

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Ḥadīd*, 57.

We have now studied the contents of nearly nine-tenths of the Qur-ān. We have found that the arrangement of the Sūras in the present Text is not haphazard, but they follow a distinct logical order more helpful for study than the chronological order. The comprehensive scheme of building up the new *Ummat* or Brotherhood and its spiritual implications is now complete. The remaining tenth of the Qur-ān may be roughly considered in two parts. The first contains ten Sūras (S. lvii. to S. lxvi.), all revealed in Madinah, and each dealing with some special point which needs emphasis in the social life of the *Ummat*. The second (S. lxvii. to cxiv.) contains short Makkan lyrics, each dealing with some aspect of religious life, expressed in language of great artistic beauty.

The present Madinah Sūra is chiefly concerned with humility and the avoidance of arrogance, and a warning that retirement from the world may not be the best way of seeking the good pleasure of Allah. Its probable date is after the Conquest of Makkah, A.H. 8.

Summary.—Allah's Power and Knowledge extend to all things: follow His Light direct, without doubt or fear or half-heartedness, but with humility, generous charity, and faith, and not in a life of isolation from the world. (lvii. 1-29).

*Al-Ḥadīd, or Iron,*⁵²⁷⁴

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. Whatever is in
The heavens and on earth,-
Declares
The Praises and Glory of Allah:⁵²⁷⁵
For He is the Exalted
In Might, the Wise.
2. To Him belongs the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth:
It is He Who gives
Life and Death; and He
Has Power over all things.
3. He is the First
And the Last,
The Evident
And the Hidden:⁵²⁷⁶
And He has full knowledge
Of all things.
4. He it is Who created
The heavens and the earth
In six Days,⁵²⁷⁷ then

سُورَةُ الْحَدِيدِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ
ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِيقُ فِي الْأَرْضِ

5274. Iron is the type and emblem of strength and reliability, on which depend the real virtues expounded in this Sūra, such as real humility, whole-heartedness, and charity, as opposed to Monasticism, Loadiceanism, and Niggardliness. See lvii. 25 below.

5275. A connecting thought between this and the last Sūra, of which see verse 96. See also paragraph 3 of the Introduction to S. liii.

5276. Allah is Evident in so far as there is ample evidence of His existence and providence all around us. On the other hand, Allah is Hidden in so far as intellect cannot grasp His essence nor can He be seen in the present world. The following tradition in Saḥīḥ Muslim is also significant for an understanding of this verse. The Prophet (peace be on him) said: "Thou art the First, so that there was nothing before Thee; and Thou art the Last, so that there is nothing after Thee; and Thou art Evident, (or Ascendant) so that there is nothing above Thee, and Thou art the the Hidden, the Knower of hidden things, so that there is nothing hidden from Thee."

5277. "In six Days": see xli. 9-12, and notes; also more briefly, n. 1031 to vii. 54.

He established Himself on the Throne.⁵²⁷⁸ He knows
What enters within the earth
And what comes forth out
Of it, what comes down
From heaven and what mounts
Up to it. And He is
With you wheresoever ye⁵²⁷⁹
May be. And Allah sees
Well all that ye do.

5. To Him belongs the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth:⁵²⁸⁰
And all affairs
Go back to Allah.
6. He merges Night into Day,
And He merges Day into Night;
And He has full knowledge
Of the secrets of (all) hearts.
7. Believe in Allah
And His Messenger,
And spend (in charity)
Out of the (substance)

وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرِجُ فِيهَا
وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٥٦﴾

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ
تَرْجِعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٧﴾

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ
وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٥٨﴾

ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ
مُسْتَخْلِفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا
لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٥٩﴾

5278. Cf. x. 3, and n. 1386. It is not that Allah completed His Creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, or rests now. Certain external forms of the universe were by Allah's Command completed in six periods of evolution. But His creative process still goes on, and He is still, and will always be, in full control, knowing all and guiding all affairs.

5279. Allah watches over man and observes his deeds. His knowledge comprehends all, the earth, heavens, what is in them or above them or whatever is in between them, comes out of them or goes into them, for "not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge", and "there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is inscribed in a Record". (vi. 59).

5280. See lvii. 2 above, where this phrase referred to Allah's complete authority over the whole of the external universe: the same phrase now refers to His complete authority over the abstract world-of thoughts and affairs. Every affair must finally go back to Him, whether it comes out here from Darkness into Light, or hides itself from Light into Darkness. Allah's knowledge penetrates into the inmost recesses of all Hearts.

