

CHAPTER 3

THE DOCTRINES OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, as understood and believed by Christians of both Roman Catholic and Protestant, persuasions, means the Three Creeds, namely, the Apostles, The Nicene and the Athanasian. The cardinal doctrines Christianity are (1) the Trinity, (2) the Divinity of Jesus Christ, (3) the divinesonship of Jesus, (4) the Original Sin, and (5) the Atonement. The religion of Islam has no place in it for any of these dogmas. It believes in the Oneness of God as against the God of Christianity. It considers the Christian deification of Jesus to be a reversion to paganism. According to the Holy Quran Jesus was not an incarnation of God but a Prophet or Messenger of God, and like all other prophets (including the Prophet Muhammad), he was every bit a human being. Islam also rejects the Divine-sonship of Jesus. He may be called a son of God in the sense in which all righteous human beings may be called the children of God, but not in any literal or special sense. In the same way Islam

rejects the dogmas of the Original Sin, the Vicarious Sacrifice and the Atonement.

The fundamental doctrines of Islam are (1) the Unity of God, (2) the belief in the Prophets raised by God among all the nations of world, (3) the belief in the revelations sent by God to the prophets to guide human beings to truth and righteousness, (4) the inherent sinlessness of human nature and man's capacity for unlimited moral and spiritual progress (through belief in God and faithful adherence to the inspired teachings of the prophets), (5) personal accountability and universal brotherhood of mankind.

Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is that there are three separate and distinct Divine Persons in Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Athanasian Creed states :

“There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the God-

head of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal... The Father is God, the Son. is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God...

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods, or three Lords.”

This is obviously self-contradictory. it is like saying one plus one plus one is three, yet it is one. If there are three separate and distinct Divine Persons and each is God, then there must be three Gods. The Christian Church recognizes the impossibility of harmonizing the belief in three Divine Persons with the oneness of God, and hence declares the doctrine of the Trinity to be a mystery, in which a person must have blind faith. This is what the Rev. J.F. De Groot writes in his book Catholic Teaching:

“The Most Holy Trinity is a mystery in the strictest sense of the word. For reason alone cannot Prove the existence of a Triune God, Revelation teaches it. And even after the existence of the mystery has been revealed to us, it remains impossible for the human intellect to grasp how the Three Persons have but one Divine Nature.”¹

Strangely enough, Jesus Christ himself never even mentioned the Trinity. He knew Or said nothing at all about there being three Divine Persons in Godhead. His conception of God was in no way different from that of the earlier Israelite prophets, who had always preached the Unity Of God and never the Trinity. Jesus merely echoed the earlier prophets when he said :

1. Rev. J.F.De Groot, Catholic Teaching, P.101

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord. and that thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength”. (Mark 12:29,30).

He believed in One Divine Person, One God, as is evident from the following saying :

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve". (Matthew 4:10).

The doctrine of the Trinity was coined by the Christians about three hundred years after Jesus. The four Canonical Gospels, written between 70 and 115 C. E, contain no reference to the Trinity. Even St. Paul, who imported many foreign ideas into Christianity, knew nothing of the Triune God. The New Catholic Encyclopaedia (bearing the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur indicating official approval) admits that the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown to the early Christians and that it was formulated in the last

quarter of the fourth century:

"It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette. Two things have happened. There is the recognition on the part of exegetes and Biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics, that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel, recognition on the part of historians of dogma and systematic theologians that when one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origin to, say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three

persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought."I

A little, later the same Encyclopaedia says even more emphatically :

"The formulation one God in three persons' was not solidly established into Christian life and its profession ,of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century. But it is precisely this formulation that has first claim to the title the Trinitarian dogma. Among the Apostolic, Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a entality or perspective." I

So the doctrine of the Trinity was not taught by Jesus Christ, 'It is nowhere found in the Bible (both the Old and the new Testaments), it was completely foreign to the mentality and perspective of the early Christians; it became a part of the Christian faith towards the end of the fourth century.

