

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Yūnus, 10

Chronologically this Sūra and the five that follow (Sūras xi, xii, xiii, xiv, and xv) are closely connected, and were revealed in the late Makkan period, as the great event of the Hijrat was gradually approaching down the stream of Time. But their chronology has no particular significance.

On the other hand their arrangement in the gradation of Quranic teaching fits in with the subject-matter. S. viii. and S. ix. were mainly concerned with the first questions that arose on the formation of the new and organised Community of Islam in its conflict with those who wished to suppress or destroy it or use force to prevent its growth and the consolidation of its ideals. See Introductions to those Sūras. The present group leads us to the questions that face us when external hostility has been met, and our relations to Allah have to be considered from a higher stand-point than that of self-preservation. How does revelation work? What is the meaning of divine grace and its withdrawal? How do the Messengers of Allah deliver their Message? How should we receive it?

All these questions revolve round the revelation of the Qur-ān and each Sūra of this group except the 13th has the Abbreviated Letters A.L.R. attached to it. S. xiii. has the letters A.L.M.R., and we shall discuss this variation when we come to S. xiii.

Let us now consider Sūra x. alone. The central theme is that Allah's wonderful Creation must not be viewed by us as a creation of material things only, once made and finished with. Most wonderful of all is how He reveals Himself to men through Prophets and Scriptures; how prophets are rejected by men, and the Message disbelieved until it is too late for repentance; and how, as in the case of Yūnus (Jonah) and his people, even the rejection (when repentance supervenes) does not prevent Allah's grace and mercy from working, and how far that working is beyond man's comprehension.

Summary.—The wonderful working of the Creator through man by revelation seems like magic to men; yet they could find Signs and Messages from Him in the sun and the moon and the constantly varying yet regular phenomena of nature, from which man should take a lesson of constancy and Faith (x. 1-20).

All the goodness or beauty that man meets in the life around him proceeds from Allah. Yet man is blind and will not understand (x. 21-40).

As all things and beings proceed from Allah, so will they return to Him,

and He is ever true. Why then does ungrateful man make untrue phantoms for himself instead of rejoicing in the good news which He sends? (x. 41-70).

Allah revealed Himself through Noah, but Noah's people rejected him and perished. He spoke through Moses to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh was stiff necked and arrogant, and when he repented at all, it was too late (x. 71-92).

Everywhere want of faith causes people to perish. But the people of Yūnus repented, and Allah saved them by His wonderful grace. So Allah will deliver the Believers. When the Truth comes from Allah, follow it and be patient, for Allah is the most righteous of Judges (x. 93-109).

Yūnus, or Jonah.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful

1. A. L. R.¹³⁸¹

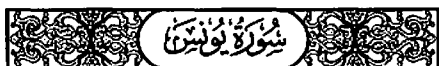
These are the Ayats¹³⁸²
Of the Book of Wisdom.

2. Is it a matter

Of wonderment to men
That We have sent
Our inspiration to a man
From among themselves?¹³⁸³
That he should warn mankind
(Of their danger), and give
The good news to the Believers
That they have before their Lord
The good actions they have
advanced¹³⁸⁴

(But) say the Unbelievers:

"This is indeed
An evident sorcerer!"



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرَّيْبُكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ
أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَنَتْلِيَ الْآيَاتِ الْكُبْرَى أَنْ لَهُمْ قَدَمٌ
صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا
لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾

1381. For the Abbreviated Letters generally see Appendix I.

1382. Āyāt = Signs, or Verses of the Qur-ān. Here both meanings are to be understood. Each verse is a nugget of wisdom. And in the verses immediately following, e.g., x. 3-6, examples are given of the wonders of Allah's material Creation. If the starry heavens impress us with their sublimity as signs of Allah's wisdom and power, how much more wonderful is it that He should speak to lowly man through His Messengers, in man's language, so that he can understand?