Whereof He has made you⁵²⁸¹
Heirs. For, those of you
Who believe and spend
(In charity),—for them
Is a great Reward.

8. How is it with you⁵²⁸²
That you believe not
In Allah?—And the Messenger
Invites you to believe
In your Lord and has
Indeed taken your Covenant,⁵²⁸³
If ye are men of faith.

9. He is the One Who
Sends to His Servant⁵²⁸⁴
Manifest Signs, that He
May lead you from
The depths of Darkness
Into the Light And verily,
Allah is to you
Most Kind and Merciful.

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا
بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي يُزِيلُ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ ءَايَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم
مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ
لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾

5281. Whenever power or wealth or influence or any good thing is transferred from one person or group of persons to another, it involves added responsibilities to the persons receiving these advantages. They must be the more zealous in real charity and all good works, for that is a part of the evidence which they give of their faith and gratitude. And, besides, their good deeds carry their own reward.

5282. A figure of speech implying a far wider meaning than the words express. It is equivalent to saying: "There is every reason why ye *should* believe in Allah", etc. The same construction applies to verse 10 below.

5283. There are two shades of meaning. (1) There is the implied Covenant in a man who accepts the Gospel of Unity that he will bring forth all the fruits of that Gospel, i.e., believe in Allah, and serve Allah and humanity. See n. 682 to v. 1. (2) There were at various times express Covenants entered into by the Muslims to serve Allah and be true to the Prophet, comparable to the Covenants of the Jewish nation about the Message of Moses; e.g., the two Covenants of 'Aqaba (v. 8, and n. 705) and the Pledge of Hudaibiya (xlvi. 10, n. 4877). For the Covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, see. ii. 63, n. 78.

5284. The holy Prophet Muhammad. The Signs sent to him were: (1) the Āyats of the Qur-ān, and (2) his life and work, in which Allah's Plan and Purpose were unfolded.

10. How is it with you
That you spend not
In the cause of Allah?—
For to Allah belongs⁵²⁸⁵
The heritage of the heavens
And the earth.
Not equal among you
Are those who spent (freely)
And fought, before the Victory,⁵²⁸⁶
(With those who did so later).
Those are higher in rank
Than those who spent (freely)
And fought afterwards.
But to all has Allah promised
A goodly (reward). And Allah
Is well acquainted
With all that ye do.

SECTION 2.

11. Who is he that will
Loan to Allah a beautiful⁵²⁸⁷
Loan? For (Allah) will
Increase it manifold
To his credit,
And he will have (besides)
A generous reward.

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ
وَقَنْتَلْ أُولَئِكَ أَكْثَرُ دَرَجَةً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا
مِنْ بَعْدُ وَقَاتِلُوا وَلَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحَسَنَى
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠﴾

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فُضِّلَهُ اللَّهُ
وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

5285. "To Allah belongs the heritage of...": see n. 485 to iii. 180; also n. 988 to vi. 165; and n. 1964 to xv. 23.

5286. This is usually understood to refer to the Conquest of Makkah, after which the Muslims succeeded to the power and position which the Pagan Quraish had so misused at Makkah. Thereafter the Muslims had the hegemony of Arabia, and in a few centuries, for a time, the hegemony of the world. But the words are perfectly general, and we must understand the general meaning also: that the people who fight and struggle in Allah's Cause and give of their best to it at any time are worthy of praise: but those are worthy of special distinction who do it when the Cause is being persecuted and in most need of assistance, before victory comes.

5287. Cf. ii. 245, n. 276.

12. The Day shalt thou see
The believing men and
The believing women—
How their Light runs⁵²⁸⁸
Forward before them
And by their right hands:
(Their greeting will be):
"Good News for you this Day!
Gardens beneath which flow rivers!
To dwell therein for aye!
This is indeed
The highest Triumph."⁵²⁸⁹

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يُشَرِّدُكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

13. The Day will the Hypocrites—
Men and women—say
To the Believers: "Wait
For us! Let us borrow
(A light) from your Light!"⁵²⁹⁰
It will be said: "Turn
Ye back to your rear!
Then seek a light (where
Ye can)!" So a wall⁵²⁹¹
Will be put up betwixt them,
With a gate therein.

