INTRODUCTION

THE continuity of religious progress among mankind is a subject of enthralling interest to the student of humanity. The gradual awakening of the human mind to the recognition of a Personality, of a Supreme Will overshadowing the universe; the travails through which individuals and races have passed before they arrived at the conception of an Universal Soul pervading, regulating, and guiding all existence,—furnish lessons of the deepest import. The process by which humanity has been lifted from the adoration of material objects to the worship of God, has often been retarded. Masses of mankind and individuals have broken away from the stream of progress, have listened to the promptings of their own desires, have given way to the cravings of their own hearts; they have gone back to the worship of their passions, symbolised in the idols of their infancy. But though unheard, the voice of God has always sounded the call to truth, and when the time has arrived His servants have risen to proclaim the duties of man to himself and to his Creator. These men have been the veritable
"messengers of Heaven." They came among their people as the children of their time; they represented the burning aspirations of the human soul for truth, purity, and justice. Each was an embodiment of the spiritual necessities of his age; each came to purify, to reform, to elevate a degraded race, a corrupted commonwealth. Some came as teachers of a smaller culture, to influence a smaller sphere; others came with a world-wide message—a message not confined to one race or nation, but intended for all humanity. Such was Mohammed. His mission was not to the Arabs alone. He was not sent for one age or clime, but "for all mankind to the end of the world." The advent of this great Teacher, whose life from the moment of his Ministry is a verifiable record, was not a mere accident, an unconnected episode in the history of the world. The same causes, the same crying evils, the same earnest demand for an "assured trust" in an all-pervading Power, which led to the appearance on the shores of Galilee, in the reign of Augustus Caesar, of a Prophet whose life is a tragedy, operated with greater force in the seventh century of the Christian era. The beginning of the seventh century, as has been rightly said, was an epoch of disintegration—national, social, and religious: its phenomena were such as have always involved a fresh form of positive faith, to recall all wandering forces to the inevitable track of spiritual evolution "towards the integration of personal worship." They all pointed to the necessity of a more organic revelation of divine government than that attained by Judaism or Christianity. The holy flames kindled by Zoroaster, Moses, and Jesus had been quenched in the blood of man. A corrupt Zoroastrianism, battling for centuries with a still more corrupt Christianity, had stifled the voice of humanity, and converted some of the happiest portions of the globe into a veritable Acedama. Incessant war for supremacy, perpetual internecine strife, combined with the ceaseless wrangling of creeds and sects, had sucked the life-blood out of the hearts of nations, and the people of the earth, trodden under the iron heels of a lifeless sacerdotalism, were crying to God from the misdeeds of their masters. Never in the history of the world was the need so great, the time so ripe, for the appearance of a Deliverer. In
order, therefore, to appreciate thoroughly the achievement of Mohammed in the moral world, it is necessary to take a rapid survey of the religious and social condition of the nations of the earth previous to, and about the time of, the Islâmic Dispensation.

The high table-land of Bactria, appropriately styled by Arab geographers *Umm ul-Bilâd*, or "mother of countries," is supposed to be the cradle of humanity, the original birth-place of creeds and nations. Through the faint and shadowy light, which comparative ethnology throws on the infancy of man-kind, we perceive groups of families congregated in this primeval home of the human race, gradually coalescing into clans and tribes, and then forced by the pressure of increasing population, issuing in successive waves to people the face of the globe. The Hamitic branch were apparently the first to leave their ancient habitations. They were followed by the Turanians, or, as they are sometimes called, the Ugro-Finnish tribes, supposed to be an offshoot of the Japhetic family. Some of them apparently proceeded northwards, and then spreading themselves in the East, founded the present Mongolian branch of the human race. Another section proceeded westward and settled in Azarbaijan, Hamadân, and Ghîlân, countries to the south and south-west of the Caspian, better known in ancient history as Media. A portion of these descending afterwards into the fertile plains of Babylonia, enslaved the earlier Hamitic colonies, and in course of time amalgamating with them, formed the Accadian nation, the Kushites of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. This composite race created Babylon, and gave birth to a form of religion which, in its higher phases, was akin to natural pantheism. In its lower phases, with its pan-daemonism, its worship of the sun-gods and moon-gods, closely associated with the phallic cult and the sexual instincts, the sacrifice of children to Baal and Moloch, of virginity to Beltis and Ashtoreth, it marks an epoch when high material civilisation was allied to gross licentiousness, and cruelty was sanctioned by religion.

The Semites were the next to leave the primeval home. They also, following in the footsteps of the Turanians, migrated towards the West, and apparently settled themselves in the
northern part of the Mesopotamian Delta. Increasing in numbers and strength, they soon overthrew the Babylonian kingdom, and founded a far-reaching empire which wielded its sway over all the neighbouring States. In their seat of power between the two great rivers of Western Asia, the Assyrians at times rose to a positive monotheistic conception. Their system of celestial hierarchy furnishes indications of a distinct recognition of one Supreme Personality.

Whilst the main body of the Semitic colony was developing itself in the upper parts of the Delta, a small section had penetrated far into a district called Ur, within the boundaries of the Chaldaean monarchy. The patriarch of this tribe, whose self-imposed exile and wanderings have passed into the religious legends of more than one creed, became the father of the future makers of history.

The Japhetic family seems to have tarried longest in its ancient habitation. Whilst the other races, which had broken away from the original stock, were forming empires and evolving creeds, the Japhetic branch underwent a development peculiar to itself. But the march of nations once set on foot was never to cease; actuated by that spirit of unrest which works in barbarous tribes, or influenced by the pressure of population and the scarcity of space in their old haunts for the pursuit of their pastoral avocations, tribe after tribe moved away towards the West. Among the first were the Pelasgians and the Celts. Other tribes followed, until the Aryans proper were left alone in the old haunts. One section apparently had its abode near Badakhshân, the other towards Balkh proper, where for centuries they lived almost isolated from the neighbouring nations, unaffected by their wars or their movements. The light of history which has dawned on the Western races, the founders of kingdoms and civilisations, also falls upon these ancient dwellers of the earth, and reveals, though indistinctly and as through a mist, several clans gathered together on that plateau; just emerged from

\[1\] Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, p. 23

\[2\] In the Arabian traditions the father of Abraham is called Āzar, which is evidently the same as Asshur, and the beautiful idols of Āzar are frequently referred to in Moslem literature. These traditions confirm the belief that Abraham was of Assyrian origin.
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savageness into barbarism, they are becoming alive to the sense of an Universal Ideality. Innumerable idealities are taking the place of the natural objects, hitherto worshipped with fear and trembling. With some of them the host of abstractions and personifications of the powers of nature are subordinated to two comprehensive principles—Light and Darkness. The sun, the bright harbinger of life and light, becomes the symbol of a beneficent Divinity, whose power, though held in check, is eventually to conquer the opposing principle of Evil and Darkness. With others, the idealities which they now impress on the fetish they worshipped before, merge in each other; at one time standing forth as distinct personal entities, at another time resolving themselves into a hylozoic whole. Gradually the clouds lift, and we see the tribal and clan-formations giving way to monarchical institutions; agriculture taking by slow degrees the place of pastoral avocations; primitive arts being cultivated; the use of metals gaining ground, and, above all, the higher conception of a Supreme Personality forcing itself upon the yet unopened mind. Kauhumurs, Hoshang, and the other old kings of whom Firdousi sings with such wondrous power, are types of an advancing civilisation. The introduction of the monarchical institutions among the Aryans proper seems to be coeval with that religious conflict between the two branches of the Aryan family which led to the expulsion of the Eastern branch from their Bactrian home. A powerful religious revolution had been inaugurated among the Western Aryans by a teacher whose name has been preserved in the literature of his religion as Citama Zarathustra. The sharp religious conflict, which resulted from this movement, has left its mark in the deep imprecations heaped by the Vedic hymn-singers on the enemy of their race and creed, the Djaradashti of the Vedas. The attitude of the Vedic hymn-singers towards the reformed faith, even more than the extraordinary coincidence in names, furnishes the strongest proof that the religious divergence was the immediate cause of the split between the two branches of the Aryans proper. In this, probably the first religious war waged among mankind, the Western dualistic clans were successful in driving their half-polytheistic, half-pantheistic brethren across the
Paropamisadæ. The Eastern Aryans burst into India, driving before them the earlier black races, massacring and enslaving them, treating them always as inferior beings, Dasyus and Sudras, slaves and serfs. The difference between the Vedic and the Zoroastrian religions was, however, purely relative. Zoroastrianism substituted for the worship of the phenomena, the adoration of the cause. It converted the gods of the Vedas into demons and the deva-worshippers into infidels; whilst the Vedic hymn-singer, on his side, called the Ahura of the Avesta an evil god, an Asura, a power hostile to the gods, and heaped burning maledictions on the head of Djaradashti.

Whilst the place and time of the early Zoroaster's birth are enwrought in mystery, under Darius Hystaspes arose another teacher, who, under the same name, revived, organised, and enlarged the basis of the ancient teachings.

Retracing our steps for a moment, we see the tide of Aryan conquest in India flowing eastward and southward for centuries. The old Aryan religion, which the invaders had brought from their ancient homes, consisted chiefly in the worship of the manes and the adoration of the powers of Nature symbolised in visible phenomena. In the land of the Five Rivers the spiritual conception developed further; we can read in the Vedas the march of progress until we arrive at the zenith of Hindu religious ideas in the Upanishads, which often in the intensity of spiritual yearning approach the highest monotheism. The Upanishads dwell not only on the immanence of God, a conception which gave birth in later times to the material pantheism of India; but also teach that the Supreme Spirit is the protector of all beings and sovereign over all creation, that he dwells in the hearts of men, and finally absorbs the individual soul in infinity "as the ocean absorbs the river"; when that absorption takes place the human soul loses all consciousness of its experience in the earthly frame. But these interesting records of human progress contained within themselves unquestioned germs of spiritual decadence which soon reversed the process of evolution; and thus instead of observing a further uplifting, we see a progressive declension. The Upanishads make way for the Puranic cults, which again succumb to the power of the Tantric worship.
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The idea to which the Upanishads frequently give expression that the Supreme Spirit manifests Himself in various forms gave rise to the conception of the Avatârs or incarnations. Just as in the Western pagan world philosophy failed to satisfy the craving of the popular mind for a personal God who had dwelt among mankind and held familiar discourse with them, the theistic aspirations of the Upanishads did not appeal to the heart or touch the emotions of the masses of India. And a hero-god was soon found in a member of the warrior caste, who came before long to be identified with the Supreme Spirit and to be regarded in his earthly existence as an incarnate god.

The development of the Krishna-cult, like that of its rival, the worship of the "dread Mother," illustrates forcibly not merely the religious welter which prevailed in India in the seventh century of the Christian era, but also the gulf which divided the minds of the philosophers who composed the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita; "the Song of Faith," from the thoughts and feelings of the populace. It is abundantly clear that long before they burst into Hindustan proper, the Aryan settlers in the Punjab or their priests and religious teachers made the most stringent rules to prevent the intermixture of the invaders and their descendants with the races they had conquered and enslaved in their steady and prolonged march towards the East. The touch of the latter, who were turned into the lowest and servile caste, was pollution; all the religious rites peculiar to the three higher castes were strictly forbidden to them.

Among all the flow and ebb of Aryan-Hindu thought in the region of pantheism the worship of the manes has always clung to the Hindu mind as an essential part of his religio-social system. The Sudra was permitted to offer oblations to his dead ancestors, but no Brahman could officiate at the rites without incurring the heaviest penalties. If a Sudra overheard a Brahman reciting the Vedas, he was to be punished by having molten lead poured into his ears; if he happened to sit on the same bench with the Brahman he was liable to be

1 A recent writer remarks that the Bhagavad-Gita no doubt shows traces of theism, but this theism is blended with other and non-theistic elements.
branded. Whilst unions, legitimate or illegitimate, between the "twice born," as the three superior castes were called, and the Sudras were interdicted under the cruelest penalties. No legislation, however, could prevent their religious ideas and practices being influenced by the primitive beliefs. In course of time the divinities of the pre-Aryan tribes and races were incorporated into the Hindu pantheon, and their worship became part of the Hindu daily ritual. The amalgamations of diverse beliefs of unequal growth and varying tendencies had their inevitable result in the debasement of the complex and abstruse pantheism the philosophers were endeavouring through ages to evolve.