1. The New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967), art, "The Holy Trinity", Volume 14, P.295.

1. The New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967), art "The Holy Trinity", Volume 14, P.299

Rationally considered also the dogma of the trinity is untenable. It is not just beyond reason, it is repugnant to reason. As we said earlier, the belief in three Divine Persons is incompatible with the oneness of God. If there are three distinct and separate Persons, then there must be three distinct and separate Substances, for every person is able from its own substance. Now if the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, then unless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three distinct Nothings, they must be three distinct Substances, and consequently three distinct Gods. Furthermore the free Divine Persons are either infinite or finite. If infinite, then there are three distinct Infinites, three Omnipotents, three Eternals, and so three Gods. If they are finite, then we are led to the absurdity of conceiving of an Infinite Being having three finite modes of subsisting or of three Persons who are separately finite making up a conjunction. The fact is

that the Three Persons are finite then neither the Father, nor Son, nor yet the Holy Ghost is God.

The doctrine of the Trinity was developed as a consequence of the deification of two creatures, Jesus Christ and the mysterious Holy Ghost, and their association with God as partners in his Godhead. As explained in Christian literature it amounts to the separate personification of three attributes of God. Whether considered from historical viewpoint or otherwise, it is a regression from rational theology to mythology. For, at the root of all mythologies lies the irrational tendency of the human mind to deify great men and personify non-personal forces and attributes and to present them as Divine Persons.

Islam preaches the plain and simple Unity of God. It presents a corruption of God, which is free from anthropomorphic or mythological fancies. It affirms the uniqueness of God and says that He has no partners in his Godhead. He is one in person and one in

substance-the two being indistitigishable. He is the Self-sufficient One, on whom all depend and Who, depends not on any one. He is the Creator and Nourisher of all, the All-Good, the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Loving, the All-Merciful, the Eternal and the Infinite. He neither begets, nor is begotten. Nothing can come out of Him and become His equal and partner in Godhead.

"Say : He is God, the One

God, the eternally Besouht of all.

He begetteth not nor was begotten.

And there is notie comparable unto Him"

(al-ouran 112:11-4).

"Your God Is One God; there is no God save Him, the All-Loving, the All-Merciful. Lo! in the creation of heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day and the ships which run upon the sea worth that which is of ure to men, and the water which God sendeth down from the sky thereby reviving the

earth after Its death. and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein. and in the ordinance of the winds. and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth, are signs (of God's unity and sovereignty) for people who have sense." (2:163.1.64)

"God there is no God save Him. the ALive. the Eternal Neither slumber nor sleep overtaken Him. Unto Him, belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedetli with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that whicle is in front of them and that which is behind them. while they encompass nothing of His knowledge tave what He will His throne includeth the heavens and the earth. and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime the Absolute." (2:255).

The Divinity of Jesus

The second Christian dogmas is that of the Godhood of Jesus. The Athanasian Creed states:

"Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Christians (both Roman Catholics and Protestants) believe that Jesus Christ is God from all eternity, the Second Person of the Divine Trinity ; that nearly two thousand years ago he chose to appear in a human body and was born of the Virgin Mary.

The author of Catholic Teaching asserts, the Godhood of Jesus in these words :

"This teaching about Christ's divinity which is to be found in so many places of scripture, has always been proclaimed by the church as one of the, most important truths of Catholic Faith. The Council of Nicaea, which was the first General Council after the persecutions, solemnly condemned Arius who contended that Christ was not God but a creature." 1

1. Rev. J.F. De Groot, Catholic Teaching, P. 149.

The Protestant author of The Truth of Christianity expresses himself as follows on this subject :

"Evidently then this expression, the Son of God, meant to him (i.e., John), and therefore presumably to other New Testament writers, who use it frequently, that Christ was truly God-God the Son-in the fullest and most complete sense.:1

This dogma also has no support of words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels.

The truth is that Jesus strongly disclaimed Godhood or divinity. Here are his own words:

"Why callest thou me God ? There is none god but One, that is, God" (Mark 10: 18).

He spoke of God as "My Father and your Father and my God and your. God,"2 These words of Jesus reported in the Bible show that Jesus stood in the same relation to God as any other man. He was a creature of God.

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1. W.H. Turton, The Truth of Christianity, P.507.
 2. The Gospel of St. John, 20:17.