1383. Is it not still more wonderful that the inspired man should be one of ourselves? The Arabs had known Muḥammad in other relations and conditions, and when the mighty Message came through his mouth—the message of Wisdom and Power, such as no man could speak as from himself, least of all a man not instructed in human learning,—they could only in their wonder attribute it to magic and sorcery. They failed to understand that magic and sorcery were projections of their own mind, while here was solid, enduring Truth from Allah!

1384. Allah's Message was and is not all smooth and agreeable. The first thing is to convince us of our wrong-doing, and warn us of our danger. If we have Faith, we then learn what a high rank we obtain in the sight of Allah. According to another view the word "qadama" here refers to the fact that the acts of a person precede him to his Lord. The word *sidq* qualifies these acts with sincerity and genuineness.

3. Verily your Lord is Allah,
Who created the heavens
And the earth in six Days,¹³⁸⁵
Then He established Himself¹³⁸⁶
On the Throne.
Regulating and governing all things.
No intercessor (can plead with Him)
Except after His leave
(Hath been obtained). This
Is Allah your Lord; Him therefore
Serve ye; will yet not
Receive admonition?¹³⁸⁷

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدِيرُ الْأُمُورَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ
إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ
فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

4. To Him will be your return-
Of all of you. The promise
Of Allah is true and sure.¹³⁸⁸
It is He who beginneth
The process of creation,¹³⁸⁹
And repeateth it, that He
May reward with justice
Those who believe
And work righteousness;
But those who reject Him

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ
الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ
شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ مِمَّا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

1385. See note 1031 to vii. 54.

1386. *Istawā*, with the preposition *ilā* after it, means He turned to or He directed Himself by His will to as in ii-29. With the preposition *'alā* after it, as here and in vii. 54 and elsewhere, the meaning seems to be "to mount or ascend," and to be firmly established, to sit firm and unshaken, beyond question. "The Throne represents many ideas: e.g., (1) that God is high above all His Creation; (2) that He regulates and governs it, as a king does, whose authority is unquestionably recognised; (3) that He is not, therefore, like the gods of Greece, and paganism, who were imagined to be in a world apart, careless of mankind, or jealous of mankind, but on the contrary. He (4) disposes of their affairs and all affairs continuously and with justice; (5) that the authority of His prophets, ministers, and messengers is derived from Him, and such intercession as they can make is by His will and permission.

1387. Cf. vi. 80.

1388. *Haqq*: true, right, for just ends, in right proportions, sure and certain: all these ideas are implied.

1389. Cf. n. 120 to ii. 117. Allah's creation is not a simple act, once done and finished with. It is continuous, and there are many stages, not the least important of which is the Hereafter, when the fruits of our life will be achieved.

Will have draughts¹³⁹⁰
Of boiling fluids,
And a Chastisement grievous,
Because they did reject Him.

5. It is He who made the sun
To be a shining glory¹³⁹¹
And the moon to be a light
(Of beauty), and measured out
Stages for it, that ye might
Know the number of years
And the count (of time).
Nowise did Allah create this
But in truth and righteousness.¹³⁹²
(Thus) doth He explain His Signs
In detail, for those who know.¹³⁹³

6. Verily, in the alternation
Of the Night and the Day,
And in all that Allah
Hath created, in the heavens
And the earth, are Signs
For those who fear Him.¹³⁹⁴

7. Those who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us,

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا
وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ
وَالْأَجْسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ
اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

1390. *Hamim*: boiling fluid: it is associated as in xxxviii. 57, with *gassāq*, a dark, murky, or intensely cold fluid; both indicative of the grievous penalty that results from rebellion against Allah.

1391. The fitting epithet for the sun is *dhiāa*, "splendour and glory of brightness", and for the moon is "a light" (of beauty), the cool light that illuminates and helps in the darkness of the night. But the sun and moon also measure time. The simplest observation can keep pace with the true lunar months and lunar years, which are all that is required by a pastoral people. For agriculture solar years are required, as they indicate the changes of the seasons, but ordinary solar years are never exact; even the solar year of 365¼ days requires correction by advanced astronomical calculation.