Before the followers of Islam lifted the veil behind which India had lived enshrouded in mystery for thousands of years, she possessed no history. It is impossible to say when Vasudeva-Krishna lived, or to judge of his personality. There are innumerable legends which verge on the absurd and puerile, legends evidently manufactured by the priests, who had become the equals, if not the superiors, of the gods; and whose interest it was to keep the minds of the vulgar fascinated and enthralled. The place which Vasudeva-Krishna occupies in the Hindu pantheon is that of the incarnation of Vishnu, and as such he forms the central figure in the devotional part of the Bhagavad-Gita. He is evidently a composite divinity; one of the man-gods associated with him being the gay hero who lived among the cowherds of Gokul and disported himself in the famous groves of Brindubun with his merry companions.1

The cult of Vasudeva-Krishna inculcated absolute dharma or faith as the key to salvation; the believer in this incarnate Vishnu, whatever his conduct in life, was assured of eternal happiness.

The doctrine of perfect faith gave birth to practices and beliefs which are still current in India. As righteousness

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1 Krishna is usually called the Gopala-Krishna or Cowherd Krishna; his female companions are called the gopis, the "milkmaids." Many a pretty legend is woven round the adventures of this hero-god of the Ahirs, the cowherd caste of Upper India. Krishna has been somewhat inaptly called the Apollo of the Hindus, though it is difficult to clothe him with the poetry which generally envelopes the Greek god.
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consists in the concentration of the mind in one's self as identical with the Supreme Spirit represented in Krishna, the gymnos-ophic ascetic practices acquired in the eyes of the people a superlative merit. To sit for years in the forest with the eyes fixed on one spot of the human body and the mind on Krishna; to stand for years on one leg; to be swung round by hooks fixed in the flesh were acts of devotion which cured all sins. To expiate a sin or to fulfil a vow a man might be employed to measure by the length of his body the distance from the abode of the penitent to the temple of the deity. To read the Bhagavad-Gita with true faith or to bathe in the Ganges or any holy pool, absolved every man or woman from all breaches of the moral laws.

It is difficult to tell when Saktism acquired the predominant hold it now possesses on large masses of the Hindu population. The Sakti is the female half and active creative side of each Hindu deity. The Sakti, or spouse of Siva, is the dread goddess known under various names, such as Parbati, Bhavâni, Kâli, Mâha-Kâli, Durga, Chamunda. The worship of this goddess, as described in the drama of Bhavabhuti, written apparently in the seventh century of the Christian era, was celebrated with human sacrifices and other revolting rites. There is nothing of the "mater dolorosa" in the spouse of Siva, by whatever name she is invoked or in whatever form she is worshipped; she possesses none of the attributes of human pity or sympathy with human suffering, the Alexandrian worshipper associated with Isis "the goddess of myriad names." This awe-inspiring, not to say, awful concept of a decadent religious mind, evidently borrowed from the pre-Aryan races, who delights in human blood and revels in human misery, has few parallels in the paganism of the world; for even Cybele, the magna mater of the Romans, was not so merciless or took so much pleasure in inflicting pain as the Sakti of the "God of destruction."¹ This deity is worshipped according to the ritual of the Tantras, which may be regarded as the bible of Saktism. Many of the Tantric hymns are imbued with considerable devotional spirit, and the invocations addressed to the goddess often appeal to her pity; but whatever

¹ Siva.
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mystical meaning the Tantras may possess for the philosopher, the people commonly accept the worship in its most literal sense.¹

From the two great epics, one of which tells the story of the war between the Pandus and the Kurus, and the other the legend of the abduction of Sita by the king of Ceylon, we can form a fairly accurate idea of the popular creeds of the time. Both represent a developed society and considerable material progress combined with great moral decadence. Thus long before the appearance of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, religious worship among the masses of India had sunk into mere mechanical performance of sacrifices and oblations at which the ability of the ministering priest, without whose services their observance was not permissible, to perform the "god-compelling" rites with the appropriate incantations, rather than the conduct or piety of the worshipper, supplied the test of merit. The revolt of Gautama and of Mahavira (Mahābīr) represented the natural uprise of the Hindu mind against a selfish sacerdotalism. Both deny a Creative Principle and the existence of a Supreme Intelligence governing and regulating the universe, both affirm the eventual annihilation of individual life; both dwell on the merit of work in bringing about this blissful consummation. But whilst Jainism has hung on to the skirts of Brahmanism and is now practically a Brahmanical sect, Buddhism struck out boldly a new path for itself. It placed Karma in the forefront of its scheme of salvation; and its great teacher tried to fulfil its claims in his own life. Its conception of the destiny of man after

¹ There are two chief divisions of Tantric worshippers: the Dakhshinachari and Vāmachari, or right and left hand ritualists; the worship of the former is public, and not otherwise noticeable than as addressed to other goddesses, such as Lakshmi or Mahalakshmi, the Sakhi of Vishnu. In the left hand worship, specially called Tantrika, the exclusive object of adoration is Kāli. This worship is private and is said to be celebrated with impure practices. This particular cult has an enormous number of followers all over India and branches into various subdivisions. In the season of the Durga Puja, which is usually celebrated in the month of August, the image of Durga is carried about seated on a throne. In Upper India she is painted as yellow of complexion; in Bengal she is represented as absolutely black, with four hands, seated on a tiger. In the temple of Kalighat (from which Calcutta derives its name) dripping skulls might be seen hanging from her neck. In one of the temples at Jeyapore the goddess may be seen with her head twisted round; the tradition is that the lady turned her face in disgust when a goat was offered to her in sacrifice instead of a human being.
death was quite opposed to Brahmanical doctrines; and its occult mysticism soon passed into other creeds. But in the land of its birth, after a short but glorious existence Buddhism met with a cruel fate; and the measure of punishment that was meted out to it by a triumphant Brahmanism is depicted on the temples of Southern India. It must be admitted, however, that in its pristine garb Buddhism did not possess the attractions Hinduism offered to its votaries. It never claimed to be a positive religion, and its "rewards" and "sanctions," its promise of bliss in a future existence, its penalties for failure to perform duties in this life, were too shadowy to stir the heart of the masses. It had soon to abandon its contest with the outside world or to arrive at a compromise with the religion it had tried to supplant; and it was not long before the religion that Buddha preached had to allow its lay-votaries to substitute prayer-wheels for pious work, or to take to Tantrism to supplement its own barren efforts. Its failure under the most favourable circumstances in the land of its nativity sealed its fate as a rousing religious system, although in some of its mystical aspects it exercised considerable influence on the philosophies of Western Asia and Egypt.

On the expulsion of Buddhism from India, Brahmanism regained its supremacy; the long shadow under which it had lived whilst the religion of Buddha dominated the country had brought no improvement in its spiritual conceptions; and the lifeless formalism against which Buddha had revolted was now re-established on a stronger foundation; the lives of men and women were under the restored Brahmanical regime regulated more closely than ever by a sacrificial cult which appealed to their senses, perhaps to their emotions, rather than to their spiritual instincts. Among the masses religious worship became a daily round of meaningless ritual. For them "the chief objects of worship were the priests, the manes and, for form's sake, the Vedic gods." Fetishism, as a part of the aboriginal belief, was never eradicated from the Indian continent by philosophical Hinduism or by practical Buddhism. It now entered into the inner life of all castes; trees, stones and other natural objects, along with the idols in which the
family gods, the household penates and the ancient divinities were symbolised, shared the adoration of the populace. The great Code of Manu, of which Hinduism is justly proud, and which became in later centuries the model for the legal doctrines of other Eastern races, represents a legislation for a state of society where a great advance in material civilisation was combined with the absolute domination of the priestly caste and an astonishing moral decadence amongst the masses. Like the priest the king was now a divinity. In the second century of the Christian era, whilst Manu’s Code was still held in reverence and treated as the final authority, its place was taken by the Commentary of Yajnavalkya, "the Contemplative Master." To him caste was as iron-bound as to Manu; and the Sudra as impure as in early times.

Female infanticide, as among the pagan Arabs, was common. There is no record when widow-burning was first introduced, but it must have been common in the seventh century of the Christian era. To the widow death, however terrible, must have been a welcome release, for unless she was the mother of children her lot was one of dire misery.

A woman was debarred from studying the Vedas or participating in the oblations to the manes, or in the sacrifices to the deities. The wife’s religion was to serve her lord; her eternal happiness depended on the strict performance of that duty. And the faithful wife, who sacrificed herself on the funeral pyre of her dead spouse, found a niche in the hearts of all the votaries of Hinduism as one of the best and noblest of her sex; and often became herself the object of worship.

Whilst thinking minds saw in the puerile practices of the religion a deeper meaning; whilst their souls floated far above the ceremonialism of the creed they professed, not one philosopher or priest viewed with horror the cruel immolations of the helpless widow, usually no more than a child. Religious associations, generally composed of both sexes and not always remarkable for austerity of life, had already sprung up; and numerous celibate brotherhoods worshipping different divinities had come into existence. They invariably congregated in monasteries into which women were admitted as lay members. Among them, as among the mendicant fraternities that were
established about the same time, the professed celibacy was more nominal than real, honoured in its breach rather than in its observance. Large numbers of the mendicant brotherhoods lived in comfort and ease in temples and muths. Others, like the begging friars of the Middle Ages and the vulgar cynics of the Flavian period, wandered in search of merit from the doles of the devout. Their sole recommendation to the charity of the pious consisted in their matted locks, their unkempt beard, the ochre-coloured shirt that hung over their shoulders, the ash-covered naked bodies and the inevitable beggar’s gourd and staff.

As the divinities loved music and dancing, a large number of dancing girls were attached to the temples, who were by no means vestal, and whose services were at the disposal of the ministrants of the cult. Women occupied a very inferior position in early Hindu legislation, and Manu’s extreme denunciation of the sex can be compared only to the fanatical pronouncement of the Christian Saint Tertullian, “Women,” says Manu, “have impure appetites; they show weak flexibility and bad conduct. Day and night must they be kept in subjection.”

As regards the Sudras, he declared, almost in the words of the Pandects, that the Creator had made them slaves and that a man belonging to that caste, even when he is emancipated by his master, cannot be free; for bondage being natural to him, who can deliver him from it?

Such in brief was the religious and social condition among the people of one of the most gifted sections of the Aryan race at the time when the Prophet of Islâm brought his Message to the world.

Let us turn now to Persia—a country which, by its proximity to the birthplace of Islâm, and the powerful influence it has always exercised on Mohammedan thought, not to speak of the character and tone it communicated to Judaism and Christianity, deserves our earnest attention.

Consolidated into a nation and with a new spiritual development, the western Aryans soon burst their ancient bounds, and spread themselves over the regions of modern Persia and Afghanistan. They appear to have conquered or destroyed
most of the Hamitic and Kushite races inhabiting those tracts, and gradually reached the confines of the Caspian, where they found the more tenacious and hardy Turanians settled in Media and Susiana. Before, however, they had succeeded in subjugating the Turanians, they themselves fell under the yoke of a foreign invader, Kushite or Assyrian, more probably the latter, under whose iron sway they remained for a considerable time.\(^1\) With the expulsion of the foreigners commenced that conflict between Irân and Turân which lasted with varying fortunes for centuries, and ended with the partial subjugation of the Turanians in Media and Susiana.\(^2\) The frequent contact of the followers of Afrâsiâb and Kai-Kâûs in the field and the hall exercised a lasting effect on the Persic faith. The extreme materialism of the Turanians did not fail to degrade the yet undeveloped idealism of their Iranian rivals and neighbours, who, whilst they succeeded in superimposing themselves on the ancient settlers of Media, had partially to incorporate Turanian worship with their own. And thus, whilst in Persia, Ormuzd alone was adored and Ahriman held up to execration, in Media, the good and the evil principle were both adored at the altars. Naturally, the Turanian population was more inclined to worship their ancient national god than the deity of their Aryan conquerors; and in the popular worship, Ahriman, or Afrâsiâb, took precedence of Ormuzd.

The Assyrian empire had fallen before a coalition, the first of its kind known in history, of the Medes and the Babylonians, but the religion of Assur, from its long domination over many of the parts occupied by the Aryans, left an ineffaceable mark on the conceptions of the Zoroastrians. The complex system of celestial co-ordination and the idea prevalent among the Assyrians of a divine hierarchy engrafted itself on Zoroastrianism. Ormuzd was henceforth worshipped as a second Assur; and the Persian’s symbol of the God of light, the all-beneficent power, became a winged warrior, with bow and lifted hand, enclosed in the world-circle. Their symbol of growth also,

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\(^{1}\) According to the Persian traditions, Zahhâk ruled over Irân for over a thousand years, and thus is supposed by several scholars to represent the exact period of Assyrian domination. The rise of Fâridûn would, according to this view, be synchronous with the downfall of Nineveh.