In his agony on Cross, Jesus cried out :

"Eloi, Eloi,,Iama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted," My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

Can any one imagine these words coming out of the mouth of God? Here we have the cry of a helpless man in agony addressed to his Creator and Lord.

God is the object of our worship, the Supreme being to whom we creatures address our prayers. We cannot imagine

God praying to any one. Yet about Jesus it is written in the Gospels :

"And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray."

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed". (Mark 1:35)

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed". (Luke 5:16).

The fact is that Jesus never claimed to be God, but only a prophet or messenger of God. He was a man to whom God had revealed his message for the guidance of other men. To give his own words :

"Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard from God". (John 8:39,40)

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3).

These words of Jesus prove, firstly, that there is only one Divine Person and that Jesus knew nothing of the Trinity ("Thee, the only true God") ; secondly. that Jesus laid no claim to Godhood, for he referred to a Being other than himself ("Thee") as the only God; thirdly, that Jesus only claimed to be a messenger of God ("Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent").

Like the Trinity, the doctrine of the Incarnation

was also developed long after Jesus. In fact, one can trace the stages through which Jesus was gradually deified. In 'Q' he was regarded as a prophet of God, as a human being and nothing more, in 'Urmarcus' there was an attempt to glamorize his person and attribute many miracles to him; in works of the first and second century he was presented as a mighty angel, the first born of all creation, but a creature; and finally in the preface to Johii's Gospel and other works of the third and fourth century he was made into a God. In the Nicene Creeds (325 C. E.) it is affirmed against those Christians who still denied the divinity of Jesus: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten, Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten not made being of one substance with the Father."

Reason refuses to accept a man who was born of a woman, suffered from human wants, ignorance and

limitations, and gradually grew in stature, power and wisdom, like all other human beings, as God. To put human limitations upon God and to believe in His incarnaticit in a human body is to deny the perfection of God.

The dogma of the Incarnation was taken into Christianity, like many other Christian notions, from paganism. In pre-Christian mythologies we often read of the hero being regarded as a God. The Hindus of India even today worship their ancient heroes, Rama and Krishna, as incaraations of Vishnu, the second person of the Hindu Trinity.

Islam has liberated its followers from the bondage of such superstitions by rejecting the dogma of the Incarnation The Holy Ouran rejects the divinity of Jesus in these words:

"They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! God is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah himself said: O children of Israel, worship God, mv Lord and your

Lord." (5:72) -"The likeness of Jesus with God is truly as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then he said unto him: Be! and he was." (3:59)

According to the sacred Book of Islam, Jesus was a Prophet of God---Sinless, pure and godly, like all other prophets--but every bit a human being:

"He (Jesus) said: Lo' I am a servant of God. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet." (9:30)

The Islamic view is that the prophets, one and all, were human beings, who by virtue of their devotion to truth and sinless life became worthy of being chosen by God as His messengers. They had made themselves so completely one with God that everything they said or did they carried out His Will. The message which they gave to on was not their's but God's. God conveyed His word to them, so that they might shape their own lives according to it and become models for their fellow-men. The Prophet Mu-

hammad declared :

"I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God, therefore take the straight path unto Him, aiii seek forgiveness of Him." (al-Quran-41:6)

The Divine Sonship

The third Christian dogma is that Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a special and exclusive sense. This dogma also is not in conformity with the sayings and teachings of Jesus. In the Bible this expression' has been used for many earlier prophets. For instance, Israel was called the "Son of God" in one of the books of Moses:

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord. Israel is My son, even My first bom." (Exodus 4:22) In the Psalms the same title was given to David.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee".