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
انظُرُوا نَارًا نَفَيَّسَ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ
فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ
الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهَرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾

5288. In the Darkness of the Day of Judgment there will be a Light to guide the righteous to their Destination. This will be the Light of their Faith and their Good Works. Perhaps the Light of the Right Hand mentioned here is the Light of their Good Works: for the Blessed will receive their Record in their right hand (lxix. 19-24).

5289. The highest Achievement, the highest felicity, the attainment of Salvation, the fulfilment of all desires. See n. 4733 to xlv. 57.

5290. Watchful preparation in Life, and the light of Faith, which reflects the divine Light, are matters of personal Life, and cannot be borrowed from another. So, in Christ's parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. xv. 1-13), when the foolish ones had let their lamps go out for want of oil, they asked to borrow oil from the wise ones, but the wise ones answered and said, "Not so;...but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves".

5291. The wall will divide the Good from the Evil. But the Gateway in it will show that communication will not be cut off. Evil must realise that Good—i.e., Mercy and Felicity—had been within its reach, and that the Wrath which envelops it is due to its own rejection of Mercy.

Within it will be Mercy
Throughout, and without it,
All alongside, will be
(Wrath and) Punishment!

14. (Those without) will call out,
"Were we not with you?"⁵²⁹²
(The others) will reply, "True!
But ye led yourselves
Into temptation; ye waited
(To our ruin); ye doubted
(Allah's Promise); and (your false)
Desires deceived you; until
There issued the Command
Of Allah. And the Deceiver
Deceived you in respect of Allah."⁵²⁹³
15. "This Day shall no ransom
Be accepted of you, nor
Of those who rejected Allah."⁵²⁹⁴
Your abode is the Fire:
That is the proper place
To claim you: and an evil
Refuge it is!"

يَنَادُوا وَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ
حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿١٤﴾

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُوَفِّدُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةً وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مَا وَدَّكُمْ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾

5292. The evil will now claim some right of kinship or association or proximity with the good in earthly life; but in fact they had been arrogant and had selfishly despised them before. The reply will be: (1) you yourselves chose temptation and evil; (2) when you had power in your earthly life, you hoped for ruin to the good, and perhaps plotted for it; (3) you were warned by prophets of Allah, but you doubted Allah's very existence and certainly His Mercy and Justice, and the Hereafter; (4) you followed your own lusts and neglected Reason and Truth; (5) you were given plenty of rope, but you followed your mad career, until Judgment came upon you, and now it is too late for repentance.

5293. The Arch-Deceiver (Satan) deceived you in respect of Allah in many ways: for example, he made you oblivious of Allah's Mercy and loving-kindness; he made you reject His Grace; he made you think that Allah's Justice may not overtake you; etc.

5294. In personal responsibility there is no room for vicarious ransom or for ransom by payments of gold or silver or by sacrifice of possessions. Nor can the crime be expiated for *after* Judgment. 'You' and 'those who rejected Allah' are two ways of looking at the same persons. 'You are rejected because you rejected Allah.'

16. Has not the time arrived⁵²⁹⁵
For the Believers that
Their hearts in all humility
Should engage in the remembrance
Of Allah and of the Truth
Which has been revealed (to them),
And that they should not
Become like those to whom
Was given The Book aforetime,⁵²⁹⁶
But long ages passed over them
And their hearts grew hard?
For many among them
Are rebellious transgressors.

لَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكثيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Know ye (all) that
Allah giveth life
To the earth after its death!⁵²⁹⁷
Already have We shown
The Signs plainly to you,
That ye may understand.

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. For those who give
In Charity, men and women,
And loan to Allah⁵²⁹⁸
A Beautiful Loan,

إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

5295. Humility and the remembrance of Allah and His Message are never more necessary than in the hour of victory and prosperity.

5296. The men immediately referred to are the contemporary Jews and Christians. To each of these Ummats was given Allah's Revelation, but as time passed, they corrupted it, became arrogant and hard-hearted, and subverted justice, truth, and the purity of Life. But the general lesson is far wider. No one is favoured of Allah except on the score of righteousness. Except on that score, there is no chosen individual or race. There is no blind good fortune or ill fortune. All happens according to the just laws and will of Allah. But at no time is humility or righteousness more necessary than in the hour of victory or triumph.

5297. As the dead earth is revived after the refreshing showers of rain, so is it with the spirit of man, whether as an individual or a race or Ummat. There is no cause for despair. Allah's Truth will revive the spiritual faculties if it is accepted with humility and zeal.