\(^{2}\) Lenormant, *Ancient Hist. of the East*, p. 54.
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the tree with the candelabra branches ending upwards in the pine-cone, was converted into the Persian fir-cone. Before the rise of Cyrus in Fârsistân and his consolidating conquests, the symbolic worship in vogue among the early emigrants and settlers became degraded among the masses into pyrolatry, or took the form of Chaldaean-Assyrian Sabeism.

The city of Asshur,—which had ruled Western Asia up to the confines of India for nearly a thousand years, and almost wrested from the Pharaohs the empire of Egypt,—the city of the mighty Sargon and the great Sennacherib, had fallen before the combined forces of the Babylonian and the Mede,never again to raise its head among the nations of the world. Babylon, which after its early rivalry with Nineveh had been reduced to a dependency of Assyria, became again the centre of Asiatic civilisation. She gathered up the arts and sciences of a thousand years of growth, and the product of "interfused races and religions, temples and priesthoods," and supplied the connecting link between the inorganic faiths of antiquity and the modern beliefs. Assyria had, with the civilisation and literature of the early Accadians, also borrowed much of their religion. Babylon, rising into more potent grandeur from the ashes of Nineveh, centred in herself the essence of the Assyrian and Chaldaean cults. Under Nebuchadnezzar the empire of Babylonia attained the zenith of its power; Judæa fell, and the flower of the nation was carried into captivity to lament by the waters of Babylon the downfall of the kingdom of Jehovah. The mighty conqueror penetrated into Arabia, and overwhelmed and nearly destroyed the Ishmaelites; he smote the Tyrians, and broke the power of the Egyptian Pharaoh. In spite of the maledictions heaped upon her head by the Hebrew patriot, Babylon was by no means such a hard taskmaster as Egypt. The Israelites themselves bear testimony to the generosity of their treatment. Not until the redeemer was nigh with his mighty hosts, marching to the conquest of the doomed city, did the children of Israel raise their voice against Babylon. Then burst forth the storm of imprecations, of predictions of woe, which displayed the characteristics of the race in its pristine savagery. "By the

1 606 B.C.

'Jer xlix 27 to 29
rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. O Daughter of Babylon! happy shall he be who dasheth thy little ones against the stones.” ¹

Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was indisputably the centre of all existing civilisations. And the influence wielded by her priesthood did not cease with the empire of Babylonia. The mark of the Babylonian conceptions is traced in unmistakable characters in both the Judaical and Christian systems. The long exile of the Jews among the Chaldæan priesthood, the influence which some of the Hebrews obtained in the court of the Babylonian king, and the unavoidable interfusion of the two peoples, tended to impart a new character to later Judaism. They were carried to Babylon in a state of semi-barbarism; they returned to Zion after their long probation in the land of exile a new people, advanced in faith and doctrine, with larger aspirations and their political vision extended.

With the conquest of Babylon begins a new era in religious development. Henceforth the religion of dualism holds the empire of Asia. The grand toleration which Cyrus extended towards the Jews naturally led to his exaltation as “the Messiah,” “the Redeemer,” “the anointed Saviour of the world.” The captivity of the Hebraic tribes, and their enforced settlement near the seat of Persian domination, and their subsequent intermixture under Cyrus with the Persians, most probably gave impetus to that religious reform among the Zoroastrians which occurred during the reign of Darius Hystaspes. There was mutual action and reaction. The Israelites impressed on renovated Zoroastrianism a deep and abiding conception of a Divine Personality overshadowing the universe. They received from the Iranians the notion of a celestial hierarchy, and the idea of a duality of principles in the creation of good and evil. Henceforth it is not the Lord who puts a lying spirit into the mouths of evil-doers; Satan, like Ahriman, from this time takes a prominent part in the religious and moral history of the Hebrews.

The reign of Cyrus was one of conquest, hardly of organisation. The reign of Darius was one of consolidation; stern worshipper of Ormuzd, to whom he ascribes all his victories, he endeavoured

¹ Ps. cxxxvii.
to purify the faith of Zoroaster of all its foreign excrescences, to stamp out the Magism of the Medes from its stronghold, and to leave Aryan Persia the dominant power of the civilised world. Nothing, however, could arrest the process of decay. Before a hundred years had gone by, Zoroastrianism had imbibed to the full the evils which it had fought against in its infancy. The scourgers of idolatry, the uncompromising iconoclasts, who, in their fiery zeal, had slaughtered the Egyptian Apis and overturned its shrine, soon absorbed into the worship of Ormuzd the Semitic gods of their subject states. The old Magian element-worship was revived, and Artaxerxes Mnemon, one of the immediate successors of Darius, introduced among the Zoroastrians the worship of that androgynous Mythra—the Persian counterpart of the Chaldæan Mylitta or Anaitis, with its concomitant phallic cult. The development of this Mythra-cult into the gorgeous worship of the beautiful Sun-God is one of the marvels of history. The resplendent Sun ascending over the cleft mountains, chasing the Bull into its lair and with its blood atoning human sins, is a conception which has left its ineffaceable mark on one of the dominant religions of the world. This worship of Mythra was carried by the Roman legionaries from the valley of the Euphrates to the furthest corners of Europe, and in the reign of Diocletian it became the state-religion of Rome.

Never was the condition of woman so bad, never was she held under greater subjection,—a slave to the caprice of man,—than under the Mago-Zoroastrians. The laws of Manu imposed certain rules of chastity, and the stringency of primitive exogamy exercised a restraining effect upon human passions. The Persian in the relations of the sexes recognised no law but that of his own will. He could marry his nearest kindred, and divorce his wives at his pleasure. The system of female seclusion was not confined to the Persians alone. Among the Ionic Greeks, women were confined within the gynaikonitis, often kept under lock and key, and never allowed to appear in public. But the Greek gynaikonomoi were not, until later times, mutilated specimens of humanity. In Persia, the custom of employing eunuchs to guard the women prevailed from the remotest antiquity. As in Greece, concubinage was
a recognised social institution, and was interwoven with the foundations of society. The Persian, however, never allowed lewdness to be incorporated with the national worship. He worshipped no Aphrodite Pandemos; nor was Zoroastrian society tainted with that "moral pestilence," the most degrading of all vices, which was universal in Greece, which spread itself afterwards in Rome, and was not even rooted out by Christianity.

With the downfall of the Achæmenian Empire ended the vitality of Zoroastrianism as a motive power in the growth of the world. The swarms of conquerors, who swept like whirlwinds over the face of Persia, destroyed all social and moral life. The Macedonian conquest, with the motley hordes which followed on its footsteps, the influx of all the dregs of Lesser Asia, Cilicians, Tyrians, Pamphylians, Phrygians, and various others, half Greeks, half Asians, obeying no moral law, the hasty and reckless temper of the conqueror himself,—all led to the debasement of the Zoroastrian faith. The Mobeds, the representatives of the national life, were placed under the ban of persecution by the foreigner, the aim of whose life was to hellenise Asia.

Alexander's career was splendidly meteoric. Shorn of the legends which have surrounded his life and turned it into an epopee, he stands before us a man of gigantic conceptions and masterly purposes, possessed of a towering ambition, a genius which overpowered all opposition, and a personality which enabled him to mould the minds of all around him according to his own will. His was a nature full of contradictions. A disciple of Aristotle, who aimed at the hellenisation of Asia, with himself as the central figure in the adoration of the world, an associate of philosophers and wise men, his life was disgraced by excesses of a revolting type. "The sack of Tyre and the enslavement of its population, the massacres and executions in India and Bactria, the homicide of Clytus, the death warrants of Philotas and the faithful Parmenio, the burning of Persepolis and the conflagration of its splendid library at the instigation of a courtezan, are acts," says an apologist and an admirer, "for which no historian has found

a palliation." With the conquest of Alexander and the extinction of the Achaemenian dynasty, Zoroastrianism gave way to Hellenism and the worst traditions of Chaldæan civilisation. The extreme partiality of the hero of many legends towards Babylon, and his anxious desire to resuscitate that city and make it the centre of a mightier and more complete civilisation, led him to discourage all creeds and faiths, all organisations, religious or political, which militated with his one great desire. Under the Seleucidæ, the process of denationalisation went on apace. Antiochus Epiphanes, the cruel persecutor of the worshippers of Jehovah, won for himself from them as well as the Zoroastrians, the unenviable designation of Ahiman. Even the rise of the Parthian power tended to accelerate the decline and ruin of Zoroastrianism. The Seleucidæ ruled on the Tigris and the Orontes; the Parthians formed for themselves a kingdom in the middle portion of the Achaemenian empire; the Græco-Bactrian dynasties were in possession of the eastern tracts, viz. Bactria and the northern part of Afghanistan. The state-religion of the Seleucidæ was a mixture of Chaldæo-Hellenism. The Jews and Zoroastrians were placed under the ban and ostracised. Under the Parthians, Mazdism, though not actually extinguished, was compelled to hide itself from the gaze of the rulers. In quiet and settled parts, Zoroastrianism became mixed with the old Sabæism of the Medes and the Chaldæans; or, where kept alive in its pristine character, it was confined to the hearts of some of those priests who had taken refuge in the inaccessible recesses of their country. But with Parthia enlarged into an empire, and the Parthian sovereigns aspiring to the title of Shah-in-shah, persecution gave way to toleration, and Mago-Zoroastrianism again raised its head among the religions of the world. And the rise of the Sasanides gave it another spell of power. The founder of the new empire placed the Mobeds at the head of the State. Last sad representatives of a dying faith! Around them clustered the hopes of a renovated religious existence under the auspices of the Sasanide dynasty. How far the brilliant aspirations of Ardeshir Babekân (Artaxerxes Longimanus), the founder of the new empire, were realised, is a matter of history. The political autonomy of Persia—
its national life—was restored, but the social and religious life was lost beyond the power of rulers to revive: The teachings of yore lived perhaps in books, but in the hearts of the people they were as dead as old Gushtâsp or Rustam.

Under the Sasanides, the Zoroastrians attained the zenith of their power. For centuries they competed with Rome for the empire of Asia. Time after time they defeated her armies, sacked her cities, carried away her Cæsars into captivity, and despoiled her subjects of their accumulated riches; but the fire of Zoroastrianism as a moral factor was extinct. It burnt upon the high altars of the temples, but it had died out from the heart of the nation. The worship of the true God had given place to a Chaldæo-Magian cult, and the fierce intolerance with which Ardeshir and his successors persecuted rival creeds, failed to achieve its purpose. The Persian empire, under the later Sasanides, only rivalled in the turmoil of its sects and the licentiousness of its sovereigns, in the degeneration of its aristocracy and the overweening pride of its priesthood, the empire of the Byzantines. The kings were gods; they were absolute masters over the person and property of their subjects, who possessed no rights, and were virtual serfs. The climax of depravity was reached when Mazdak, in the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era, preached the communism with which modern Europe has now become familiar, and “bade all men to be partners in riches and women, just as they are in fire, water, and grass; private property was not to exist; each man was to enjoy or endure the good and bad lots of this world.” The lawfulness of marriages with sisters and other blood relations had already been recognised by Mago-Zoroastrianism. The proclamation of this extreme communism revolted the better minds even among the Persians. The successor of Zoroaster, as Mazdak styled himself, was put to death; but his doctrines had taken root, and from Persia they spread over the West.

All these evils betokened a complete depravity of moral life, and foreshadowed the speedy extinction of the nation in its own iniquities. This doom, though staved off for a time

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1 The *Dabistân-i-Mazâhib* of Mohsini Fâni; see also Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal’s *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 18.
by the personal character of Ksrâ Anûshirvân, became inevitable after his death. But a Master had already appeared, destined to change the whole aspect of the world!