(Psalms 2:7)

A little later in the Bible Solomon also was called the Son of God :

"He shall build an house for My name: and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever."
(I Chronicles, 22: 10)

This phrase meant nothing more than nearness to God in love. The founder of Christianity himself said that every man who did the Will of the Father in Heaven was a son of God. It was devout life and kind and merciful behaviour that made a man worthy of being called the son of God. Is this not what Jesus says in the following sayings:

"Love your enemies... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 5:44,45)

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)

These sayings leave no doubt in our minds as to what this phrase meant for Jesus. In view of this, there is no justification of regarding Jesus as the Son of God, in an exclusive or unique sense. Jesus mostly called himself a "son of man", but when he referred to himself as a "son of God", it was no doubt in the same sense in which Adam, Israel, David and Solomon had been called the sons of God before him and in which he himself had spoken of those who had love in their hearts and lived in peace with their fellowmen as "sons of God". The following remarks of Jesus will further show that it was only in a metaphorical sense that he called himself a son of God:

"Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the son of God." (John

10:34-36)

Jesus was obviously referring to Psalms 82: verses 6 and 7:" I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shail die like men and fall like one of the princes." As the Judges and prophets of old were called "gods" only in a Metaphorical sense, so Jesus called himself a "son of God" in the same sense. It is clear that for Jesus the term "son of God ' carried no particular import other than the idiom of the Bible permitted. There is no case for singling Jesus out as the Son of God in a special or literal sense, as the Christians have done.

The Holy Quran in a very forceful language rejects tied dogma that Jesus was the Son of God in a literal or unique sense. It says :

"And they say: God hath taken unto Himself a Son. Be He Glorified! Nay, but whatsoever is in the heaven and the earth is His. All are subservient unto Him" (2:116) "It befitteth not (the Majesty) of God

that He should decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only, Be ! and it is.” (19:35)

Reason and common sense are again on the side of Islam. Philosophy tells us that no being from whom another being can come out and exist as a separate individual and become his equal and partner can be regarded as perfect. To attribute a son to God would be to deny the perfection of God.¹

The Original Sin

The fourth Christian dogma is that of the Atonement. Christianity declares that by disobeying God's order not to eat of the forbidden fruit of knowledge, Adam sinned. The sin of Adam is inherited by all the children of Adam : all human beings are born sinful. The requirement of God's justice is that a price must be paid for every sin. God cannot and will not allow a single sin to go unpunished.

1.Cf. Bergson, The Creative Evolution, Modern Library, P.16

Now the only thing which can wipe out sin is the shedding of blood. As St. Paul puts it, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). But this blood must be perfect, sinless, and incorruptible blood. "As the original sin, being directed against God, was of infinite proportion. it demanded infinite recompense." So. Jesus Christ, the of God, who came from Heaven, shed his holy, sinless blood, suffered indescribable agony, and died to pay the Penalty for the sins of men. Because Jesus was infinite God, he alone could pay the infinite price of sins. No one can be saved unless he accepts Jesus Christ as his redeemer. Every one is doomed to suffer eternally in hell because of his sinful nature, unless he accepts atonement made for his sins by Jesus Christ by his blood 1.

1. C.f. God's Plan For Your Salvation, Phoenix Arizona, U.S.A

This dogma is divided into three parts: (i) the Original Sin, (ii) the belief that God's Justice requires that the penalty of blood must be paid for sin, and (iii) the belief that Jesus has paid the price for the sins of men by his death on the cross and that salvation is only for those who believe in his vicarious sacrifice.

As to the first part, the Rev. De Groot writes:

"Scripture teaches us that Adam's sin passed unto all men (our Blessed Lady excepted). For in the words of St. Paul: Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one (Christ) unto all men to justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one man (Adam) many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one (Christ) many shall be made, just. (Rom. 5:18,19). These words make it plain that all men have inherited Adam's sin."I

1.Rev. J.F. DeGroot, Catholic Teaching, P.140

Like many other Christian beliefs, the doctrine of the Inherited Sin also finds no support in the words of Jesus or of the prophets who had come before him.

They taught that every man was accountable for his own action; the children will not be punished for the sin of the father. For instance, it is written in the Book of Propheet Jeremiah

"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."²

The Prophet Ezekiel also rejected the dogma of the original Sin in almost the same words:

The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, what me. ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

2. The Bible, Jeremiah, 31:29-30.

As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine ; the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither has come near to a menstruous woman, and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with garment, he that hath not given forth on usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, has executed true judgment between man and man, has walked in My statutes, and hath kept My judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God... The son shall not bear the iniquity

uity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." I

That Jesus himself regarded children as innocent and pure, and not as born in sin, is clear from him reported saying :

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark 10: 14,15).

