

martyrs, are held up to reverence as teachers and witnesses of what then was the truth, just as we look on the prophets and worthies of Old Testament history. The strictly theological difficulty in embracing Islam must have been greater to the Christian than to the Jew; but the Jew had to make, what the Christian had not humiliating confession that he and his fathers had already refused the latest manifestation of God's will. Here most likely was the great stumbling-block which hindered Arabian professors of Judaism from accepting a teaching which otherwise must have had so many attractions for them. Certain it is that in some of his very latest revelations, Mahomet speaks most bitterly of the Jews as enemies to his teaching no less stubborn than the idolators themselves. But of the Christians he speaks with the greatest tenderness, as men well disposed to Islam and easily won over to its full profession. Yet in another Sura of nearly the same date, we find Jews and Christians alike charged with the guilt of idolatry, and God is implored to do battle against both alike. And in this last stage, when he was making ready for his attack on the Roman Empire, Mahomet practically dealt out the same measure to the Christian which he dealt out to the Jew and the idolator. To all alike the alternative was now offered of Koran, tribute, or sword.

The relation which Islam in the end took up towards both Judaism and Christianity must be borne in mind. Each of the successive dispensations is a republication of the earlier one, but all alike are declared to be republications of the original faith of Abraham. Abraham, it must be remembered, fills a still greater place in Mahometan than he does in Jewish memories. He is not only the forefather and the prophet; he is also the local founder of the national worship. The Kaaba of Mecca was the temple reared by Abraham and Ishmael to the one true God, and it was only in the course of ages of corruption that it came to be desecrated into a shrine of idol-worship. As Western criticism will attach very little value to the endless genealogies of early Arabian tradition, so it will attach just as little value to the legend of

the Abrahamic origin of Mecca and its sanctuary. It may be a native legend; it may have arisen from the spreading abroad of Jewish ideas; in either case the *origines* of Mecca stand out the same ground, from an historical point of view, as the *origines* of Rome and Athens. The famous black stone sinks in the eye of criticism into the fetish of some early superstition, and the strange rites of the Meccan pilgrimage come within the sphere of the historian of 'Primitive Culture.' But the belief in Abraham as the founder of the Kaaba, worthless as the statement as an historical fact, becomes of the highest moment as a belief which had no small influence on the mind and the career of Mahomet. Local reverence for the local sanctuary was strong in his mind through his whole life. It stands forth with special prominence in the tale of the War of the Elephant, how Abraham, the Christian King of Hamyar, marched against the holy place and was driven back by a miraculous interposition. Mahomet records the tale with glee; yet, according to his own view, Abraham, a professor of what was then God's last revelation, ought to have been looked on as a forestaller of his own work, as one sent to cleanse the Kaaba from its idolatrous defilement. But local feeling was too strong for consistency, and the preacher of the unity of God could rejoice over the overthrow of the man who, in smiting down the idols of Mecca, would have made Mecca a vassal city. But to do the work in which Abraham failed, to sweep away all taint of idolatry from the ancient sanctuary, was from the beginning one of Mahomet's most cherished objects, as its actual accomplishment was the most striking outward badge of his success. As long as he had hopes of winning over the professors of the other monotheistic creeds, this tendency was to some extent kept in the background. He chose Jerusalem, the Holy City of both Jews and Christians, to be equally the Holy City of Islam, to be the point to which his followers, like Daniel in his captivity, were to turn their faces in prayer. When he found that there was no hope of an union of all "the people of the book"—of all the believers in the successive revelations—he turned away