—we used to learn lists of names, offices and epithets of Christ, as these could be extracted from the Bible. A similar method has held in Islam from Mohammed himself down, and is indeed rooted in the very genius of the Arabic language. So, in the Koran, as in the old poetry of the desert, the rolling rhythms are rounded with sonorous epithets, and the midnight devotions of Mohammed consisted in describing Allah as this and that.¹ The after generations have followed in his path, and from the fixed, stately ceremonial of the *Ṣalāt*, through the freer and more spontaneous, yet also governed and restrained, ejaculations of the *dhikr* to the daily and hourly meditations of the pious, all the forms of expression are cast in this mould. Thus an immense number of names have been brought together, either found in the Koran or developed from Koranic ideas, and out of these a canonical ninety-nine have been selected which are called the Most Beautiful Names of Allah. These the pious recite in a fixed order as they slip the ninety-nine beads of the Moslem rosary through their fingers, though the wayfaring man may content himself with simply murmuring, ‘Allah, Allah, Allah!’

There lies here, I am certain, a wide field which the judicious missionary will know how to occupy. When some sheikh, after discussion, says to him, ‘Nay, brother,

¹ It may be pointed out that the only basis on which to work out a doctrine of the nature of Allah, as developed in the Koran, is to be found in these names. See the article ‘Allah’ in the Leyden *Encyclopædia of Mohammedanism*.

tell me some of your Most Beautiful Names and I will tell you some of mine,' he will put into such name-form some of the spiritual depths of the Bible, and thus, without controversy or even any sense of strangeness, lead his friend into the range of Christian ideas. 'We say of God,' he may reply, or 'In our Book stands written that He is this or that.' To have a store of such names in his memory, cast in impeccable Arabic, of a rather 'high' type and impeccable not only in form but in that indefinable thing called linguistic atmosphere, should be the ambition of every missionary. It is true that some doctrines, by no amount of outward form or atmosphere can be rendered anything but strange and repellent to the Moslem; but it is equally certain that there are many sides of the religious life where the wealth of religious experience in the Bible may vindicate itself over the poverty and onesidedness of the Koran and yet excite no surprise and raise no controversy.

This distinction is illustrated in the other element in the religious life of Islam to which I wish to draw attention. By no form nor atmosphere, save, as we shall see, that created by the Divine Figure itself and for itself, can the conception of fatherhood and sonship between God and man be rendered anything but repellent, even blasphemous to a Moslem. This applies not only to the doctrine of the divine sonship, but also to every relationship between God and man not specifically of Creator and created. With Moslems there is no such point of contact as St. Paul found in the verse of the Greek poet, 'For we are also his children.' Apparently, Mohammed wished to deal with the question of sonship root and branch. Allah in the Koran is never a father and men are never His sons. And the same holds of the traditions from Mohammed and of all the after religious development. The Church of Allah never consists of His children and no saint in his ecstasy ever heard himself addressed as 'My son.' Men are the slaves of Allah, His absolute property

to do with as He wills. For while the human owner of a slave is under certain legal restraints and has certain legal duties towards him, such can never hold of Allah. The Pauline example of the potter and the vessels is applied even in the devotional life of Islam with the most unflinching logic. It is unfortunate that our translations too often weaken this by rendering '*abd*' not as 'slave' but 'servant.' In this they follow a similar mistranslation of '*ebhedh*' in the Old Testament and are influenced by a feeling of recoil from all its implications. But the theology of Islam does not so recoil and no implications turn its serene inhumanity. The absoluteness of Allah over everything is preserved and that absoluteness, be it noticed, is no creation of the later dogmaticians, but was fully developed in at least one side of Mohammed's brain.

For precisely here lies the eternal paradox of Islam, a paradox which has led to endless controversy in Islam within and among those studying it from without ; but both sides of which are absolutely true. Islam is a spiritual religion and knows the relation in the spirit between God and man. Thus devotion is possible for it, and the *dhikr* and all the experiences of the saint whose life is hidden in God. But Islam is also Calvinism run wild, outdoing all the vagaries of the most *outré* Dutch Confessions. And this paradox goes back to Mohammed himself. On one side he was a genuine saint with genuine religious experiences ; but on another his theology, whence derived is still one of our puzzles, was uncompromising as to the absoluteness of Allah, both of His will and power and of His difference from all other beings. So all the way down through the history of the Moslem Church and in the lives of individual Moslems, we find this ever-renewed opposition between the experience of the religious life and the systems derived from dogmas. The orthodox Moslem had to square them in one way or another and commonly did so by keeping them apart and by urging and developing now one and now the other. By his own experience and the