1. The Bible, Ezekiel, 18: 1-9 & 20-21

Islam condemns the dogma of the Original Sin and regards the children as pure and sinless at birth. Sin, it says, is not inherited, but it is something which each one acquires for himself by doing what he should not do and not doing he should do.

Rationally considered also, it would be the height of injustice to condemn the entire human race for the sin committed thousands of years ago by the first parents. Sin is a willful transgression of the law of God or the law of right and wrong. The responsibility or blame for it must lie only on the person committing it, and not on his children.

Man is born with a free will, with the inclination and the capacity both to do evil and also to fight against it and do good. It is only when, as a grown-UP man, capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, he makes a wrong use of his freedom and falls a prey to temptation, that sin is born in him. That many men and women have resisted and conquered

evil inclinations and lived their lives in harmony with the Will of God is clear from the, sacred records of all nations. The Bible itself mentions Enoch Noah, Job, John the Baptist, and many others as being perfect and upright and among those who feared God and eschewed evil.

It is the height of misanthropy and cynicism to consider children to be sinful at birth. How unreasonable and hardhearted a man can become by believing in the dogma of the Inherited Sin is shown by the theological dictum of St. Augustine that all unbaptised infants are doomed to burn eternally in the fire of hell. Till recently, the unbaptised infants were not buried in consecrated grounds in Christendom because they were believed to have died in the original sin.

The very basis of the doctrine of the atonement, that is the belief in the Original Sin, having been found to be wrong on the authority of Jesus Christ as well as reason, the superstructure of dogma built on

it must also be false. But let us consider the Christian scheme of salvation a little further. drop down or extra live God's Jusfice.

The second part of the Christian doctrine of the atonement is that God's Justice requires that a price must be paid for the original and other sins of man. If God were to pardon a sinner without punishment it would be a denial of His Justice. The Rev. W. Goldsack writes in this connection :

"It should be clear as day light to any one that God cannot break His own law: He cannot forgive a sinner without first giving him an appropriate punishment. For if He did, so, who would call Him just and equitable,"I

This view shows complete ignorance of the nature of God. God is not a mere judge or king. He is, as the Quran describes Him, "Master of the Day of Judgement".

1.Rev. W. Goldsack, The Atonement, p.5

He is not only Just but also Merciful and Forgiving. If He finds some real good in a man or sees that he is sincerely repentant, having a real urge to conquer the evil within him, then He may forgive his failings and sins altogether. And this can by stretch of imagination be called a violation of His justice. After all, the only proper motive for punishment is to check evil and reform the offender. To punish a person for his past sins, even after he has repented and reformed himself, is a sign of vengeance and not of justice. A God whose justice requires compensation for every fall and sin of man is no better than Shylock. The God that we worship- the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds-is the God of love and mercy. If He prescribes a law and a way and demands obedience, it is not for His own benefit, but for the benefit of mankind. And if He punishes a man for his faults and sins it is not for His own satisfaction or compensation, as the Christian dogma pro-

claims, but to check evil and purify the sinner. Hell itself is like a hospital, where the spiritually ill-those afflicted with the diseases of malice, hatred, selfishness, callousness. falsehood, dishonesty, greed, impurity, arrogance, etc.-are cured through the fire of suffering and remorse. But those who have the persistent urge to..do good and the sincerely repentant will find God ever-ready to forgive their failures and sins without demanding any compensation from them, or from any one else. Is this not what the Prophet Ezekiel proclaimed in the verses of the Bible that we have quoted above? And is this not what Jesus taught in his beautiful parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son ? Can we trace the origin of the doctrine that unless every sin is compensated for and someone punished God's justice would be outraged to the man who taught us to pray to God in these words "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors".' Forgiveness of a

sinner after punishing him, or on his behalf, is no forgiveness at all. God can and forgive the faults and sins of those in whom he sees real goodness and those who have turned away from their sins and reformed themselves without, punishing them of any other person on their behalf, and this is not against God" justice. In fact this alone is true forgiveness. Thus we read in the Holy Quran :

"Say: O my people who have acted extravagantly against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God, for He forgiveth the sins altogether. Lo! He is All-Forgiving. All-Merciful. So turn unto Him repentant, and surrender unto Him, before there come unto you the chastisement, when ye cannot be helped". (39:53,54) '-Whoso doeth evil or wrongeth his own soul, then seeketh pardon of God (and reformeth himself), will find God Forgiving, Merciful. Whoso committeth sin committeth it only against himself. 'God is All-knowing All-Wise.'" (4:110, 111)

The Blood Atonement.