Eleven centuries had passed over the Jews since their return from the Babylonian captivity, and witnessed many changes in their fortunes. The series of disasters which one after another had befallen the doomed nation of Moses, had culminated in the wars of Titus and Hadrian. Pagan Rome had destroyed their temple, and stamped out in fire and blood their existence as a nation. Christian Constantinople persecuted them with an equally relentless fury, but the misfortunes of the past had no lessons for them in the future. Their own sufferings at the hands of ruthless persecutors had failed to teach them the value of humanity and peace. The atrocious cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt, of Cyprus and Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous harmony with the unsuspecting natives, take away all sense of pity for their future fate. The house of Israel was a total wreck; its members were fugitives on the face of the earth, seeking shelter far and wide, but carrying everywhere their indomitable pride, their rebellious hardness of heart, denounced and reprehended by an endless succession of prophets. The Jews, in their safe retreats in foreign lands, re-enacted the scenes of past times. The nation lived in hope, but the hope was mixed with rigid uncompromising bigotry on the one hand, and a voluptuous epicureanism on the other. Jesus had come and gone, without producing any visible effect upon them. The child of his age, he was imbued with the Messianic ideas floating in the atmosphere in which he lived and moved. The Book of Daniel, written during one of the greatest travails of the nation, with its hopes and aspirations, could not but make a deep impression on the mind of the Teacher mourning over the sight of his stricken people. The fierce intolerance of the Zealots seated in their mountain homes, the lifeless ceremonialism of the Sadducees, the half-hearted liberalism of the Pharisees, the dreamy hopefulness of the Essenes, with one hand extended towards Alexandria and the other towards Buddhistic India, the preachings and denunciations of the wild Dervish, whose-life became a sacrifice to the depravity
of the Herodian court, all appealed to the heart of Jesus. But the Eagle's talons were clutched on the heart of Judæa and its legions crushed out all hope of a violent change. The quietism of Jesus, and his earnest anticipation of a kingdom of heaven, to be ushered in by the direct instrumentality of God, were the outcome of his age. Among a nation of furious and relentless bigots, he had come as the messenger of universal brotherhood and love. In the midst of a proud and exclusive race, he trod the path of humility and meekness; kind and gentle to his immediate followers, devoted to the cause of all, he left behind him the impress of an elevated, self-denying spirit. Among the powerful, the rich, and the ruling classes, he had roused only feelings of hatred, fear, and opposition; among the poor, the despised, the ignorant and the oppressed, the deep compassion of the great Teacher had awakened sentiments of gratitude and love. One bright sunny morning he had entered the stronghold of Jewish fanaticism full of hope in his ministry as the promised Messiah; before a fortnight had run out, he was sacrificed to the vested interests of his day.

Amidst the legends which surround his life, so much at least is clear. Born among the poor, his preachings were addressed to the poor. Deeply versed in the Rabbinical lore, his short ministry was devoted almost exclusively to the humble denizens of the countryside—the poverty-stricken peasantry and the fishermen of Galilee. His disciples were poor, ignorant folk. In spite of their credulous natures, and the vivid—not to say weird—effect exercised on their imaginations by the untimely disappearance of the Master, they never regarded him as anything more than a man. It was not until Paul adopted the creed of him whose execution he had witnessed, that the idea of an incarnate God or angel was introduced into Christianity. In spite of the promise attached to the "effusion of the Holy Ghost," "it was found necessary," says the historian of Ecclesiasticism, "that there should be some one defender of the gospel who, versed in the learned arts, might be able to combat the Jewish doctors and the pagan philosophers with their own arms. For this purpose Jesus himself, by an extraordinary voice from heaven, had called to his service a thirteenth apostle, whose name was Saul (afterwards Paul),
and whose acquaintance both with Jewish and Grecian learning was very considerable." ¹  

The Mago-Zoroastrian believed in an angel-deliverer, in the Surũš who was to appear from the East; the Buddhist, in an incarnate god born of a virgin; the Alexandrian mystic inculcated the doctrine of the Logos and the Demiurge. The esoteric conceptions regarding the birth, death, and resurrection of Osiris, the idea of the Isis-Ceres, the virgin mother "holding in her arms the new-born sun-god Horus," ² were in vogue both in Egypt and Syria. And Paul, the Pharisee and the scholar, was deeply imbued with these half-mystical, half-philosophical notions of his time. A visionary and enthusiast, by nature, not free from physical ailments, as Strauss suggests, he, who had never come in actual contact with the Master, was easily inclined to attach to him the attributes of a Divinity—of an Angel Incarnate. He infused into the simple teachings of Jesus the most mysterious principles of Neo-Pythagoreanism, with its doctrine of intelligences and its notion of the triad, borrowed from the far East.

The jealousy between the home and the foreign, the Judaical and the anti-Judaical party, was shown in the curious though well-known antipathy of the two apostles, Peter and Paul.³ The Ebionites most probably represented the beliefs of the original companions of the Prophet of Nazareth. He had conversed with them familiarly, and "in all the actions of rational and animal life" had appeared to them as of the same nature as themselves. They had marked him grow from infancy to youth and from youth to manhood; they had seen him increase in stature and wisdom. Their belief was tempered by their knowledge of him as a man. The depravation of ideas from this original faith, through various intermediate phases like those of the Docetes, the Marcionites, the Patrapians,⁴ and various others down to the decisions of the

² Comp. Mr. Ernest de Bunsen's Essay on Mohammed's Place in the Church, Asiatic Quarterly Review, April 1889.
⁴ The Docetes believed Jesus to be a pure God. The Marcionites regarded him as a being "most like unto God, even his Son Jesus Christ, clothed with a certain shadowy resemblance of a body, that he might thus be visible to
Council of Nice in 328, forms a continuous chain. The prevalent belief in æons and emanations predisposed all classes of people, especially those who had never beheld the Prophet, observed his humanity, or noted his everyday life, to accept his divinity without any question.

At the time Jesus began his preaching the Empire of Rome stretched over more than half Europe, and included almost the whole of Northern Africa and a large part of Western Asia. This vast area by an accident became, in the coming centuries, the seed-ground of Christianity and the battlefield of contending sects.

Exactly a century before the Phrygian Cybele ¹ was brought to Rome, Ptolemy Soter, the most fortunate and probably the most far-sighted of Alexander’s generals, had become master of Egypt. With the object of fusing the Egyptians and Greeks into a homogeneous nation by the unifying bond of a common religion he conceived the design of establishing a worship in the practice of which the two peoples would join hands. The same idea occurred to Akbar some two thousand years later; but where the great Akbar failed, Ptolemy succeeded, for all the conditions were in his favour. The Greeks worshipped Zeus, Demeter and Apollo or Dionysus; the Egyptians, Osiris, Isis and Horus; the trinitarian belief was common to both. The Egyptian faith revolved round the Passion and Resurrection of Horus, the Son; the Greek in the Passion and Resurrection of Dionysus. The Greek had his Eleusinian mysteries with all the mystic rites of initiation and communion; the Egyptian hierophant, the mysteries of Isis with similar rites and similar significance. To neither it mattered under what names the gods were worshipped or the rituals were conducted. So long as the main idea was maintained they were indifferent to mere names. Thus was born the great cult of the Serapeum. Serapis took the place of Zeus among the Greeks, of Osiris among the Egyptians; Isis who became the “mater dolorosa” of the votaries of the

mortal eyes.” The Patripassians believed that the Father suffered with the Son on the cross (Mosheim and Gibbon, in loco; and Neander, vol. ii. pp. 150, 301 et seq.).

¹ The worship of Cybele has a very close analogy to the cult of the famous Hindu goddess Durga or Kâh.
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Alexandrian cult, displaced Demeter; and Horus Happocrates absorbed the adoration hitherto rendered to Dionysus. This deity does not seem, however, to have lost his hold among the inhabitants of the sea-board of Asia Minor; and the prevailing belief that a god had lived among mankind, had suffered and died and risen again made easy in later centuries the spread of Christianity.

The worship of Isis, whose glory had overshadowed the personality of her consort, was brought to Rome, it is said, some eighty years before the birth of Jesus. It seized at once the fancy both of the populace and of the cultivated classes. Its gorgeous ritual, its tonsured, clean-shaven priests, the young acolytes in white, carrying lighted tapers, the solemn processions in which nothing was wanting to stimulate the emotions, the passionate grief at the suffering and death of Osiris-Horus, the frenzied joy at his resurrection, the mysteries with all their mystical meanings, the initiation, above all the promise of immortality, appealed vividly to a world whose old gods were mute and which yearned for a closer touch with the eternal problem of the Universe. It is not surprising that Isis took a strong hold on the heart of the Roman people.¹

Although the worship of Isis, "the bestower on the wretched the sweet affection of a mother" never lost its power on their emotions, the more virile cult of Mythra the beautiful sun-god, with all its mystic rites, its doctrine of atonement, its insistence on the direct touch of its god with humanity, was held in special favour among the Roman soldiers; and wherever the legionaries were quartered they appear to have left the memorials of their worship.

To form a just estimate of the superlative and exclusive claim advanced by Christianity to enrol under her banner and to dominate the conscience of all mankind, it is necessary to bear in mind the causes that helped in the diffusion of the Galilean faith before the ascension of Constantine to the throne. The promise of the second advent of Jesus with the immediate ushering in of "the Kingdom of God," when the poor would

¹ Dill's Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, chapter v.; Legge's Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 87.
be exalted, and Lazarus would take the place of Dives in the enjoyment of heavenly gifts, created among the humble folk a wild excitement. The fervent anticipations of the immediate disciples and followers of Jesus naturally communicated themselves to the neighbouring peoples; and as the missionaries of the faith multiplied they carried this vivid belief far and wide. The religion that held forth the promise of an early adjustment of inequalities and redress of wrongs and injustice received a ready acceptance among the masses. So strong a hold did the belief in the establishment of the kingdom of God with the second advent acquire among the populace, that although the fulfilment of the promise, which was assured to take place within the lifetime of the early disciples, receded as decades went by into dim futurity, the anticipations and hopes to which it gave birth did not lose their force until the final collapse of the Crusades. After a thousand years, first of travail and later of success, the warriors of Christianity went forth to destroy the professors of another faith in the full belief that the second coming of their Lord was nigh.

Besides this there were other causes equally potent which helped the diffusion of Christianity in the shape it assumed after the death or, according to Ebionite and Moslem belief, the disappearance of the Master.

As already observed, among all the peoples of Asia Minor, Syria and the Mediterranean littoral, excepting the Jews, the idea of a god who had died and risen again, and of a divine Trinity, was universal. It was an essential part of the Serapean cult; and with the spread of Isis-worship every part of the Roman world was permeated by the trinitarian conception; there was no difficulty arising from sentiment or religious predilection to the acceptance of the principal doctrines of post-Jesus Christianity.

The philosophers at the same time, albeit unconsciously and without the intention of helping Christianity, even without any knowledge of its tenets, furthered its cause. Their speculations with regard to the nature of God and of a life after death undermined the faith of many thinking pagans in the mysteries of Isis and Mythra, and in the rites and practices of the old cults. And yet the hold of the Alexandrian divinities
and of the Sun-god on the hearts of the cultivated classes, who looked askance at the revolutionary doctrines of the new cult, was so strong that for nearly three centuries the spread of Christianity was confined to the ignorant and uneducated. Not until the Christian Church had incorporated with its theology and ecclesiastical system many dogmas borrowed from its great and fascinating rivals, and almost all their rites and ceremonialism, and practices and institutions, did it make any headway among people of culture. And when these, under the stress of religious persecution or imperial pressure, began entering the fold they brought with them all the elements that have gone to mould modern Christianity with its multitudinous sects. Relentless persecution lasting for centuries secured, however, in the early period of its growth a certain uniformity of faith and doctrines.

Among the masses Isis-worship was transformed into Mariolatry; and Mary the mother of Jesus became, instead of the Egyptian goddess, "the haven of peace," and "the altar of pity." Thenceforth she was worshipped, as she still is among the Latin races, as the "madre de dios."

Asceticism was a favoured institution among the votaries of the Alexandrian divinities; it was practised by the Pythagoreans and Orphics, who had derived much of their inspiration from the hierophants of the Gangetic Delta, among whom it was a common practice; the Christian Church adopted and sanctified this institution for both sexes. From the simple immersion used by John the Baptist, baptism under the influence of the cult of Isis grew into a mystical and cumbersome rite. Communion took the place of initiation; and even the dogma connected with the mysteries of Isis regarding the change of wine into the blood of the mourned god was absorbed into the Christian system. In the tonsured clean-shaven, pale-clad priests, the white robed acolytes, in the gorgeous rituals, "in the form of the sacraments, in the periods of the fasts and festivals" of the Christian Church, looking back through the vista of ages, one is forcibly reminded of the older cults; and the religions which Christianity displaced rise

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1 Dill's Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, chapter v.
2 Legge, Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity, in loco
s.1,
before us in all their pomp and pageantry. We seem to hear once more in the litanies of the Church the beautiful touching hymns sung to the Alexandrian goddess (the Mater dolorosa of the Western pagan world), by a thousand white-robed boys and girls, and it requires but little effort of fancy to carry back the imagination from St. Peter's or St. Paul's to the Serapeum.