1392. Everything in Allah's creation has use and purpose, and fits into a Design. It is true in every sense of the word and it is good and just. It is not merely a matter of sport or freak (xxi. 16). Though so varied, it proclaims Allah's Unity; though a limited free-will is granted to creatures, the results of evil (which is rebellion) are neutralised and harmony is restored. Cf. iii. 191.

1393. Cf. ix. 11.

1394. Cf. ii. 164.

But are pleased and satisfied
With the life of the Present,
And those who heed not
Our Signs,-¹³⁹⁵

8. Their abode is the Fire,
Because of the (evil)
They earned.
9. Those who believe,
And work righteousness,-
Their Lord will guide them
Because of their Faith:¹³⁹⁶
Beneath them will flow
Rivers in Gardens of Bliss.

10. (This will be) their prayer therein:
"Glory to Thee, O Allah!"
And "Peace" will be their
greeting therein
And the end of their prayer¹³⁹⁷
Will be: "Praise be to Allah,
The Cherisher and Sustainer
Of the Worlds!"

SECTION 2.

11. If Allah were to hasten for men
The ill (they have earned)

وَأَطَاعُوا أَمْرًا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ إِلَّا كَأَنَّهُمْ

يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ
الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾

دَعْوَهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ
وَأَخْرَجُوا مِنْهَا كَأَنَّهُمْ يُخْرِجُونَ الْحَبَّ مِنَ النَّارِ

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَسْرَارَهُمْ

1395. Those who fall from Grace are described by three epithets: (1) the meeting with Allah is not the object of their hope and earnest desire, but something else, viz. (2) the material good of this world, which not only attracts them but apparently gives them complete satisfaction, so that there is no glow of the Future in their horizon, and (3) they are deaf and dead to the resounding and living Message of Allah, (1) and (2) refer to the extinction of Faith in them, and (3) to their falling a prey to the evils of this world in their conduct. They are contrasted in x. 9 with the Faith and the Righteousness of those who accept Grace.

1396. Their Faith is the cause as well as the instrument of their Guidance,-the Kindly Light which leads them as well as the Joy which fills their Soul.

1397. A beautiful piece of spiritual melody! They sing and shout with joy, but their joy is in the Glory of Allah! The greetings they receive and the greetings they give are of Peace and Harmony! From first to last they realise that it is Allah Who cherished them and made them grow, and His rays are their Light.

As they would fain hasten on
The good,—then would
Their respite be settled at once.¹³⁹⁸
But We leave those
Who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us.
In their trespasses, wandering
In distraction blindly.

12. When trouble toucheth a man,
He crieth unto Us
(In all postures)—lying down¹³⁹⁹
On his side, or sitting,
Or standing. But when We
Have removed his affliction,
He passeth on his way as if
He had never cried to Us
For the affliction that touched him!
Thus do the deeds of transgressors
Seem fair in their eyes!¹⁴⁰⁰

13. Generations before you
We destroyed when they
Did wrong: their Messengers
Came to them with Clear Signs,
But they would not believe!
Thus do We requite
Those who sin!

بِالْخَيْرِ لِقَاضِي إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلَهُمْ فَتَذَرُ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا
أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ
يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا
وَجَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

1398. Those who have no hope for the Future grasp at any temporary advantage, and in their blindness even mockingly ask for immediate punishment for their sins (viii. 32), thus vainly challenging Allah, in Whom they do not believe. If the beneficent Allah were to take them at their word, they would have no chance at all. Their doom would be sealed. But even the respite they get they use badly. They merely wander about distractedly like blind men, to and fro. Cf. ii. 15.