5298. Cf. lvii. 11; also see ii. 245, n. 276.

It shall be increased manifold
(To their credit),
And they shall have (besides)
A generous reward.

19. And those who believe
In Allah and His messengers—
They are the Truthful⁵²⁹⁹
And the martyrs,⁵³⁰⁰
In the eye of their Lord:
They shall have their Reward
And their Light.⁵³⁰¹
But those who reject Allah
And deny Our Signs,—
They are the Companions
Of Hell-Fire.

SECTION 3.

20. Know ye (all), that
The life of this world
Is but play and a pastime,⁵³⁰²
Adornment and mutual boasting
And multiplying, (in rivalry)
Among yourselves, riches
And children.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ
وَالشَّٰهَدَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٩﴾

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ
وَفَتَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَأُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرَهُ
مُضْطَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَمًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

5299. Cf. iv. 69, and n. 586. The four categories there mentioned as constituting the beautiful Company of Faith are: the Prophets who teach, the Sincere Lovers of Truth, the Martyrs, and the Righteous who do good. Of these, the prophets or messengers have already been mentioned in this verse. The Righteous who do good are mentioned as the men and women given over to deeds of charity in verse 18.

5300. The Martyrs (witnesses) are all those who carry the Banner of Truth against all odds and in all positions of danger, whether by pen or speech, or deed or counsel.

5301. Note that these two are specially high degrees in the Hereafter, just short of Prophethood. For they have not only their reward in the Hereafter, like those who practise charity (verse 18 above), but they themselves become sources of light and leading.

5302. Cf. vi. 32, and n. 855. In the present passage the idea is further amplified. In this life people not only play and amuse themselves and each other, but they show off, and boast, and pile up riches and man-power and influence, in rivalry with each other.

Here is a similitude:⁵³⁰³

How rain and the growth
Which it brings forth, delight
(The hearts of) the tillers,⁵³⁰⁴
Soon it withers; thou
Wilt see it grow yellow;
Then it becomes dry
And crumbles away.
But in the Hereafter
Is a Chastisement severe
(For the devotees of wrong).
And Forgiveness from Allah
And (His) Good Pleasure
(For the devotees of Allah).
And what is the life
Of this world, but
Goods and chattels
Of deception?⁵³⁰⁵

21. Be ye foremost (in seeking)
Forgiveness from your Lord,
And a Garden (of Bliss),
The width whereof is
As the width of
Heaven and earth,⁵³⁰⁶

وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿٥٧﴾

سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا
كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ
مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾

5303. Cf. xxxix. 21, and n. 4273. Here the Parable is meant to teach a slightly different lesson. Allah's mercies are free and open to all, like His rain. But how do men make use of them? The good men take the real spiritual harvest and store the spiritual grain. The men who are in love with the ephemeral are delighted with the green of the tares and the grass; but such things give no real nourishment; they soon wither, become dry, and crumble to pieces, like the worldly pleasures and pomps, boasting and tumults, possessions and friends.

5304. *Kuffār* is here used in the unusual sense of 'tillers or husbandmen', because they sow the seed and cover it up with soil. But the ordinary meaning, 'Rejecters of Truth', is not absent. The allegory refers to such men.

5305. Cf. iii. 185, and n. 492. Many of the attractive vanities of this world are but nets set by Satan to deceive man. The only thing real and lasting is the Good Life lived in the Light of Allah.

5306. Cf. iii. 133, and n. 452.

Prepared for those who believe
In Allah and His messengers:
That is the Grace of Allah,
Which He bestows on whom⁵³⁰⁷
He pleases: and Allah is
The Lord of Grace abounding.

22. No misfortune can happen
On earth or in your souls⁵³⁰⁸
But is recorded in
A Book before We bring⁵³⁰⁹
It into existence:
That is truly easy for Allah:

23. In order that ye may
Not despair over matters
That pass you by,
Nor exult over favours
Bestowed upon you.
For Allah loveth not
Any vainglorious boaster,⁵³¹⁰

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا
ءَاتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

5307. "Bestows on whom He pleases." That is, such grace and favour is beyond any one's own merits. It is bestowed by Allah according to His holy Will and Plan, which is just, merciful, and righteous.

5308. External disasters or misfortunes may strike people's eye or imagination, but there are worse crisis and misfortunes in the spiritual world, which are of equal or greater importance to man's future. All this happens according to the Will and Plan of Allah. Even where we are allowed the exercise of our own wills, the consequences that follow are in accordance with the laws and Plan decreed by Allah beforehand.