The third part of the Christian dogma of the Atonement is that Jesus paid the penalty for the original and other sins of men by death on the cross of Calvary, and that salvation cannot be had without belief in the saving power of blood. This is what we read in the First Epistle of St. Peter : "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."1.. And this is what two modern Christian Apologists (a Protestant and a Roman Catholic) have written :

"Wepass on now to the doctrine of theAto,,ement. which is that Christ's death was in some sense a sacrifice for sin, and thus reconciled (or made 'at-one') God the Father and sinful man. And though not actually stated in the Creeds, it is implied in the words, was crucified also for us. and who suffered for our salvation.'2

1.The Bible. I Peter, 1:18,19

2. W.H. Turton, The Truth of Christianity,P.289

"Since Christ. God and man, has taken upon Himself our sins (by His death on the cross) in order to atone for them by giving satisfaction to God's outraged justice, He is the Mediator between God and man."1

This dogma is not only a denial of the mercy of God but also of His justice. To demand the price of blood in order to forgive the sins of men is to show a complete lack of mercy, and to punish a man who is not guilty for the sins of others. whether the former is willing or not, is the height of injustice.

Christian apologists try to defend this by saying that Jesus Christ willingly suffered death to pay the price for the sins of men. To this our reply is :

Pirstly, it is not historically correct to say that, Jesus had come to die willingly and deliberately for the sins of read in the Bible that he did not wish to die on the cross.

1. J.F. De Groot. Catholic Teaching, P.162.

For when he learn that his enemies were plotting against his life, he declared that his "soul was exceedingly sorrowf,,ii unto death". he asked his disciples to keep watch over him to protect him from his enemies, and he prayed to God, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou Wilt". (Mark 14:36)

Secondly, we fail to see how the suffering and death of one I man can wipe out the sins of others. It sounds something like the physician breaking his own head to cure the headache of his patients. The idea of substitutionary or vicarious sacrifice is illogical, meaningless and unjust.

Thirdly, the idea that shedding of blood is necessary to appease the wrath of God has come into Christianity from tile primitive man's image of God as an all-powerful demon. We see no connection at all between sin and blood. What is necessary to

wash away sin is not, blood, but repentance, remorse, persistent struggle against evil inclinations, development of greater sympathy for mankind and determination to carry out the Will Of God as revealed to us through the Prophets. The Quran says: "To God does not reach the flesh or the blood (of animals they sacrifice), but unto Him is acceptable righteousness on your part". (22:37)

The doctrine of the Atonement makes the First Person of Godhead into a blood-thirsty tyrant in order to demonstrate the self-sacrifice of the Second Person. To a dispassionate critic, the sacrifice of the Second person appears as much misplaced and meaningless as the demand of the First person is cruel and sadistic.

Arthur Weigall makes the following significant contribution on the doctrine of the Atonement.

"We can no longer accept the appalling theological doctrine that for some mystic reason a propitiatory

sacrifice was Accessary. It outrages either our conception of God as Almighty or else our conception of Him as All-loving. The famous Dr. Cruden believed that for Christ suffered 'dreadful the purpose of this sacrifice Christ suffered dreadful pains inflicted by God', and this, of course, is a stand, one which nauseates the modern mind and which may well be termed a hideous doctrine, not unconnected with the sadistic tendencies of primitive human nature. Actually, it is of pagan origin, being, indeed, perhaps, the most obvious relic of heathendom in the Faith-"I

The Christian scheme of salvation is not only morally and rationally unsound but also has no support of the words of Jesus.