1399. Not only do men fail to use their respite: even those who have a superficial belief in Allah call on Him in their trouble but forget Him when He has relieved their trouble. Their Faith is not strong enough to make them realise that all good proceeds from Allah. But in moments of trouble they use every position, literally and figuratively, to appeal to Him.

1400. Those without Faith are selfish, and are so wrapped up in themselves that they think every good that comes to them is due to their own merits or cleverness. That is itself a cause of their undoing. They do not see their own faults.

14. Then We made you heirs
In the land after them,
To see how ye would behave!¹⁴⁰¹
15. But when Our Clear Signs
Are rehearsed unto them,
Those who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us,
Say: "Bring us a Qur-ān¹⁴⁰²
Other than this, or change this."
Say: "It is not for me,
Of my own accord,
To change it: I follow
Naught but what is revealed
Unto me: if I were
To disobey my Lord,
I should myself fear the Chastisement
Of a Great Day (to come)."
16. Say: "If Allah had so willed,
I should not have rehearsed it
To you, nor should He
Have made it known to you.¹⁴⁰³
A whole life-time before this
Have I tarried amongst you:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا أَنْتَ بِشْرَاءٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا
أَوْ يَدِّلُكَ قُلُوبُ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِي
نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَيْتُ إِلَّا مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَلَا أَدْرَبْتُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

1401. This is addressed to the Quraish in the first instance, for they had succeeded to the 'Ad and the Thamūd heritage. But the application is universal, and was true to the 'Abbāsī Empire in the time of Hārūn-ar-Rashīd, or the Muslim Empire in Spain or the Turkish Empire in its palmiest days, and indeed, to the Muslims and non-Muslims of our own days.

1402. *Reading:* in the Arabic, the word is "Qur-ān", which may mean Reading or in the special sense, the Qur-ān. The duty of Allah's Messenger is to deliver Allah's Message as it is revealed to him, whether it please or displease those who hear it. Selfish men want to read their own desires or fancies into religious precepts, and thus they are often willing to use Religion for their own ends. Most of the corruptions of Religion are due to this cause. But Religion is not to be so prostituted.

1403. It is in Allah's Plan that He should reveal Himself in certain ways to His creatures, and His Messengers are the instruments that carry out His will. It is in itself gracious Mercy that He should thus make His Will known. We should be grateful for His guidance instead of carping at it.

Will ye not then understand?"¹⁴⁰⁴

17. Who doth more wrong
Than such as forge a lie
Against Allah, or deny
His Signs? But never
Will prosper those who sin.

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. They serve, besides Allah,
What can hurt them not
Nor profit them, and they say:
"These are our intercessors
With Allah." Say: "Do ye
Indeed inform Allah of something
He knows not, in the heavens¹⁴⁰⁵
Or on earth?—Glory to Him!
And far is He above the partners
They ascribe (to Him)!"

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَتُنَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. Mankind was but one nation,¹⁴⁰⁶
But differed (later). Had it not
Been for a Word¹⁴⁰⁷

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا

1404. Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā had lived his whole life of purity and virtue amongst his people, and they knew and acknowledged it before he received his mission. They knew he loved his nation and was loyal to it. Why should they turn against him when he had to point out under inspiration all their sins and wrong-doing? It was for their own good. And he had to plead again and again with them: "Will you not understand, and see what a glorious privilege it is for you to receive true guidance from Allah?"

1405. When we shut our eyes to Allah's glory and goodness, and go after false gods, we give some plausible excuse to ourselves, such as that they will intercede for us. But how can stocks and stones intercede for us? And how can men intercede for us, when they themselves have need of Allah's Mercy? Even the best and noblest cannot intercede as of right, but only with His permission (x. 3). To pretend that there are other powers than Allah is to invent lies and to teach Allah. There is nothing in heaven or earth that He does not know, and there is no other like unto Him.