record of that of others, including Mohammed himself, he had his real religion, and so long as that remained unsystematized and in the realm of feeling, the fundamental dogmas of his faith did not trouble him. But if—either to defend that faith against unbelievers without or critics within, or simply to state it in definite form—he had to bring the two into contact, then the unyielding theological system normally asserted itself, and his religion became a theology of the most closely argued, invulnerable, but also impossible type. To bring the two into a real agreement meant heresy sooner or later. Some attempted it by dint of metaphysical speculation and, removed in these clouds from common sight, span ontological and cosmological hypotheses of more or less explicit and conscious pantheism. Echoes, too, from these systems tended to filter through even to the multitude. In the dervish fraternities were and are men at all stages of theological and philosophical growth, and so for the unlearned and the half-learned the too glaring contrast might be helped by some phrase or some fragment of an idea. And always there was the refuge of turning and flinging themselves in adoration before the mystery. So the life of Islam continued and continues to be possible, and at one time the missionary will be faced by depths of devout quietism and at another by a fully armed monster of logic in which he will find it hard to recognize any religion at all.

But, whatever be the form before him, he will discover one kind of phrase that he can never use unless he would be met by more or less gentle negation. 'Our Father which art in heaven' and 'Like as a father pitieth his children'—these words suggest to us the most irreducible minimum of a religious attitude. Men of all faiths, we imagine, might join in using them. But the denial of them has passed into Moslem blood and bone, and the Mohammedan sees in them indefinite vistas of controversy. However close he may feel to Allah he stands always in His presence as an *'abd*. Yet it should never be forgotten

that, for an oriental, behind the word '*abd*, 'slave,' some approximation to the idea of child may lie. All depends upon how it is used. The Moslem 'slave' like the 'slave' of the Old Testament is the property of his master; but he is also one of his master's household, under his master's care and may even be the heir of all that his master has. Thus, in the devotional literature of Islam, the word is often used where we find it hard or impossible to translate it as 'slave,' so different are, to us, the ideas and images which the words raise. Very frequently 'creature' comes much closer to the burden of the context, and though theology may emphasize the absoluteness of the divine control, religion always pleads the closeness of the human relation.

It will thus be seen that the idea before which the Moslem, even in his religious aspirations, recoils is that of generation. The article in the creed, 'Begotten not made,' however rendered in Arabic—and the current rendering is one of crude directness—must always be the essential stumbling-block. Whether it would have been possible to maintain the Christian verity while expressing the relation of the Son to the Father as a Procession, is probably now a useless speculation; it would certainly have made the Christian position much easier for the Moslem. To the conception of an inner multiplicity in the nature of God Islam has, though always finally rejecting it, from time to time approximated. But while the representation of the coming into being of such a multiplicity by an eternal 'procession' (*şudûr*) has been rejected by Islam as only heretical, any connexion of such a multiplicity with fatherhood has never been conceived of in any but the simplest physical fashion and has, consequently, been viewed with horror. To some aspects of this I will return.

What has now been said brings us, then, back to the question which must ever be primary, How can Christ be best preached to Moslems? We have to take them as we

find them—even as Paul took the Athenians—and present the body of Christian truth so as to meet and complete their strivings. There are certain vital forces working in Islam ; there is a great vital force working in Christendom. How can we bring that force—which is Christ—to bear on those forces which are the workings and yearnings of the human spirit fostered and guided, as we must believe, by that Divine Spirit which has never left itself without a witness within us ? These strivings within Islam have been variously coloured, biassed and stunted by Islam itself with its strange inheritance from we know not what Christian heresy. And it is there, in these imposed modifications, that the taking of Moslems as we find them enters. What do they, as Moslems, think of Christ ? How far are they on the road towards Him ? How does the thought of Him, if at all, already affect them ? To that I wish now to turn.