The religion of Jesus, as taught by his chief disciples, had, besides these borrowed and adventitious recommendations, distinct and independent claims to draw to itself the homage of those who, in the welter of spiritual conceptions and religious beliefs, were groping in semi-darkness for a resting place where high and low, ignorant and educated, should stand on the same plane. In its higher phases, it appealed to the nobler instincts of mankind if not more forcibly than the Isiac or Mythraic creeds, certainly with greater assurance. Its promise of a life after death was less veiled in mysteries; its doctrines were more positive and concrete than the abstract speculations of the philosophers. It brought solace and comfort to the down-trodden and held forth a promise—not yet fulfilled—of equality and brotherhood among mankind, with an assured trust in future salvation to rich and poor alike among those who accepted its doctrines. Whilst the dogmatism of its preachers often assisted by secular force silenced questioning minds, it satisfied the yearnings of those who, turning from the mysticism of the older cults or fleeing from the hidden indecencies associated with Nature-worship, hungered for an assurance that the existence on earth was but part of a larger life. The whole of the Western pagan world was in short in an expectant mood, waiting for a positive and direct revelation; and all the teachings of the past had attuned its mind to the reception of a call. The Galilean faith seized the opportunity, and after appropriating and absorbing the ritual and doctrinal legacies left by its "Forerunners and Rivals," gradually monopolised the homage of the peoples who had been subjected by Rome. Whether this adaptation of the simple teachings of Jesus, to make them more readily acceptable, was a development or the reverse must remain for the present unanswered. But the charge the Moslems make against his followers that
they corrupted his faith can hardly be said to be altogether unwarranted.

The early cessation of the ministry of Jesus and the absence of any organic teaching, whilst it allowed a freer scope to imagination, perhaps "a freer latitude of faith and practice," 1 as shown in the lives of even the early Christians, furnished an open ground for contending factions to dispute not only about doctrines and discipline, but also as to the nature of their Teacher. The expulsion of the Jews and the Christians from Jerusalem, which abounded in so many traditions relating to Jesus as a man; the intermixture of his followers with the non-Judaic people who surrounded them on all sides, and among whom the Neo-Pythagorean or Platonic ideas as to the government of the universe were more or less prevalent; the very vagueness which surrounded the figure of Jesus in the conception of his followers—soon gave birth to an infinite variety of doctrines and sects. And age after age everything human, "everything not purely ideal, was smoothed away from the adored image of an incarnate God," the essentially pathetic history of Jesus was converted into a "fairy tale," and his life so surrounded with myths that it is now impossible for us to know "what he really was and did."

The fantastic shapes assumed by Christianity in the centuries which preceded the advent of Mohammed are alike interesting and instructive.

The Gnostic doctrines, which were wholly in conflict with the notions of the Judaic Christians, are supposed to have been promulgated towards the end of the first century, almost simultaneously with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Hadrian. Cerinthus, the most prominent of the Gnostic teachers in this century, inculcated among his followers the dual worship of the Father and the Son, whom he supposed to be totally distinct from the man Jesus, "the creator of the world."

The narrowness of Pauline Christianity, and its futile endeavours to reconcile its doctrines with the philosophy of the Alexandrian schools, gave birth about the same time to the Neo-Platonic eclecticism of Ammonius Saccas, adopted after-

1 Mosheim, p. 121.
wards by Origen and other leading Christians. This versatile writer, whose impress is visible in the writings of almost all the prominent thinkers of Christendom in the earlier centuries, endeavoured to bring about a general concordance among all the existing creeds and sects. In some respects, Ammonius was the prototype of Mâni, or Manes, and was undoubtedly above the level of his contemporaries. He succeeded in forming a school, but his teachings never regulated the morals or influenced the faith of a community.

The second century of the Christian era was ushered in in strife and disorder. Divisions and heresies were rife throughout the Christian Church. Gnosticism was in great force, and left its character indelibly impressed on Christianity. Some of the sects which came into prominence in this century deserve a passing notice, as they show not only the evils which flowed from the teachings of the Church, but also the influence exercised upon Christianity by Zoroastrianism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and the ancient Sabæism of the Chaldæans.

The Marcionites, who were perhaps the most important of the early Gnostics, believed in the existence of two principles, the one perfectly good and the other perfectly evil. Between these there existed the Demiurge, an intermediate kind of deity, neither perfectly good nor perfectly evil, but of a mixed nature, who administered rewards and inflicted punishments. The Demiurge was, according to the Marcionite doctrines, the creator of this inferior world, and engaged in perpetual conflict with the Principle of Evil,—mark the impress of the Zoroastrian ideas! The Supreme Principle, in order to terminate this warfare and to deliver from their bondage the human souls, whose origin is celestial and divine, sent to the Jews, "a being most like unto Himself, even His Son Jesus Christ," clothed with a certain shadowy resemblance of a body, that thus he might be visible to mortal eyes. The commission to this celestial messenger was to destroy the empire, both of the Evil Principle and of the Author of this world, and to bring back wandering souls to God. "On this account he was attacked with inexpressible violence and fury by the Principle of Evil" and by the Demiurge, but without effect, since, having a body only in appearance, he was thereby rendered incapable of suffering.
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The Valentinians, whose influence was more lasting, taught that "the supreme God permitted Jesus, His Son, to descend from the upper regions to purge mankind of all the evils into which they had fallen, clothed, not with a real, but with a celestial and aerial body." The Valentinians believed Jesus to be an emanation from the Divine Essence come upon earth to destroy the dominion of the Prince of Darkness.

The Ophites, who flourished in Egypt, entertained the same notions as the other Egyptian Gnostics concerning the æons, the eternity of matter, the creation of the world in opposition to the will of God, the tyranny of the Demiurge, and "the divine Christ united to the man Jesus in order to destroy the empire of this usurper." They also maintained that the serpent, by which Adam and Eve were deceived, was either Christ himself, or Sophia, disguised as a serpent.

Whilst the Gnostic creeds were springing into existence under the influence of Chaldaean philosophy, the Greeks on their side endeavoured to bring about a certain harmony between the Pauline doctrine concerning "the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the two natures united in Christ," and their own philosophical views as to the government of the world. Praxeus was the first of these sophistical preachers of Christianity, and he set the ball rolling by denying any real distinction between the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and maintained that the Father was so intimately united with the man Christ, His Son, that He suffered with him the anguish of an afflicted life, and the torments of an ignominious death!

"These sects," says Mosheim, "were the offspring of philosophy. A worse evil was to befall the Christian Church in the person of Montanus, a native of Phrygia." This man, who disdained all knowledge and learning, proclaimed himself the Paraclete promised by Jesus. He soon succeeded in attaching to himself a large body of followers, the most famous of whom were Priscilla and Maximilla, the prophetesses, "ladies more remarkable for their opulence than for their virtue." They turned Northern Asia into a slaughter-house, and by their insensate fury inflicted terrible sufferings on the human race.

Whilst the Marcionites, Valentinians, Montanists, and the
other Gnostic sects were endeavouring to spread their doctrines throughout the empire of Rome, there arose in Persia a man whose individuality has impressed itself in inefaceable characters on the philosophy of two continents. Mâni was, to all accounts, the most perfect embodiment of the culture of his age. He was an astronomer, a physicist, a musician, and an artist of eminence. The stories relating to his art-gallery 1 have passed into a proverb.

Thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish Cabbala and the teachings of the Gnostic masters, imbued with the ancient philosophy and mysticism of the East, a Magi by birth and Christian by education, he rose in revolt against the jarring discord which surrounded him on all sides, and set himself to the task of creating, from the chaos of beliefs, an eclectic faith which would satisfy all demands, the aspirations of all hearts. The audacity with which Mâni applied himself to undermine the current faiths by an outward profession, joined to a subtle criticism, which destroyed all foundations of belief in the neophyte—a process afterwards imitated by his congeneris, the Ismâ’îliâs, 2—and his assertion, like the Bâtinis, of an esoteric insight into all religious doctrines, armed against him every creed and sect; and naturally, wherever he or his disciples appeared, they were persecuted with unparalleled ferocity.

The doctrine of Mâni was a fantastic mixture of the tenets of Christianity with the ancient philosophy of the Persians and the Chaldaean. According to him, Matter and Mind are engaged in perpetual strife with each other. In the course of this conflict human beings were created by the Principle of Matter endowed with two natures, one divine, the other material, the former being a part of the light or spirit which had been filched from heaven. In order to release the struggling divine soul from the prison in which it was confined, the Supreme God sent from the solar regions an Entity created from His own substance—which was called Christ. Christ accordingly appeared among the Jews clothed with the shadowy form of a human body, and during his ministry taught mortals how to disengage the rational soul from the corrupt body—

1 Arzang-i-Mâni. 2 See post, part ii. chap. x.
to conquer the violence of malignant matter. The Prince of Darkness having incited the Jews to put him to death, he was apparently, but not in reality, crucified. On the contrary, having fulfilled his mission, he returned to his throne in the sun.

The Manichæan Christ thus could neither eat, drink, suffer, nor die; he was not even an incarnate God, but an illusory phantasm—"the all-pervading light-element imprisoned in nature, striving to escape matter, without assuming its forms." However blasphemous and irrational these doctrines may seem, they appear hardly more so to Moslems than the doctrine of transubstantiation, the changing of the eucharistic elements into the actual flesh and blood of the Deity.

Manes divided his disciples into two classes; one, the "elect," and the other, the "hearers." The "elect" were compelled to submit to a rigorous abstinence from all animal food and intoxicating drink, to abjure wedlock and all gratifications of the senses. The discipline appointed for the "hearers" was of a milder kind. They were allowed to possess houses, lands, and wealth, to feed upon flesh, to enter into the bonds of conjugal relationship; but this liberty was granted them with many limitations, and under the strictest conditions of moderation and temperance.

Manes, or Mâni, was put to death by Bahrâm-Gôr, but his doctrines passed into Christianity and were visible in all the struggles which rent the Church in later times.

About the middle of the third century arose the sect of the Sabellians, which marked a new departure in the religion of Jesus. They regarded Jesus as only a man, and believed that a certain energy proceeding from the Supreme Father had united itself with the man Jesus, thus constituting him the son of God. This peculiar doctrine, which Gibbon regards as an approach to Unitarianism, was the cause of serious disorders in the Christian Church, and led to the promulgation in the early part of the fourth century, by Origen, of the doctrine of three distinct personalities in the Godhead. Tritheism was only a modification of the ancient paganism suited to the character of the people who had adopted the creed of Jesus. Polytheism was ingrained in their nature, and tritheism was a compromise between the teachings of Jesus and the ancient
race. At last, in 630 A.D., Heraclius tried to allay the disorders by starting a new sect, that of the Monothelites, whose doctrines were no less monstrous and fantastical. The Monothelites maintained that "Christ was both perfect God and perfect man, and that in him were two distinct natures so united as to cause no mixture or confusion, but to form by their union only one person." Instead, however, of bringing peace into the bosom of the Church of Jesus, the rise of this sect intensified the evil; and Western Asia, Northern Africa, and various parts of Europe continued to be the scene of massacres and murders and every kind of outrage in the name of Christ.

Such was the religious condition of Christendom during the centuries which preceded the advent of Islam.

With the apparent conversion of Constantine, Christianity became the dominant power in the Roman empire. The fate of paganism was sealed. Its downfall, though staved off for a time by the greatest and most sincere of the Roman emperors, had become inevitable. "After the extinction of paganism," says Gibbon, "the Christians, in peace and piety, might have enjoyed their solitary triumph. But the principle of discord was alive in their bosom, and they were more solicitous to explore the nature than to practise the laws of their founder." 1 The whole of Christian Europe was immersed in absolute darkness, and the Church of Jesus was rent with schisms and heresies. The religious conception of the masses had not advanced beyond the pagan stage; the souls of the dead were worshipped in numbers, and the images of those who were honoured in life were objects of adoration. Relic and saint worship had become universal; Christianity had reverted to heathenism.

The social and political condition of the nations subject to the sway of Christianity was equally deplorable. Liberty of thought and freedom of judgment were crushed out from among mankind. And the reign of Christ was celebrated by the sacrifice of heretics who ventured to differ from any idea which predominated for the time.