1406. Cf. ii 213. All mankind was created one, and Allah's Message to mankind is in essence one, the Message of Unity and Truth. But as selfishness and egotism got hold of man, certain differences sprang up between individuals, races, and nations, and in His infinite Mercy He sent them messengers and messages to suit their varying mentality, to test them by His gifts, and stir them up to emulation in virtue and piety (v. 48).

1407. Cf. vi. 115. ix 40, and iv. 171. "Word" is the Decree of Allah, the expression of His Universal Will or Wisdom in a particular case. When men began to diverge from one another (see last note). Allah made their very differences subserve the higher ends by increasing their emulation in virtue and piety, and thus pointing back to the ultimate Unity and Reality.

That went forth before
From thy Lord, their differences
Would have been settled
Between them.

20. They say: "Why is not
A Sign sent down to him
From his Lord?" Say:
"The Unseen is only
For Allah (to know).
Then wait ye: I too
Will wait with you".¹⁴⁰⁸

SECTION 3.

21. When We make mankind
Taste of some mercy after
Adversity hath touched them,
Behold! they take to plotting
Against Our Signs! Say:
"Swifter to plan is Allah!"
Verily, Our messengers record
All the plots that ye make!"¹⁴⁰⁹
22. He it is who enableth you
To traverse through land
And sea; till when ye even board
Ships;-they sail with them
With a favourable wind,
And they rejoice thereat;

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءَ مَا سَكَبُوا لِإِذَا
لَهُمْ مَكْرُوفٌ ؕ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَصْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا
يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي
الْفُلْكَ وَجَرَدِنَ بِهِمْ يَبْسُجْ طَبَقَةً وَفَرَّجُوا بِهَا جَاءَ تَهَا
رَبِّحْ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ

1408. Their demand for a Sign is disingenuous. All nature and revelation furnishes them with incontestable Signs. What they want is the Book of the Unseen opened out to them like the physical leaves of a book. But they forget that a physical Book is on a wholly different plane from Allah's Mysteries, and that their physical natures cannot apprehend the mysteries. They must wait. Truth will also wait. But the waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses. Cf. vi. 158 and ix. 52.

1409. Man turns his thoughts in adversity to Allah. But as soon as the trouble is past, he not only forgets Him but actually strives against His cause. But such people are poor ignorant creatures, not realising that the Universal Plan of Allah is swifter to stop their petty plans, and that though they fail, the record of them remains eternally against them.

Then comes a stormy wind
And the waves come to them
From all sides, and they think
They are being overwhelmed:
They pray unto Allah, sincerely
Offering (their) duty unto Him,
Saying, "If Thou dost deliver us
From this, we shall truly
Show our gratitude!"¹⁴¹⁰

وَطَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الَّذِينَ لَيْنَ أَمْجَاتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. But when he delivereth them,
Behold! they transgress
Insolently through the earth
In defiance of right!
O mankind! your insolence¹⁴¹¹
Is against your own souls,—
An enjoyment of the life
Of the Present: in the end,
To Us is your return,
And We shall show you
The truth of all that ye did.

فَلَمَّا أَجَسَّهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ
مَتَّعَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. The likeness of the life
Of the Present is
As the rain which We
Send down from the skies:¹⁴¹²
By its mingling arises
The produce of the earth—
Which provides food

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَأَخْلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ
وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ

1410. All the great inventions and discoveries on which man prides himself are the fruit of that genius and talent which Allah has freely given of His grace. But the spirit of man remains petty, as is illustrated by the parable from the sea. How the heart of man rejoices when the ship goes smoothly with favourable winds! How in adversity it turns, in terror and helplessness, to Allah, and makes vows for deliverance! and how those vows are disregarded as soon as the danger is past! Cf. vi. 63.

1411. In our insolence and pride we do not see how small and ephemeral is that part of us which is mortal. We shall see it at last when we appear before our Judge. In the meantime our ridiculous pretensions only hurt ourselves.