So far as these questions are theological, the answer to them is easy ; so far as they are religious, it is very difficult. The Moslem doctrine of the nature of Christ can be put in half a dozen sentences. He is a semi-angelic semi-human being, but of sinless flesh and nature ; a new creation by Allah springing from Allah's direct creative word as did Adam and hence called a Word from Allah, and even the Word of Allah. But He is also specifically called an '*abd*', a creature. His mother was also conceived without sin in order that even on the human side He might have no taint of inheritance. He is called a Spirit from Allah and even the Spirit of Allah, just as are the angels. His life on earth was surrounded with miracle and in His birth-body Allah took Him to one of the heavens where He now is and whence He shall come to rule the world in the last days. But the eternal sonship is rejected with the death on the cross, the resurrection and rule at God's right hand. Nor does He return to judge the quick and the dead. In fact, the Islamic doctrine leaves us questioning why this semi-angelic being came to earth at

all. Some positive element must have been dropped by Mohammed from the system which was taught to him. Jesus in it was evidently a second Adam, but His theological relationship to the first has vanished. He must have been sent for a purpose; that, too, has vanished. The missionary might ask some arousing questions on these points. He might ask, too, what was involved in His being a special manifestation in time of the eternal Word of Allah. It may be answered that all things are products of Allah's creative Word. But in the case of Jesus stress is laid upon a certain uniqueness—what was it? *Up to a certain point Islamic doctrine leads straight to a Logos conception of the nature of Christ; but at that point it stops sharply.*

Yet the Logos idea has found an entrance into Islamic theology, and that in two forms. The doctrine concerning the Koran is that it represents upon earth the Word or Speech (*kalām*) which has been with Allah from all eternity, by which He made the worlds. This, it may be said roughly, is our Nicene form of the Logos doctrine. On the other hand, the Arian form appears in the doctrine of the person of Mohammed. He is the first of all created beings, and for his sake the worlds were created. Both of these ideas are exceedingly vital forces in Islam to-day and show the craving of the human mind for some such mediating conception—some link between God and man. Thus, reformers in Islam now tend to rally to one or other of two cries: either, 'Back to the Koran!' or 'Back to Mohammed!'

Urging to the first cry are many forces. For all Arabic speakers, the Koran is peculiarly their book. It is the supreme flowering of the genius of the language. No criticism of it by an outsider is ever heard with patience. And, in truth, there are in it, here and there, passages of haunting music. Mohammed, it should never be forgotten, was a poet of the primitive, incoherent, ecstatic type before he was a prophet. So its cadences still in-

toxicate and endless repetitions have not staled its melodies. In the ears of the Moslem, schooled in them from infancy, they constantly ring, and the Book witnesses to itself of its uniqueness. And when to this is added that it is a divine Book; that in it Allah speaks to man as with His own speech, a Quality of His from all eternity—the theological statements of this vary but such is their substance—then that the Koran should be a rallying point for all Moslems is easily intelligible. The life of Mohammed, the bearer, may be smirched; but the divine Word abides untouchable. Patriotism, beauty, habit, faith, all unite to protect it. In face of this—a most vital fact with all, especially with educated Moslems—I can only repeat what I have said above, that a heavy burden of duty lies on all concerned to see that the Christian message is clad in a garb that will do it no discredit; that the supreme magic for the Arabic-speaking peoples—and by their proverb a lawful magic—the magic of language, is not disregarded.

But to the more emotional and less educated Moslems, especially to those who, born in non-Arabic lands, cannot so intoxicate themselves on the rhythms of the Book of the Arabs, the more human interest of the figure of Mohammed himself appeals. And so it has come about that he is often practically deified, however contrary to exact Islam and to the Prophet's own declarations such an apotheosis may be. It is a question of temperament and environment, and the missionary need not be surprised at any form he may meet and must not think that the doctrine of his district is universal Islam. We have had our time of Bibliolatry, and we have now, apparently, a time of speaking of Jesus and addressing Him in prayer as though He were the only person in the Godhead. These Moslem vagaries should lead us to be only the more careful as to the forms of our theological statements. We sometimes think we can get along without a theology and upon religious experience alone. Theology thus cast out avenges itself by coming back in perverted forms.

But I return to the second and more difficult side of my question on the Moslem attitude towards Christ. What place does He hold religiously among them? What part does He play in their lives? Is He in any respect a vital force there? I fear the answer must be that, for the great mass of Moslems, He is not. On that side there is little or nothing from which to begin. He does not even seem to have struck the popular imagination as has the mysterious al-Khaḍir. He is theologically a similarly mysterious figure among the prophets, and if actual physical meetings with Him in this middle earth cannot be looked for by Moslems, as they look to meet al-Khaḍir, visions of Him in dream might be expected. Yet the evidence is that these occur very rarely and almost only among dervishes and under peculiar and predisposing circumstances. It is true that there are certain stock anecdotes about Him current in theological books of edification. In these His unearthly, angelic nature appears. He possesses peculiarly the power of raising the dead. His words are of strange wisdom and His conduct is sinless, or rather, His life moves in a sphere in its nature apart from that of men. Generally, it may be said that Islam, while acknowledging theologically His rank and treating Him at all times with great respect, does not seem in its religious or worldly need to turn towards Him. Under such stress it seeks its local saints or al-Khaḍir or Mohamammed himself, while Shi'ites, of course, turn to the Imams. In the Last Days he will play a large but undefined part with which the religious Moslem does not greatly trouble himself unless he aspires to be the Mahdi. Then he must determine what *rôle* falls to him and what to 'Isà.