1 The Emperor Julian (the so-called Apostate) is reported to have said: "No wild beasts are so hostile to man as Christian sects in general are to one another."
INTRODUCTION

In the streets of Alexandria, before the eyes of the civilised world, the noblest woman of antiquity was slaughtered with nameless horrors by a Christian who bears the title of saint in the annals of Christendom, and who, in modern times, has found an apologist. The eloquent pages of Draper furnish a vivid account of the atrocious crime which will always remain one of the greatest blots on Christianity. A beautiful, wise, and virtuous woman, whose lecture-room was full to overflowing with the wealth and fashion of Alexandria, was attacked as she was coming out of her academy by a mob of the zealous professors of Christianity. Amidst the fearful yelling of these defenders of the faith she was dragged from her chariot, and in the public street stripped naked. Paralysed with fear, she was haled into an adjoining church, and there killed by the club of a "saint." The poor naked corpse was outraged and then dismembered; but the diabolical crime was not completed until they had scraped the flesh from the bones with oyster shells and cast the remnants into the fire. Christendom honoured with canonisation the fiend who instigated this terrible and revolting atrocity, and the blood of martyred Hypatia was avenged only by the sword of Amru!

The condition of Constantinople under Justinian, the Christian and the glorified legislator, is the best index to the demoralised and degraded state of society all over Christendom. Public or private virtue had no recognition in the social conceptions; a harlot sat on the throne of the Caesars, and shared with the emperor the honours of the State. Theodora had publicly plied her trade in the city of Constantine, and her name was a byword among its dissolute inhabitants. And now she was adored as a queen in the same city by "grave magistrates, orthodox bishops, victorious generals, and captive monarchs." The empire was disgraced by her cruelties, which recognised no religious or moral restraint. Seditions, outbreaks, and sanguinary tumults, in which the priesthood always took the most prominent part, were the order of the day. On these occasions every law, human or divine, was trampled under foot; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders; no place was safe or sacred from depredations;

1 'Amr(u) ibn al-'Asi or 'As of Arabian history.
the bonds of society were rent asunder, and revolting outrages were perpetrated in broad daylight. Nothing, however, can equal the horrors which were inflicted upon this unholy city during the Nika riots in the fifth year of Justinian's reign. The horrible anarchy of the circus, with its incessant bloodshed and sensuality, stimulated to its worst excesses by the support and encouragement which the imperial champions of orthodoxy extended to the most barbarous of the factions, was unparalleled in any heathen land.

As compared with Constantinople at this period, Persia was a country of order and law.

Humanity revolts from the accounts of the crimes which sully the annals of Christian Constantinople. Whilst the Prophet of Islâm was yet an infant, one of the most virtuous emperors who ever ascended the throne of Byzantium was massacred, with his children and wife, with fearful tortures at the instance of a Christian monarch. The emperor was dragged from his sanctuary, and his five sons were successively murdered before his eyes; and this tragic scene closed with the execution of the emperor himself. The empress and her daughters were subjected to nameless cruelties and then beheaded on the very ground which had been stained with the blood of the poor Emperor Maurice. The ruthless treatment meted out to the friends, companions and partisans of the imperial victim, serves as an index to the morality of the Byzantine Christians. Their eyes were pierced, their tongues were torn from the root, their hands and feet were amputated; some expired under the lash, others in the flames, others again were transfixed with arrows. "A simple, speedy death," says Gibbon, "was a mercy which they could rarely obtain."

The Byzantine empire, slowly bleeding unto death, torn by political and religious factions, distracted with theological wranglings, and "crazed by an insane desire to enforce uniformity of religious belief," offered a wretched spectacle of assassinations, dissoluteness, and brutality.¹

¹ Milman thus describes the Christianity of those days: "The Bishop of Constantinople was the passive victim, the humble slave, or the factious adversary of the Byzantine emperor; rarely exercised a lofty moral control upon his despotism. The lower clergy, whatever their more secret beneficent or sanctifying workings on society, had sufficient power, wealth, and rank
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The countries included in Asiatic Turkey westward of the Euphrates, devastated alternately by the Parthians and the Romans, and then by the Persians and the Byzantines, presented a picture of utter hopelessness. The moral misery of the people was surpassed by their material ruin. The followers of Jesus, instead of alleviating, intensified the evil. Mago-Zoroastrianism combating with a degraded Christianity in Mesopotamia, the Nestorians engaged in deadly conflict with the orthodox party, the earlier contests of Montanus and the prophetesses, had converted Western Asia into a wilderness of despair and desolation.

The whirlwinds of conquest which had passed over Africa, the massacres, the murders, the lawlessness of the professors and teachers of the Christian religion, had destroyed every spark of moral life in Egypt and in the African provinces of the decaying empire. In Europe the condition of the people was, if possible, still more miserable. In the open day, in the presence of the ministers of religion and the people, Narses, the benefactor of his country, was burnt alive in the marketplace of Constantinople. In the streets of Rome, under the eyes of the Exarch, the partisans of rival bishops waged war, and deluged churches with the blood of Christians. Spain exhibited a heart-rending scene of anarchy and ruin. The rich, the privileged few, who held the principal magistracies of the province under the emperors, or who were dignified with the title of magistrates, were exempt from all burdens. They lived in extreme luxury in beautiful villas, surrounded by slaves of both sexes; spending their time in the baths, which were so many haunts of immorality; or at the gaming

to tempt ambition or to degrade to intrigue; not enough to command the public mind for any great salutary purpose, to repress the inveterate immorality of an effete age, to reconcile jarring interests, to mould together hostile races; in general they ruled, when they did rule, by the superstitious fears, rather than by the reverence and attachment of a grateful people. They sank downward into the common ignorance, and yielded to the worst barbarism—a worn-out civilisation. Monasticism withdrew a great number of those who might have been energetic and useful citizens into barren seclusion and religious indolence; but except when the monks formed themselves, as they frequently did, into fierce political or polemic factions, they had little effect on the conditions of society. They stood aloof from the world—the anchorites in their desert wildernesses, the monks in their jealously-barred convents; and secure, as they supposed, of their own salvation, left the rest of mankind to inevitable perdition.3—Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. i. Introd. p. 4.
table, when not engaged in eating and drinking. The sight of this luxury and opulence offered a terrible contrast to the miseries of the masses. The middle class, the free population of the cities and the villages, were ground to the earth by the tyranny of the Romans. Agrarian slavery had disappeared; its place was taken by the colonists, occupying an intermediate position between freedom and slavery. They were in some respects happier than the slaves. They could contract valid marriages; they obtained a limited share of the produce of the lands they cultivated; and their patrons could not take their goods and chattels from them. But in all other respects they were the slaves of the soil. Their personal services were at the disposal of the State. They were liable to corporal chastisement, like the domestic slaves;¹ slaves, not of an individual, but of the soil, they remained attached to the lands they cultivated by an indissoluble and hereditary tie. The condition of the slaves, who formed the bulk of the population, was miserable beyond description. They were treated with pitiless cruelty, worse than cattle. The invasion of the barbarians brought with it a dire punishment upon the ill-fated land. In their wake followed desolation, terrible and absolute; they ravaged, they massacred, they reduced into slavery the women, children, and the clergy.

A vast number of Jews were settled in the peninsula for centuries. The terrible persecutions which they suffered at the hands of the ecclesiastics in the reign of the Visigoth Sisebut in the year 616 A.C., lasted until Islam brought emancipation to the wretched victims of ignorance and fanaticism. It was Islam which rendered possible for Judaism to produce such men as Maimonides or Ibn Gebrol.

Let us turn now to Arabia, that land of mystery and romance, which has hitherto lain enwrapped in silence and solitude, isolated from the great nations of the world, unaffected by their wars or their polity. The armies of the Chosroes and the Caesars had for centuries marched and re-marched by her frontiers without disturbing her sleep of ages. And though the mutterings of the distant thunder, which so frequently rolled across

¹ Three hundred lashes was the usual allowance for trivial faults. See Dozy, Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne, vol. ii. p. 87.
the dominions of the Byzantine and the Persian, often reached her ears, they failed to rouse her from her slumber. Her turn, however, was come, and she found her voice in that of the noblest of her sons.

The chain of mountains which, descending from Palestine towards the Isthmus of Suez, runs almost parallel to the Red Sea down to the southern extremity of the Arabian peninsula, is designated in the Arabic language, Hijâz, or Barrier, and gives its name to all the country it traverses until it reaches the province of Yemen. At times the mountains run close to the sea, at times they draw far away from the coast, leaving long stretches of lowland, barren, desolate, and inhospitable, with occasional green valleys and rich oases formed in the track of the periodical rain-torrents. Beyond this range, and eastward, stretches the steppe of Najd—the "highland" of Arabia—a vast plateau, with deserts, mountain gorges, and here and there green plantations refreshing to the eye. In Hijâz, the barrier-land, lie the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, the birthplace and cradle of Islâm.

This vast region is divided into four tolerably well-defined countries. First, to the north lies Arabia Petræa, including the countries of the ancient Edomites and the Midianites. Then comes Hijâz proper, containing the famous city of Yathrib, known afterwards in history as the City of the Prophet,—Medîna't un-Nabi, or Medîna. South of Hijâz proper lies the province of Tihâma, where are situated Mecca and the port of Jeddah,—the landing-place of the pilgrims of Islâm. The fourth and the southernmost part is called Asyr, bordering on Yemen. Yemen, properly so called, is the country forming the south-western extremity of the Arabian Peninsula, bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the north by Hijâz, and on the east by Hazramaut (Hadhramaut). The name of Yemen is often applied to southern Arabia generally. It then includes, besides Yemen proper, Hazramaut and the district of Mahra to the east of Hazramaut. Beyond Mahra, at the south-east corner of the peninsula, is Oman, and to the north of this al-Bahrain, or al-Ahsa, on the Persian Gulf. This latter country is also called Hijr, from the name of its principal province.
Najd, the highland, is the large plateau which, commencing westward on the eastern side of the mountains of Hijâz, occupies the whole of Central Arabia. That portion of Najd, which borders on Yemen, is called the Najd of Yemen, and the northern part simply Najd. These two divisions are separated by a mountainous province called Yemâma, famous in the history of Islâm. North of Najd, stretches the Syrian desert, not really a part of Arabia, but where the Arab tribes now roam, free and wild, leading a nomadic life like their ancient Aramæan predecessors. North-east are the deserts of Irâk (Barriyat ul-Irâk), bordering the fertile territory of Chaldæa on the right bank of the Euphrates, and separating it from the cultivated portions of Arabia. Eastward, Najd is separated from al-Ahsa by one of those strips of desert called Nafūd by the Arabs. Towards the south lies the vast desert of Dahna. It separates Najd from Hazramaut andMahra.

This vast region, which embraces an area twice the size of France in the height of its power, was then as now inhabited by two different types of people, "the people of the town" and "the dwellers of the desert." The virtues and the defects of the Bedawee, his devotion to his clan, his quixotic sense of honour, with his recklessness and thirst for revenge, and his disregard for human life, have been portrayed in vivid and sympathetic colours by eminent writers like Burton and Poole. But whatever the difference between the Bedouin and the citizen, the Arab is peculiarly the child of the desert. His passionate love of freedom and his spiritual exaltation are the outcome of the free air which he breathes and of the wide expanse which he treads,—conscious of his own dignity and independence. In spite of the annual gatherings at Mecca and 'Ukâz, the tribes and nationalities which inhabited the soil of Arabia were far from homogeneous. Each was more or less distinct from the other in development and religion. This diversity was mainly due to the diversity of their origin. Various races had peopled the peninsula at various times. Many of them had passed away, but their misdeeds or their prowess were fresh in the memory of successive generations, and these traditions formed the history of the nation. The Arabs themselves divide the
races who have peopled the peninsula into three grand subdivisions, viz.: (1) the *Arab ul-Bāidah*, the extinct Arabs, under which are included the Hamitic colonies (Kushites), which preceded the Semites in the work of colonisation, as also the Aramaean populations of Syria, Phoenicia, and other parts; (2) the 'Arab ul-'Āriba, or Mut'ariba, original Arabs, true Semites, whom tradition represents to be descended from Kahtān, or Joktan, and who, in their progress towards the south, destroyed the aboriginal settlers. The Joktanite Arabs, nomads by nature, super-imposed themselves in those countries on the primitive inhabitants, the Hamitic astral-worshippers. Their original cradle was the region whence also came the Abrahamites, and is precisely indicated by the significant names of two of the direct ancestors of Joktan, Arphaxad, "border of the Chaldaean," and Eber, "the man from beyond (the river)," in reference to Babylon, or the district now called Irāk-Araby, on the right bank of the Euphrates.1 (3) The 'Arab ul-Muṣ'tariba, "or naturalised Arabs," Abrahamic Semites, who, either as peaceful immigrants or as military colonists, introduced themselves into the peninsula, and who intermarried and settled among the Joktanite Arabs.2 These three names, 'Āriba, Muṭ'ariba, and Muṣ'tariba, are derived from the same root, and by the modification of their grammatical form indicate the periods when these races were naturalised in the country.3