1412. Another beautiful Parable, explaining the nature of our present life. The rain comes down in drops and mingles with the earth. Through it, by Allah's matchless artistry, the womb of the earth is made fruitful. All kinds of good, useful, and beautiful grains, vegetables, and fruits are produced for men and animals. The earth is covered in its bravery of green and gold and all kinds of colours. Perhaps the "owner" takes all the credit to himself, and thinks that this will last eternally. A hailstorm or a blast, a =

For men and animals:
 (It grows) till the earth
 Is clad with its golden
 Ornaments and is decked out
 (In beauty): the people to whom
 It belongs think they have
 All powers of disposal over it:
 There reaches it Our command
 By night or by day,
 And We make it
 Like a harvest clean-mown.
 As if it had not flourished
 Only the day before!
 Thus do We explain
 The Signs in detail
 For those who reflect.

25. But Allah doth call
 To the Home of Peace:¹⁴¹³
 He doth guide whom He pleaseth
 To a Way that is straight.
26. To those who do right
 Is a goodly (reward)-
 Yea, more (than in measure)!¹⁴¹⁴
 No darkness nor abasement
 Shall cover their faces!¹⁴¹⁵

وَوَلَّى أَهْلَهَا أَنْتُمْ قَدِيرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَنْتُمْ
 أَمْرًا نَائِلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ
 تَغْنَبْ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
 إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ
 وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ

= frost or a volcanic eruption, comes and destroys it, or it may be even normally, that the time of harvest comes, and the fields and orchards are stripped bare by some blight or disease. Where is the beauty and bravery of yesterday? All that is left is dust and ashes! What more can we get from this physical material life?

1413. In contrast with the ephemeral and uncertain pleasures of this material life, there is a higher life to which Allah is always calling. It is called the Home of Peace. For there is no fear, nor disappointment nor sorrow there. And all are called, and those will be chosen who have sought, not material advantages, but the Good Pleasure of Allah. *Salām*, Peace, is from the same root as *Islām*, the Religion of Unity and Harmony.

1414. The reward of the righteous will be far more than in proportion to their merits. For they will have the supreme bliss of being near to Allah, and "seeing His face".

1415. The face is the symbol of the Personality, the inner and real Self, which is the antithesis of the outer and ephemeral Self. It will be illuminated with Allah's Light, behind which is no shadow or darkness. All its old shortcomings will be blotted out, with their sense of shame, for there will be Perfection, as in Allah's sight.

They are Companions of the Garden;
They will abide therein
(For aye)!

27. But those who have earned
Evil will have a reward
Of like evil:¹⁴¹⁶ ignominy
Will cover their (faces):
No defender will they have
From (the wrath of) Allah:
Their faces will be covered,
As it were, with pieces
From the depth of the darkness¹⁴¹⁷
Of Night: they are Inhabitants
Of the Fire: they will
Abide therein (for aye)!

28. One Day shall We gather them
All together. Then shall We say
To those who joined gods (with Us):
"To your place! ye and those
Ye joined as 'partners'."
We shall separate them,
And their "partners" shall say:
"It was not us
That ye worshipped!"¹⁴¹⁸

29. "Enough is Allah for a witness
Between us and you: we

فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا
وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَّا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا
أَغْشَيْتَ وُجُوهَهُمْ قِطْعًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ
شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِنَّا نَاعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

فَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ
لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

1416. Note that the evil reward is for those who have "earned" evil, i.e., brought it on themselves by the deliberate choice of evil. Further, in the justice of Allah, they will be requited with evil similar to, and not greater in quantity or intensity, than the evil they had done,—unlike the good, who, in Allah's generosity, get a reward far greater than anything they have earned or could possibly earn.

1417. Night is the negation of Light and metaphorically of joy and felicity. The intensive is indicated by "the depth of the darkness of Night."