Yet in this, as in all phases of religion as opposed to theology, and especially in the religion of the masses, it is necessary to speak with caution. In Lady Burton's time at Damascus there arose among the Shādhilite dervishes a strange movement produced by visions of Jesus. Further, the broader minded generally have shown a tendency to

play Him off against Mohammed, by way of vindicating the universality of religion and the common value of all religions. This has occurred more among Turks and Persians and everywhere only among advanced mystics. It is possible also that in certain localities more closely connected with His earthly life such religious influence may be found. But I know of no evidence to that purport. Tales are, of course, told to tourists, notably that He and Mohammed will judge together at the Last Day, one on the one side and the other on the other of the valley of Kidron ; but these seem to be fictions of dragomans, and are at best too completely in the teeth of all sound doctrine to be at all widely current among Moslems. That, on that day, none shall judge save Allah Himself is a fundamental article of the faith.

On another conception, to which attention has already been drawn in more than one of the preceding papers, I would wish to lay emphasis. There can be no question that there has existed and still exists, widespread among Moslems, a strong feeling of the need of a mediator, an intercessor between men and God. This has shown itself in the doctrine which has gradually grown up, apparently of necessity, and which is in the teeth of statements of Mohammed himself, that Mohammed will intercede for his people at the Last Day and secure their entrance as a whole into paradise. Only a single wretched man will be left outside to satisfy God's justice and keep the letter of His threats. He is, as it were, a scapegoat, and his fate is a ghastly parody on some forms of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. This is intercession on behalf of the people in general and, as such, belongs to Mohammed alone. No other prophet, even, has a right to it, and he only by the grace of Allah.¹ But all through the religious life of Islam runs the idea of intercession on behalf of indi-

¹ I pass over the interesting word *wajih*, applied once to Jesus in the Koran and explained by some commentators as meaning 'intercessor in the world to come.' It is of more importance for Mohammed's idea of Jesus than for the position of Jesus in Islam.

viduals by individuals who have acquired merit in the eyes of Allah. This is what lies behind and conditions the so-called 'worship' of saints, which is at bottom prayer to them for the exertion of their personal influence with Allah. Among Shi'ites, as has been pointed out by one writer above, this has developed into a doctrine of a virtue lying in the shed blood of the slain Husain and his family. There is in it a specific claim upon Allah. But this is only a special case, sharpened by Shi'ite emotion, of a general Moslem attitude towards the sufferings of the saints. Theologically, Islam would never admit the doctrine of a treasury of merit; for in it, no more than in Calvinism, can the human race by any possibility acquire or hold merit in the eyes of God. But religiously the idea certainly appears, and in the lives of the saints we find them again and again exercising flat pressure upon Allah. Of course there might be here some fine distinguishing between the ideas of influence with Allah—as being the Friends of Allah (*awliyā*)—and rights over Allah, and theologians would undoubtedly draw such a distinction. But in the attitudes and ideas of the religious life it vanishes.

To that strange book, *al-Insān al-kāmil*, with its approximations to Christian positions, allusion has also been made in a preceding paper, and it would be well if the book could have a more careful study than has yet fallen to it. But such phenomena keep appearing and disappearing in the multiform and almost inchoate mass of Sufi ideas. The human soul, when unbiassed by systems and prejudices, is naturally Christian, and such freedom has been the mark of Sufism at all times. An outstanding example which all missionaries should study most carefully is given by the case of al-Hallaj. The book upon him by M. Louis Massignon marks an epoch in our understanding of earlier Moslem mysticism.

We come back, then, again to our question. All things being so, how can Christ be best preached to Moslems?