5309. For *baraa*, 'to bring into existence', and other words denoting Allah's creative energy, see n. 120 to ii. 117; n. 916 to vi. 94; and n. 923 to vi. 98.

5310. In the external world, what people may consider misfortune or good fortune may both turn out to be illusory,—in Kipling's words, "both imposters just the same". The righteous man does not grumble if some one else has possessions, nor exult if he has them. He does not covet and he does not boast. If he has any advantages, he shares them with other people, as he considers them not due to his own merits, but as gifts of Allah.

24. Such persons as are⁵³¹¹
 Covetous and commend
 Covetousness to men.
 And if any turn back⁵³¹²
 (From Allah's Way), verily
 Allah is free of all needs,
 Worthy of all praise.

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ
 وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. We sent aforetime
 Our messengers with Clear Signs
 And sent down with them
 The Book and the Balance⁵³¹³
 (Of Right and Wrong), that men
 May stand forth in justice;
 And We sent down⁵³¹⁴ Iron,⁵³¹⁵
 In which is
 Great might, as well as
 Many benefits for mankind,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ
 الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ
 وَأَنزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعُ
 لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
 بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

5311. Neither the Covetous nor the Boasters have any place in the Good Pleasure of Allah. The Covetous are particularly insidious, as their avarice and niggardliness not only keep back the gifts of Allah from men, but their pernicious example dries up the streams of Charity in others.

5312 It is Charity in Allah's Way that is specially in view here. If people are selfish and withhold their hand, they only injure themselves. They do not hurt Allah's Cause, for He is independent of all needs, and He will find other means of assisting His more meagrely-endowed servants; He is worthy of all praise in His care for His creatures.

5313. Three things are mentioned as gifts of Allah. In concrete terms they are the Book, the Balance, and Iron, which stand as emblems of three things which hold society together, viz. Revelation, which commands Good and forbids Evil; Justice, which gives to each person his due; and the strong arm of the Law, which maintains sanctions for evil-doers. For *Balance*, see also xlii. 17, and n. 4550.

5314. "Sent down": *anzala*: in the sense of revealed to man the use of certain things, created in him the capacity of understanding and using them: cf. xxxix. 6: "sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs".

5315. *Iron*: the most useful metal known to man. Out of it is made steel, and from steel and iron are made implements of war, such as swords, spears, guns, etc., as well as instruments of peace, such as ploughshares, bricklayers' trowels, architects' and engineers' instruments, etc. Iron stands as the emblem of Strength, Power, Discipline, Law's sanctions, etc. Iron and steel industries have also been the foundation of the prosperity and power of modern manufacturing nations'.

That Allah may test who
It is that will help,
Unseen,⁵³¹⁶ Him and His
messengers:⁵³¹⁷
For Allah is Full of Strength,
Exalted in Might⁵³¹⁸.

SECTION 4.

26. And We sent Noah
And Abraham, and established
In their line Prophethood
And Revelation: and some of
them⁵³¹⁹
Were on right guidance,
But many of them
Became rebellious transgressors.
27. Then, in their wake,
We followed them up
With (others of) Our messengers:
We sent after them
Jesus the son of Mary,
And bestowed on him
The Gospel; and We ordained
In the hearts of those

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا
النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا
بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ
وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً
وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهَابَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ

5316. In xxi. 49, I have translated "in their most secret thoughts" for the more literal "unseen" (*bil-gaibi*). Perhaps the more literal "unseen" may do if understood in the adverbial sense as explained in xxxv. 18, n. 3902. The sincere man will help the Cause, whether he is seen or brought under notice or not.

5317. To help Allah and His messengers is to help their Cause. It is to give men an opportunity of striving and fighting for His Cause and proving their true mettle, for thus is their spirit tested. As explained in the next line, Allah in Himself is Full of Strength, Exalted in Power, and Able to enforce His Will, and He has no need of others' assistance.

5318. Cf. xxii, 40 and n. 2818. "Strength" is specific; Power or Might is more abstract, the ability to enforce what is willed.

5319. *Some of them:* i.e., of their line, or posterity, or Ummat. When the Book that was given to them became corrupted, many of them followed their own fancies and became transgressors.