1. Arthur Welgall, The Paganism in Our Christianity.

Jesus may be said to have suffered for the sins of men in the sense that, in order to take them out of darkness into light, he incurred the wrath of the evil-doers and was tortured by them; but that does not mean that his death was an atonement for the sins of others and that only those who believe in his blood would be forgiven.

Jesus had come to rescue men from sin by his teaching and the example of his godly life, and not by deliberately dying for them on the cross and offering his blood as a propitiation for their sins. When a young man came and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he mentioned nothing about his atoning sacrifice and the redeeming power of his blood. His reply was the same as that of every other prophet. For he said:

"Why called thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments". (Matthew 19:17)

"Keep the commandments" -- that, according to Jesus, was the way to eternal life. Salvation could be gained by believing in God, eschewing evil and doing good, and not by accepting Jesus as the redeemer and believing in his blood atonement.

The dogma of the Atonement is unsound, for (1) man is not born in sin, (2) God does not require a price to forgive the sinners, and (3) the ideas of substitutionary or vicarious sacrifice is unjust and cruel. By sinning we do not harm God, but ourselves. The stain of sin on our souls can be removed, not by the suffering or death of any other person, whether the latter be willing or unwilling, but by our own repentance, turning away from evil and doing good. And so, when Adam, after the act of disobedience, repented and submitted himself completely to God, his sin was forgiven. Neither is the sin of Adam inherited by the children of Adam, nor did it require the suffering and death of Jesus Christ to be forgiven.

The truth is that Jesus did not die on the cross at all. The doctrine of the Atonement is a denial of the justice and mercy of God.

Islam rejects this dogma. It declares that the forgiveness of sins cannot be obtained by the suffering and sacrifice of any other person, human or divine, but by the grace of God and our own sincere and persistent efforts to fight against evil and do good:

"That no laden one shall bear another's load, and that man hath only that for which he maketh effort, and that his effort will be seen". (The Holy Ouran 53:38-40).

"Whosoever goeth right, it is only for the good of his own soul he goeth right, and whosoever erreth erreth only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load".(,17:15).

Islam . promsgs salvatiqq (which in the religion of the Quran means the achieveiue nt of nearness to God and the development of all the gooyness in man)

to all those who believe in God and do good deeds

"Nay, but whosoever surrendereth his purpose to God while doing good, his reward is with his Lord-. and there shall .io fear come upn-i them neither shall they grieve" (2:112)

Islam : A Rational Religion

We have inquired into some of the most important doctrines of Christianity, which form parts of both the Protestant and the Ronian Catholic creeds. Our examination has led us to the conclusion that the doctrines of the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus. the Divine-Sonship of Jesus, the Original Sin and the Atonement are, neither rational nor in conformity with the teachings of Jesus. These dogmas took shape long after Jesus, as a result of pagan influence. These dogmas show that Christianity has deviated considerably from the religion of Jesus.

Islam is a revival and restatement of the religion of Jesus and of all other prophets. The religion revealed

to the prophets of various nations was the same, but in the course of time it had been misinterpreted and become mixed up with superstitions and degenerated into magical practices and meaningless rituals. The conception of God, the very core of religion, had become debased by (a) the anthropomorphic tendency of making God into a being with a human shape and human passions, (b) the association of other persons with the one and only God in His Godhead (as in Hinduism and Christianity), (c) by the deification of the angels (e.g., the Devas in Hinduism, the Yazatas in Zoroastrianism and, perhaps, also, the Holy Spirit in Christianity), (d) by making the prophets into avatars or incarnations of God (e.g., Jesus Christ in Christianity, the Buddha in mahayana Buddhism, Krishan and Rama in Hinduism), and (e) by the personification of the attributes of God into separate Divine persons (e.g., the Christian Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost the Hindu Trimurti

of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and the Amesha Spentas of Zoroastrianism). The Holy Prophet Muhammad criticized all these irrational theological trends and restored to its pristine purity the conception of God as the One Eternal Reality (as-Samad), the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds (Rabb-ul-Alamin), the Loving-kind (al-Rahman), the All-Merciful (al-Rahim), the All-Forgiving (al-Ghaffur), the Holy (al-Quddus), the All-Knowing (al-Alim), the Holy (al-Quddus), the All-Embracing (al-Wasi).