Almost one is impelled to answer, Do not preach Him; let Him Himself do His own work. If ever, it is face to face with Islam that the preaching of man is foolishness. The path to any formal presentation of Christian doctrine is sown with misunderstanding and prejudice. Yet the figure of Christ, simply presented as He lived and spoke, seems to overcome these. An experience which all, probably, who have worked among Moslems have had, abundantly proves this. I have spoken above of the Moslem horror before the idea of the divine paternity. But it is peculiarly in the Johannine writings that this 'begotten' aspect of the Son is emphasized. Without these that word and its circle of ideas would probably have played a much smaller part in the development of Christian doctrine. And yet—and to this I think all missionaries will bear witness—it is precisely the Gospel according to John which attracts and holds the Moslem who has become a seeker for something which his own religion cannot give him. It is true that such men are all mystics and that the mysticism of the book appeals to them. But it is the mystical atmosphere of the great Figure itself which overcomes and makes possible the words that are used.

And even this very difficulty may be turned to account. In Philippians ii. 7, we read that He took the form of a slave, *δοῦλος*—an '*abd*', a 'creature'; it is exactly the Koranic word for Jesus. Can we, then, with Moslems begin at that point? Can we develop all that lies in that word *δοῦλος* and recognize all that a Moslem thinks when he uses the word '*abd*'? A multitude of the most essential and germinative conceptions of Christianity connect with that aspect of Jesus, and they are those which Islam peculiarly needs. I do not develop them here. That has been done already in more than one of the preceding papers. Then, when that Figure in its human life of service and submission has once been brought clearly into view and stands up concrete and real with its testimony, its individual summons and its promise, its mysterious

background of relationship to the Divine in time and in eternity will far more easily follow. All the Logos ideas of Islam can be related to it and thereby carried to their true measure and end. The Moslem will pass beyond that strange check which the Koran imposes, and will be able to connect with Christ those other stunted growths from the same stock which Islam has related to the Koran and to Mohammed. One forward step, especially, must be made. In dealing with the Speech or Word (*Kalām*) of Allah Islam has limited itself very carefully to one side only of the Logos conception. Its divine Logos is always *oratio* and no conception of *ratio* is allowed to enter. This is very marked and appears to spring from another conception fundamental to Islam, that Allah must be left a pure, unlimited Will—unlimited even by any process of reason in Himself. That would subordinate Allah to something else and make His attitudes and acts less immediate and uncaused. Just as right and wrong depend upon His will, so He must be free also from the laws of thought. I do not remember ever having met with a precise statement of this; but it is involved in the care with which reason (*‘aql*) is kept out of all definitions and descriptions of Allah. But this, be it always remembered, is theology, and the religious life of experience, on the other hand, has to think and speak of Allah in terms of the aspects under which it has known Him. It should not, therefore, be difficult, at the cost of whatever metaphysical confusion, to reintroduce thought into the Moslem conception of the Divinity and so far break up that impossible Unity. The Word of Allah will cease to be a simple objectified command (*amr*), like the Jewish *Memrâ*, and will again, like the older Hebrew *Hothmâ*, be that Wisdom in which and by which God does all things.

I am very conscious that in what I have now said there is more of theology and less of vital experience than the title of this series of articles would seem to demand. Yet that has sprung from the very nature of the case. I am a student of Moslem theology; but only an onlooker

upon Moslem life. Lest any, however, should mistake my attitude in the broad matter, let me now finally state some practical propositions which seem to me essential. I trust that missionaries will forgive an outsider if he casts these, for directness, in imperative form.

(1) As much as is in any way possible let the Bible, and especially the figure of Christ in the gospels, speak for themselves.

(2) As much as is in any way possible avoid controversy, however friendly. Turn it with an answer which will show that Christianity too has beneath it a reasoned metaphysical system.

(3) As much as is in any way possible cultivate religious conversation with Moslems and try to understand their religious life. The reading of their devotional and mystical books will greatly help in this.

(4) As much as is in any way possible study the theological system of Islam in the treatises of its theologians.

(5) Be thus prepared, when the genuine inquirer who has been attracted by Christ and has read the Bible brings forward theological difficulties, to understand these and his mind in general and to enter most fully into theological subtleties. To us they may seem unreal; to him, with his training, they are vital.

(6) Never be surprised at the doctrine or the aspect of Christianity which seems most to appeal to any individual Moslem. He must begin where he can. Avoid, therefore, fixed 'easy methods.' I knew one man who became a sincere Christian with a real grasp of Christian doctrine and who began by being impressed with the historical continuity of the books of Samuel and Kings. Above all, do not think that there must be a theological sense of sin. Many Moslems find rest in Christ as a solution of the problems of the world and of the mystery of the universe. Their Christ is cosmic, but none the less real.

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