Among the 'Arab ul-'Āriba, the races which require special mention in connection with the history of Islām are the Banī-'Ād,4 the 'Amālika, the Bani-Thamūd,5 and Banī-Jadis (the Thamudians and Jodicites of Diodorus Siculus and Ptolemy). The Banī-'Ād, Hamitic in their origin, were the first settlers and colonists in the peninsula, and they were established

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1 Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, vol. ii. p. 293
3 Caussin de Perceval regards the Bāidah as the same as 'Āriba, and puts the Muṣ'tariba as forming the second group. In the following pages I adopt his classification.
4 The 'Ādites are said to have been overwhelmed, conquered, and destroyed by the Joktanite Arabs; the Thamūdites, "that strange race of troglodytes," by the Assyrians under Chedorlaomer (Khozār al-Ahmar).
5 With a ﺙ.
principally in that region of Central Arabia, which is called by Arab historians and geographers, the Aḥsāf ur-ramal, contiguous to Yemen, Hazramaut, and Oman. They appear during one period of their existence to have formed a powerful and conquering nation. One of the sovereigns of this race, Shaddād, whose name is preserved in the Koran, seems to have extended his power even beyond the confines of the Arabian peninsula. He is said to have conquered Irāk, and even approached the borders of India. This tradition probably points to the invasion of Babylonia or Chaldaea by the Arabs more than 2000 years before Christ, and possibly might be referred to the same event which, in Persian traditions, is called the invasion of Zahhāk. The same Shaddād, or one of his successors bearing the same name, carried his arms into Egypt and farther west. This invasion of Egypt by the Arabs has been identified with the irruption of the Hyksos into that country. And the way in which the nomadic invaders were ultimately driven out of Africa by a combination of the princes of the Thebaïd, with the assistance of their Ethiopian or Kushite neighbours towards the south, gives some degree of corroboration to the theory.

The bulk of the ‘Ādites are said to have been destroyed by a great drought which afflicted their country. A small remnant escaped and formed the second ‘Ādite nation, which attained considerable prosperity in Yemen. These later ‘Ādites, however, were engulfed in the Joktanide wave.

The Bani-'Amàlika, supposed by Lenormant to be of Aramaean origin, who are undoubtedly the same as the Amalekites of the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures—the Shashu of the Egyptian monuments—expelled from Babylonia by the early Assyrian sovereigns, entered Arabia, and gradually spread themselves in Yemen and Hijâz, as well as Palestine and Syria. They appear to have penetrated into Egypt, and gave her several of her Pharaohs. The ‘Amàlika of Hijâz were either destroyed or driven out by the Bani-Jurhum, a branch of the Bani-Kahtân, who had originally settled in the south, and subsequently moving northwards, overwhelmed the Amàlika.

The Bani-Thamûd, who, like the Bani-‘Ād, were Kushite
or Hamitic, inhabited the borders of Edom and afterwards the country named Hijr, situated to the east of Arabia Petraea, and between Hijāz and Syria. These people were troglodytes, and lived in houses carved in the side of rocks. Sir Henry Layard, in his Early Travels, has described the ruins of these rocky habitations, and one can fix the exact location of the Thamudites by comparing the Arabian traditions with the accounts of modern travellers and the results of recent discoveries. As the "indispensable middlemen" of the commerce between Syria and Najd or Hijāz, the Thamudites attained a high degree of prosperity. They were, ultimately, in great part exterminated by Chedorlaomer (Khuzār al-Ahmar), the great Elamite conqueror, in the course of his victorious campaigns in Syria and Arabia. The terrible fate which overtook these ancient cave-dwellers, who, in their solid habitations, considered themselves safe from divine wrath, is often referred to in the Koran as a warning to the Koreishites.

After this disaster, the rest of the Banī-Thamūd retreated to Mount Seir, on the north of the Elamitic Gulf, where they lived in the times of Isaac and Jacob. But they soon disappeared, doubtless absorbed by the neighbouring tribes, and their place was taken by the Édomites who held Mount Seir for a time.¹ These Edomites were apparently succeeded in their possessions by a body of Arabs driven from Yemen by the Banī-Kaḥtān. In the days of Diodorus Siculus, under the same name as their predecessors they furnished contingents to the Roman armies.

Leaving the Tasm and Jadīs and other smaller tribes, as too unimportant to require any specific mention, we come to the Banī-Jurhum, who, also, are classed under the head of 'Arab ul-'Āriba, and who appear to have overwhelmed, destroyed, and replaced the 'Amālik in Hijāz. There seem to have been two tribes of that name, one of them, the most ancient, and contemporaneous with the 'Ādites, and probably Kushite in their origin; the other, descendants of Kaḥtān, who, issuing from the valley of Yemen in a season of great sterility, drove out the 'Amalekite tribes of Hijāz, and established themselves in their possessions. The irruption of the

¹ Gen. xiv. 4, 6.
Bani-Jurhum, of Kahtanite origin, is said to have taken place at a time when the Ishmaelitic Arabs were acquiring prominence among the 'Amâlika, in whose country they had been long settled. The Ishmaelites entered into amicable relations with the invading hordes, and lived side by side with them for a period. Before the advancing tide of the descendants of Ishmael, the Jurhumites began gradually to lose their hold over the valley, and before a century was well over the dominion of Hijâz and Tihâma passed into the hands of the Abrahamitic Arabs. The development of the Must'ariba Arabs suffered a temporary check from the inroad of the Babylonian monarch, but, as we shall see later, they soon recovered their vitality, and spread themselves over Hijâz, Najd, and the deserts of Irâk and Mesopotamia, where they finally absorbed the descendants of Kahtân, their predecessors.

The 'Arab ul-Mut'ariba were tribes sprung from Kahtân, son of Eber, and were chiefly concentrated in Yemen. The descendants of Kahtân had burst into Arabia from its northeast corner, and had penetrated down into the south, where they lived for a time along with the 'Adites of the race of Kush, subject to their political supremacy, and at last became the governing power. The population sprung from Kahtân was not, however, exclusively confined to Southern Arabia. Their primitive cradle lay in Mesopotamia. In moving southward from that locality to Yemen, the Kahtanite tribes must have passed through the whole length of the Arabian peninsula, and no doubt left some settlements behind them along their route.

According to the Arab historians, the wave which entered the peninsula at this period was headed by two brothers, Kahtân and Yaktân, the sons of Eber or Heber. And it was the son of Kahtân, Yareb, whom they regard as the first prince of Yemen, who gave his name to all his descendants and to the whole of the peninsula. Yareb is said to have been succeeded by his son Yeshhad, founder of Mereb, the ancient capital of the realm, and father of the famous Abd ush-Shams, surnamed Saba. This surname, which means Capturer, was given to him on account of his victories. The posterity of

1 Ibn ul-Athîr calls him Ghâhir or 'Abîr.
Saba became the progenitors of the various tribes of Kahtanite descent, famous in Arab traditions. Saba left two sons, Himyar (which means red) and Kuhlan. The former succeeded to his father’s throne, and it was after him that the dynasty of Saba were called Himyari or Himyarite. His descendants and those of Kuhlan, his brother and successor, alternately ruled Yemen until the century before Mohammed. To this dynasty belonged the great Zu’llkarnain, and the celebrated Bilkis, who went to Jerusalem in the time of Solomon.

1 From the red mantle which he used to wear in imitation of the Pharaohs.

2 The Himyarite sovereigns of Yemen, who were styled Tobbas, seem to have been from the earliest times in communication both with Persia and Byzantium.

3 There is considerable doubt as to the identity of Zu’llkarnain. Several Mohammedan historians have thought that the Zu’llkarnain referred to in the Koran is identical with Alexander of Macedon. This opinion, however, is open to question. Zu’llkarnain in its primitive sense means “the lord of two horns.” When we remember the head-dress worn by the ancient Sabæan sovereigns, the crescent-shaped moon with its two horns, borrowed probably from Egypt about the period of this king, there can be little room for doubt that the reference in the Koran is to some sovereign of native origin, whose extensive conquests became magnified in the imagination of posterity into a world-wide dominion.

Lenormant thinks that Shaddad, Zu’llkarnain, and Balkis were all Kushites. Judaism was strongly represented among the subjects of the Himyarite sovereigns, and in the year 343 A.C., at the instance of an ambassador sent to Yemen by the Emperor Constantine, several Christian churches were erected in their dominions. But the bulk of the nation adhered to the primitive Semitic cult.

Towards the end of the fifth century, Zu-Nawas, known to the Byzantines as Dimion, made himself the master of Yemen and its dependencies, after slaying the ferocious usurper, Zu-Shinatur. His cruel persecution of the Christians, under the instigation of the Jews, whose creed he had adopted, drew upon him the vengeance of the Byzantine emperor. Instigated from Constantinople, an Abyssinian army, under the command of Hante or Aryat, landed on the shores of Yemen, defeated and killed Zu-Nawas, and made themselves masters of Yemen. This occurred about 525 A.C.

Shortly afterwards (537 A.C.) Aryat was killed by Abraha al-Ashram, who subsequently became the Abyssian viceroy. It was under Abraha that the Christian Abyssinians made their abortive attempt to conquer Hijaz. Yemen remained under the Abyssinian domination for nearly half a century, when M’adi Karib, the son of the famous Saif zu’l Ycezen, whose heroic deeds are sung up to the present day by the Arabs of the desert, restored the Himyarite dynasty (573 A.C.) with the help of an army furnished by Kesra Anushirvan. On M’adi Karib’s assassination by the Christians in 597, Yemen came under the direct domination of Persia, and was ruled by viceroys appointed by the court of Ctesiphon. Wahraz was the first Marzbân. Under him Yemen, Hazramaut, Mahra, and Oman were added to the Persian empire. The last of these viceroys was Bazzan, who became Marzbân under Khusru Parviz towards the year 606. It was during the viceroyalty of Bazzan that Islam was introduced into Yemen, and he himself accepted the Faith. The Persian
The traditions respecting the early Ishmaelite settlement in Arabia relate back to the time of Abraham and his expulsion or expatriation from Chaldæa. The descendants of Ishmael prospered and multiplied in Hijâz until they, with their allies the Jurhumites, were overwhelmed and almost destroyed by the formidable king of Babylonia, Nebuchadnezzar, who, of all the monarchs that endeavoured to attack the heart of Arabia, was alone successful in wounding it seriously. The foundation of Mecca was apparently co-eval with the establishment of the Abrahamic Arabs in the peninsula, for according to the Arab traditions a Jurhumite chief named Meghass ibn-Amr, whose daughter was married to the progenitor of the Must'ariba Arabs, Ishmael or Ismâ'il, was the founder of the city. About the same time was built the temple which gave Mecca an overwhelming predominance over the other cities of Arabia. Built by Abraham, that "Saturnian father of the tribes," in the remotest antiquity, the Kaaba ever remained the holiest and most sacred of the temples of the nation. Here were ranged the three hundred and sixty idols, one for each day, round the great god Hobal, carved of red agate, the two ghazâlas, gazelles of gold and silver, and the image of Abraham and of his son. Here the tribes came, year after year, "to kiss the black stone which had fallen from heaven in the primeval days of Adam, and to make the seven circuits of the temple naked." Mecca was thus from the earliest times the centre, not only of the religious associations of the Arabs, but also of their commercial enterprises. Standing on the highway of the commerce of antiquity, it gathered to itself the wealth and culture of the neighbouring countries. Not even the Babylonian monarch could touch her mercantile prosperity; for, from the necessity of their situation, the Arabs of Hijâz became the carriers of the nations of the world.

Mecca was the centre of the commercial activity which has distinguished the Arabs at all times from the other nations of the East. From Mecca eradiated the caravans which carried to the Byzantine dominions and to Persia the rich products of domination of Yemen was extremely mild. All religions enjoyed equal toleration, and the chiefs of the different tribes exercised their authority in their different tracts, subject to the control of the Marzbân.
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Yemen and the far-famed Ind, and brought from Syria the silks and stuffs of the Persian cities. But they brought with them more than articles of trade; in the train of these caravans came all the luxurious habits and vices which had corroded the very heart of the neighbouring empires. Grecian and Persian slave girls, imported from Syria and Irak, beguiled the idle hours of the rich with their dancing and singing, or ministered to their vices. The poet, whose poems formed the pride of the nation, sung only of the joys of the present life, and encouraged the immorality of the people. And no one beheld himself of the morrow.