He purged religion of all superstitions, errors and meaningless ceremonies, widened its scope to make it a source of inspiration and guidance to the whole human race, and united the peoples of all races, colours and nations into one universal brotherhood.

Islam is a religion without a mythology. its teachings are simple and rational. Its appeal is to human reason and conscience. The truth of the Islamic doctrine of the Unity and Goodness of God 's brought

home to us by the study and contemplation of the cosmos, where we find the all-pervading unity behind the manifest diversity, by the teachings of all the prophets, by the experiences of the mystics of all religions and nations, and finally by the of the Trinitarians, who, despite their Divine Persons, declare that there is but one God. The truth of the other Islamic principles follows logically from the belief in the Unity and Goodness of God. If God is one, all human beings are the creatures of the same God and are equal in His sight--and hence the Islamic belief in the equality and brotherhood of all men and women. if God is the Creator and Nourisher of all the worlds, He must provide not only for the physical needs of man, but also for the moral and spiritual needs 'by revealing to man the path of truth and righteousness --and hence the Islamic belief in Divine Revelation. Moreover, the Livine Revelation must come wherever and whenever needed, and for revealing

His message, God must choose men who are comp-
leter), devoted to truth, are leading a godly and sin-
less life and can inspire others to follow the true
path-and hence the Islamic belief in the Prophets of
all nations. And finally, if God is the God of Good-
ness and His plan in creating the world and making
man a free moral agent is not frivolous and meaning-
less, there must be the Life-after-,death where men
may reap the fruits of their beliefs, intentions and ac-
tions and continue their blissful journey to God and
in God--and hence the Islamic belief in the Here-
after.

The famous Italian Orientalist, Dr. Laura Veccia
Vaglieri, writes the following about the rational and
universal spirit of Islam in her book *An Interpretation of Islam*:

“The Arabian Prophet, with a voice which was in-
spired by a deep communion with his Maker,
preached the purest monotheism to the worshippers

of fetish and the followers of a corrupted Christianity and Judaism. He put himself in open conflict with those regressive tendencies of mankind which lead to the association of other beings with the Creator.

"In order to lead men to a belief in one God, he did not delude them with happenings which deviate from normal course of nature--the so-called miracles; nor did he compel them to keep quiet by using celestial threats which only undermine man's ability to think. Rather he simply invited them without asking them to leave the realm of reality, to consider the universe and its laws. Being confident of the resultant belief in the one and indispensable God, he simply let men read in the book of life. Muhammad Abduh and Ameer Ali both state that Muhammad was content to appeal to the intimate conscience of the individual and to the intuitive judgment of man."1

1. Laura Vecia Vaglieri, *Apologia, dell Islamismo*, translated into English as *An Interpretation of Islam* by Dr. Caselli. PP. 30,31.

After quoting some relevant verses of the Holy Quran, the learned author continues :

"Thanks to Islam, paganism in its various forms was defeated. The concept of the universe, the practices of religion, and the customs of social life were each liberated from all the monstrosities which had degraded them, and human minds were made free of prejudice. Man finally realized his dignity. He humbled himself before the Creator, the Master of all mankind.

"The spirit was liberated from prejudice, man's will was set free from the ties which had kept it bound to the will of other men, or other so-called hidden powers. Priests, false guardians of mysteries, brokers of salvation, all those who pretended to be mediators between God and man and consequently believed that they had authority over other people's wills, fell from their pedestals. Man became the servant of God alone and towards other men he had

only the obligations of one free man towards other free men. While previously men had suffered from the injustices of social differences, Islam proclaimed equality among humaa beings. Each Muslim was distinguished from other Muslims not by reason of birth or any other factor not connected with his personality, but only by his greater fear of God, his good deeds. his moral and intellectual qualities."I

Islam is the universal message of Unity-the Unity of God, the unity of all religions, the unity of the prophets of all the nations, and the unity of all mankind.

1. Laura Veccia Vaglieri, Apologia dell Islamismo, pp. 33,34.