

It is a singular combination of strength and weakness, and is a manifest compromise in the realm of religious doctrine and practical ethics. As against polytheism and idolatry it is a saving force in the world, and brings men back to essential truth, although the Koranic Deity resembles rather some mutilated fragment of a splendid classical statue dug out of the *débris* of an ancient ruin, than the living God of Christian revelation. It is coldly grand, and within certain lines it is artistically beautiful, but so sadly mutilated that it is only a suggestion of the perfection and grace of the living original. The God of Christian revelation comes into touch with humanity and makes Himself a part of the spiritual life of the believer in a sense which is utterly foreign to the Moslem ideal.

When we have given to Islam the credit of this one great central truth, and its correlative teachings of Divine sovereignty and control, we have practically exhausted all that can be said in its favor as a religious force in the world. Its terrible weaknesses and failures appear in the realm of practical religion and ethics. Its views of personal righteousness are the very acme of Phariseeism, and its vain attempt to adjust the ethics of social and domestic life show plainly that it moves in an earthly atmosphere and is colored by the local sentiment and coarse morality of heathen Arabia. It should be noted, however, in fairness that the watchword of Mohammed in his ethical code was restraint rather than license. He sought to reform by limiting existing evils. His policy was to temporize along lines of expediency, rather than to establish an ideal moral code. The suppression of individual liberty in Islam, its monumental intolerance, its alliance with military power, its undistinguishable combination of State and Church, all mark it as of the earth, earthly. It is cast in entirely another mould from Christianity. As a religion it is like the loose, flowing garment of the typical Oriental—it is slipped on over human nature as it is, and while it gives a certain dignity to the appearance, at the same time it serves a useful purpose in covering up much that is better hid from the light of truth and the sensibilities of moral refinement.

Islam is a religion which has seized upon the great fundamental truth of all religions, the existence of one God, and has adjusted this truth to the human consciousness of the average Oriental with the least possible friction with human nature, and the least possible disturbance of the desires and passions of fallen humanity. It commends itself to the darkened reason and the unregenerate nature of man with great skill, and has succeeded in commanding an adamant faith and devotion on the part of its followers, while holding its own with the prestige given by undoubted historical facts and by the overshadowing power of military supremacy in the regions where it has prevailed.

It captured the Eastern world in an age of spiritual weakness, formality, and religious degeneracy. It has seemed in time past, and still seems to the great mass of its followers, to be a substantially authenticated religion. It is regarded by them as the latest and fullest phase of