The Arabs, and especially the Meccans, were passionately addicted to drinking, gambling, and music. Dancing and singing, as in other Eastern countries, were practised by a class of women occupying a servile position, who were called Kiyân, or, in the singular, Kayna, and whose immorality was proverbial. And yet they were held in the highest estimation, and the greatest chiefs paid public court to them. As among the Hindus, polygamy was practised to an unlimited extent. A widow (other than the mother) was considered an integral part of her deceased husband’s patrimony, and passed into the use of the son; and the atrocious and inhuman practice of burying female infants was universal.

The Jews, chased successively from their native homes by the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans, had found among the Arabs safety and protection. But they had brought with their religion that bitter spirit of strife which was perhaps the cause of the greater portion of their misfortunes. They had succeeded, however, in gaining in Arabia a considerable body of proselytes; and at the time when Mohammed proceeded to announce his mission, Judaism was professed in Yemen by a notable fraction of the descendants of Himyar.

The moral depravity of the people is evidenced by the fact that these women used to give receptions, which were attended by all the men of light and leading in the city.

The town Arab was so passionately addicted to dice that he would frequently, like the Germans of Tacitus, stake away his own liberty. It was on account of these evils, and the immoralities associated with their practice, that Mohammed wisely prohibited to his followers gambling, dancing, and drinking of wine. The Ommeyyades revived all the three evils; they represented, in fact, the uprise of the old paganism, which had been stamped out with such labour by the great Prophet.
and Kinda, issue of Kuhlân; at Khaibar and at Yathrib, by the Kuraizha and the Nazîr, tribes of Ishmaelite origin, but naturalised as Arabs from very ancient times. The Nestorians and the Jacobite Christians had also founded colonies in Arabia. The deadly rivalry between these two creeds to dominate over Arabia occasioned sanguinary wars in the most fertile provinces.\textsuperscript{1} Christianity had commenced to introduce itself among some families of the race of Rabî‘a son of Nizâr, such as the Taglibites established in Mesopotamia, and the Bani Abd ul-Kais who were settled in al-Bahrain. It flourished at Najrân among the Bani-l-Hârith ibn Ka‘b; in Irâk, among the Ibâd; in Syria, among the Ghassanids and some Khuzait families; at Dûmat ul-Jandal, among the Saconi and Bani-Kalb. And some of the tribes who roamed over the desert that lay between Palestine and Egypt were also Christians. Magism and Sabæism had also their representatives among the Arabs, and specially among the Himyarites: the Bani-Asad worshipped Mercury; the Jodhâm, Jupiter; the Bani-Tay, Canopus; the descendants of Kais-Aylan, Sirius;\textsuperscript{2} a portion of the Koreish, the three moon-goddesses—al-Lât, the bright moon, al-Manât the dark, and al-‘Uzza, the union of the two,—who were regarded as the daughters of the high god (Banât-ullâh) Mecca was, at this time, the centre of a far-reaching idolatry, ramifications of which extended throughout the tribes of the peninsula. The Kinânâ, closely allied to the Koreish politically and by blood, besides the star Aldobaran, served the goddess ‘Uzza, represented by a tree at a place called Nakhla, a day and a half’s journey from Mecca. The Hawâzin, who roamed towards the south-east of Mecca, had for their favourite idol the goddess Lât, located at Tâyef. Manât was represented by a rock on the caravan road between Mecca and Syria. The worship of these idols was chiefly phallic, similar in character to that which prevailed among the ancient Semites, the Phœnicians and the Babylonians. But the majority of the nation, especially the tribes


\textsuperscript{2} Koran, sura xli 37.
belonging to the race of Mozar, were addicted to fetishism of a very low type. Animals and plants, the gazelle, the horse, the camel, the palm-tree, inorganic matter like pieces of rock, stones, etc., formed the principal objects of adoration. The idea of a Supreme Divinity, however, was not unrecognised; but its influence was confined to an inappreciable few, who, escaping from the bondage of idolatry, betook themselves to a philosophical scepticism, more or less tinged with the legendary notions, religious and secular, of their neighbours, the Sabæans, the Jews, or the Christians. Among these some distinctly recognised the conception of the supreme Godhead, and, revolting at the obscenities and gross materialism of their day, waited patiently for the appearance of a Deliverer who, they felt in their hearts, would soon appear.

Among some tribes, in the case of a death, a camel was sacrificed on the tomb, or allowed to die from starvation, in the belief that it would serve as a conveyance for the deceased in a future existence. Some believed that when the soul separated itself from the body, it took the shape of a bird called Hama or Sada. If the deceased was the victim of a violent death, the bird hovered over the grave, crying askuni, "Give me drink," until the murder was avenged. Belief in Jins, ghous, and oracles rendered by their idols, whom they consulted by means of pointless arrows, called Azlâm or Kidâh, was universal. Each tribe had its particular idols and particular temples. The priests and hierophants attached to these temples received rich offerings from the devotees. And often, there arose sanguinary conflicts between the followers or the worshippers of rival temples.¹

But the prestige of the Kaaba, the chapel of Abraham and Ishmael, stood unimpeached among all. Even the Jews and the Sabæans sent offerings there. The custody of this temple was an object of great jealousy among the tribes, as it conferred on the custodians the most honourable functions and privileges in the sight of the Arabs. At the time of Mohammed's birth

¹ Among others, the temple of Zu'l-Khulâsa in Yemen, belonging to the tribe of Bani-Khatûm; the temple of Rodha in Najd, belonging to the Bani Rabî'â; the temple of Zu Sabât in Irâk; and that of Manât at Kodây, not far from the sea, belonging to the tribe of Aus and Khazraj, domiciled at Yathrib—were the most famous.
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this honour was possessed by his family; and his grandfather was the venerable chief of the theocratic commonwealth which was constituted round the Kaaba. Human sacrifices were frequent. Besides special idols located in the temples each family had household penates which exacted rigorous observances.

Such was the moral and religious condition of the Arabs. Neither Christianity nor Judaism had succeeded in raising them in the scale of humanity. "After five centuries of Christian evangelization," says Muir, "we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christians;—the Banī Hārith of Najran; the Banī Hanifa of Yemāma; some of the Banī Tay at Tayma, and hardly any more. Judaism, vastly more powerful, had exhibited a spasmodic effort of proselytism under Zu Nawās; but, as an active and converting agent the Jewish faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a thralldom, rigorous and undisputed." ¹

The divisions and jealousies of the tribes,² combined with the antagonistic feelings which actuated one against the other from religious and racial differences, had enabled the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Persians, and Abyssinians, to become masters of various provinces in the north, in the east, and in the south-west. The Abyssinians had even gone so far as to invade Hijāz, with the intention of destroying the national temple. But their power was broken before Mecca by the sturdy patriotism of Abd ul-Muttalib. After twenty years' oppression, they were driven out of Yemen with the assistance of Persia, by a native prince, the son of the celebrated Saif zu'l-Yezen. On his assassination by the Christians, the

¹ Muir, vol i Introd. p. ccxxxix.
² These tribal jealousies and family feuds, which I shall have to describe later, were the causes which led to the ruin of the Arab empire.
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sovereignty he had enjoyed under the auspices of the great 
Ardushirvān passed entirely into Persian hands, and Yemen 
became tributary to Persia.¹

Besides the direct domination which the rival empires of 
Constantinople and Ctesiphon exercised over the various 
provinces of Arabia, two of the greatest chieftains, the kings 
of Ghasṣān and of Ḥira, divided their allegiance between the 
Caesars and the Chosroes; and in the deadly wars, profitless 
and aimless, which Persian and Byzantine waged against 
each other, sucking out the lifeblood of their people from 
mere lust of destruction, though oftener the right was on the 
side of the Zoroastrian than the Christian, the Ghassanide and 
Ḥirite stood face to face in hostile array, or locked in mortal 
combat.²

The heterogeneous elements of which the Arabian peninsula 
was thus composed gave an extremely varied character to the 
folklore of the country. Among uncultured nations, the 
tendency is always to dress facts in the garb of legends. Im-
agination among them not only colours with a roseate hue, 
but magnifies distant objects. And the variety of culture 
multiples legends, more or less based on facts. The Hamitic 
colonies of Yemen and of the south-west generally; the true 
Semites who followed in their footsteps, like the Aryans in 
the East; the Jews, the Christians,—all brought their traditions, 
their myths, their legends with them. In the course of ages, 
these relics of the past acquired a consistency and character, 
but however unsubstantial in appearance, on analysis there is 
always to be found underlying them a stratum of fact. In 
the legend of Shaddād and his garden of Irem, we see in the 
hazy past the reflection of a mighty empire, which even con-
quered Egypt—"of a wealthy nation, constructors of great 
buildings, with an advanced civilization analogous to that of

¹ Ibn ul-Athir, vol i. pp. 324, 327; Caussin de Perceval, vol. i. p. 138 
² The sedentary portion of the Arab population of Yemen, of Bahrain and 
Irāk, obeyed the Persians The Bedouins of these countries were in reality 
free from all yoke. The Arabs of Syria were subject to the Romans; those 
of Mesopotamia recognised alternately the Roman and Persian rule. The 
Bedouins of Central Arabia and of Ḥiyāz, over whom the Himyarite kings had 
exercised a more or less effective sovereignty, had nominally passed under 
Persian rule, but they enjoyed virtual independence.
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Chaldaea, professing a religion similar to the Babylonian; a nation, in short, with whom material progress was allied to great moral depravity and obscene rites.”¹ In the traditional, half-legendary, half-historic destruction of the ‘Ādites and the Thamudites, we see the destructive fate which overwhelmed these Hamitic races before the Semitic tide, Assyrian and Arab.²

The children of Jacob, flying from their ruthless enemies, brought their legends and traditions with them, and thus contributed their quota to the folklore of the Peninsula. The last of the Semitic colonies that entered Arabia was acknowledged by themselves as well as their neighbours to be descended from Abraham; and tradition had handed down this belief, and given it a shape and character.

Manicheism, stamped out from Persia and the Byzantine dominions, had betaken itself to Arabia.³ The early Docetes, the Marcionites, the Valentinians, all had their representatives in this land of freedom. They all disseminated their views and traditions, which in course of time became intermixed with the traditions of the country. These Christians, more consistent in their views than their orthodox persecutors, believed that the God incarnate, or at least the Son of God, His Word, born in the bosom of eternity, an Æon, an Emanation issuing from the Throne of Light, could not, did not, die on the cross; that the words of agony which orthodox Christian traditions put into the mouth of Jesus did not, and could not, escape from his lips; in short, that the man who suffered on the cross was a different person from the Divine Christ, who escaped from the hands of his persecutors and went away to the regions whence he had come.⁴ This doctrine, however fanciful, was more consistent with the idea of the sonship of Jesus, and in itself appears to have been based on some strong probabilities. The intense desire of Pilate, whom Tertullian calls a Christian at heart, to save Jesus;⁵ even the unwillingness of Herod

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³ Beausobre, Hist. du Manicheisme, pt. i. l. ii. chap. iv.
⁴ Mosheim and Gibbon, in loco.
⁵ Blunt, History of the Christian Church, p 138.
to incur more odium by the murder of the Prophet of Nazareth; the darkness of the short hours when that great benefactor of humanity was led forth for the consummation of the frightful scenes which had continued throughout the night; the preternatural gloom which overshadowed the earth at the most awful part of this drama;¹ all these coincident circumstances lend a strong probability to the belief that the innocent escaped and the guilty suffered.²

Before the Advent of Mohammed, all these traditions, based on fact though tinged by the colourings of imagination, must have become firmly imbedded in the convictions of the people, and formed essential parts of the folklore of the country. Mohammed, when promulgating his faith and his laws, found these traditions current among his people; he took them up and adopted them as the lever for raising the Arabs and the surrounding nations from the depths of social and moral degradation into which they had fallen.

The light that shone on Sinai, the light that brightened the lives of the peasants and fishermen of Galilee, is now aflame on the heights of Fârân!³

² Anything could lend stronger probability to this curious belief, it ought to be the circumstantial account of Luke xxiv. 36 et seq, about Jesus allowing himself to be touched and felt (after the resurrection) in order to calm his afflicted disciples, who believed him to be a spirit; and his asking for “ meat” and partaking of “ a broiled fish and of a honey-comb.”
³ The tradition which I have paraphrased into English is as follows:—

"Sâr," says Yâkût in his Geographical Encyclopaedia, "is a hill in Palestine and Fârân is the hill of Mecca;" Mu’jam ul-Buldân, vol. iii. p 834.