Who followed him
 Compassion and Mercy.⁵³²⁰
 But the Monasticism
 Which they invented
 For themselves, We did not
 Prescribe for them.⁵³²¹
 (We commanded) only
 The seeking for the Good
 Pleasure of Allah; but that
 They did not foster⁵³²²
 As they should have done.
 Yet We bestowed, on those
 Among them who believed,⁵³²³
 Their (due) reward, but

إِلَّا أَبِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَارَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا
 فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ
 وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

5320. The chief characteristic of the teaching in the Gospels is humility and other-worldliness. The first blessings in the Sermon on the Mount are on "the poor in spirit", "they that mourn", and they that are "meek" (Matt. v. 3-5). Christ's disciples were enjoined to "take no thought for the morrow", and told "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34). They were also commanded "that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v. 39). These are fragmentary presentments of an imperfect philosophy as seen through monastic eyes. In so far as they represent pity, sympathy with suffering, and deeds of mercy, they represent the spirit of Christ.

5321. But Allah's Kingdom requires also courage, resistance to evil, the firmness, law, and discipline which will enforce justice among men. It requires men to mingle with men, so that they can uphold the standard of Truth, against odds if necessary. These were lost sight of in Monasticism, which was not prescribed by Allah.

5322. Allah certainly requires that men shall renounce the idle pleasures of this world, and turn to the Path which leads to Allah's Good Pleasure. But that does not mean gloomy lives, ("they that mourn"), nor perpetual and formal prayers in isolation. Allah's service is done through pure lives in the turmoil of this world. This spirit was lost, or at least not fostered by monastic institutions. On the contrary a great part of the "struggle and striving" for noble lives was suppressed.

5323. Many of them lost true Faith, or had their Faith corrupted by superstitions. But those who continued firm in Faith saw the natural development of Religion in Islam. Their previous belief was not a disadvantage to them, but helped them, because they kept it free from false and selfish prejudices. These are the ones who are further addressed at the beginning of verse 28 below.

Many of them are
Rebellious transgressors.⁵³²⁴

28. O ye that believe!⁵³²⁵
Fear Allah, and believe
In His Messenger, and He will
Bestow on you a double⁵³²⁶
Portion of His Mercy:
He will provide for you
A Light by which ye⁵³²⁷
Shall walk (straight
In your path), and He
Will forgive you (your past):⁵³²⁸
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ
يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا
تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

5324. The corruptions in the Christian Church, the hair-splitting disputes, and mutual strife and hatred of sects had become a scandal by the time that the light of Islam came into the world. The pages of Gibbon's great History bear witness. Not only had the religion become void of grace, but the lives of the people, priests and laity, had fallen into great depths of degradation.

5325. From the context before (see n. 5323 above) and after (see next note), this is held to refer to the Christians and People of the Book who kept their Faith true and undefiled.

5326. The double portion refers to the past and the future. As noted in the last note, this passage is addressed to the Christians and the People of the Book, who, when honestly facing the question of the new Revelation in Islam, find in it the fulfilment of previous revelations, and therefore believe in Allah's Messenger Muhammad, and walk by the new Light. Their previous merits will be duly recognised, and they will be treated on fully equal terms in the new Ummat. This is their double share, not necessarily more in quantity than that of their brethren in Islam who passed through no other gate, but having a twofold aspect.

5327. As this refers to the Christians and the People of the Book, the following saying of Christ in his last days may interest them: " 'Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you... While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them'. (John, xii. 35-36). The light of Christ's Gospel soon departed; his Church was enveloped in darkness; then came the light again, in the fuller light of Islam. And they are asked to believe in the Light, and to walk in it. Cf. also lvii. 12. and n. 5288 above.

5328. Any wrongs they may have committed through ignorance or misconceptions in their previous religion will be forgiven them, as they have seen the new Light and walk by it.

29. That the People of
 The Book may know
 That they have no power⁵³²⁹
 Whatever over the Grace
 Of Allah, that (His) Grace
 Is (entirely) in His Hand,
 To bestow it on
 Whomsoever He wills.
 For Allah is the Lord
 Of Grace abounding.

لَا يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ
 عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ
 يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

5329. Let not any race, or people, or community, or group, believe that they have exclusive possession of Allah's Grace, or that they can influence its grant or its withholding. Allah's Grace is free, and entirely controlled by Him, independently of any priests and privileged people. He dispenses it according to His own wise and holy Will and Plan; and to His Grace there is no limit.

It is upto Him to bestow His Grace upon whom He likes. The Qur-ān is the final revelation in which He said: "ye are the best Ummah brought forward to mankind." So in order to receive His Grace, one should submit to Islam.