1418. The false gods are not real: they are only the figments of the imaginations of those who indulged in the false worship. But the prophets or great or good men whose names were vainly taken in competition with the name of Allah, and the personified Ideas or Idols treated in the same way would themselves protest against their names being used in that way, and show that the worship was paid not to them, but to the ignorance or superstition or selfish lusts of the false worshippers.

Certainly knew nothing
Of your worship of us!"¹⁴¹⁹

30. There will every soul see
(The fruits of) the deeds
It sent before¹⁴²⁰; they will
Be brought back to Allah
Their rightful Lord,
And their invented falsehoods
Will leave them in the lurch.¹⁴²¹

SECTION 4.

31. Say: "Who is it that
Sustains you (in life)
From the sky and from the earth?"¹⁴²²
Or who is it that
Has power over hearing¹⁴²³
And sight? And who
Is it that brings out
The living from the dead
And the dead from the living?"¹⁴²⁴

هَذَا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ
مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ
السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ
وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

1419. See last note. They did not even know that they were being falsely worshipped in that way.

1420. Cf. ii. 95, where the verb used is *qaddama*. The verb *aslafa*, used here, is nearly synonymous.

1421. Instead of their false ideas helping them, they will desert them and leave them in the lurch. Cf. vi. 24.

1422. Sustenance may be understood in the sense of all the provision necessary for maintaining physical life as well as mental and spiritual development and well-being. Examples of the former are light and rain from heaven and the produce of the earth and facilities of movement on land and sea and in air. Examples of the latter are the moral and spiritual influences that come from our fellow-men, and from the great Teachers and Prophets.

1423. Just two of our ordinary faculties, hearing and sight, are mentioned, as examples of the rest. All the gifts of Allah, physical and spiritual, are enjoyed and incorporated by us by means of the faculties and capacities with which He has endowed us.

1424. Cf. iii. 27 and n. 371; vi. 95 and n. 920; and xxx. 19.

And who is it that
Rules and regulates all affairs?¹⁴²⁵
They will soon say, "Allah".
Say, "Will ye not then
Show piety (to Him)?"

32. Such is Allah, your true Lord:
Apart from the Truth.
What (remains) but error?¹⁴²⁶
How then are ye turned away?

33. Thus is the Word
Of thy Lord proved true¹⁴²⁷
Against those who rebel:
Verily they will not believe.

34. Say: "Of your 'partners',¹⁴²⁸
Can any originate creation
And repeat it?" Say:
"It is Allah Who originates
Creation and repeats it:
Then how are ye deluded
Away (from the truth)?"

35. Say: "Of your 'partners'
Is there any that

فَذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعَدَ الْحَقِّ
إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا
أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَدْعُوا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ قُلْ
اللَّهُ يَسْبُدُّ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلْ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي

1425. This is the general summing-up of the argument. The government of the whole Creation and its maintenance and sustenance is in the hands of Allah. How futile then would it be to neglect His true worship and go after false gods?

1426. The wonderful handiwork and wisdom of Allah having been referred to, as the real Truth, as against the false worship and false gods that men set up, it follows that to disregard the Truth must lead us into woeful wrong, not only in our beliefs but in our conduct. We shall err and stray and be lost. How then can we turn away from the Truth?

1427. Disobedience to Allah brings its own terrible consequences on ourselves. The Law, the Word, the Decree, of Allah must be fulfilled. If we go to false gods, our Faith will be dimmed, and then extinguished. Our spiritual faculties will be dead.

1428. The argument is now turned in another direction. The false gods can neither create out of nothing nor sustain the creative energy which maintains the world. Nor can they give any guidance which can be of use for the future destiny of mankind: on the contrary they themselves (assuming they were men who were deified) stand in need of such guidance. Why then follow vain fancies, instead of going to the source of all knowledge, truth, and guidance, and worship, serve, and obey Allah, the One True God?

Can give any guidance
Towards Truth?" Say: "It is Allah
Who gives guidance
Towards Truth. Is then He
Who gives guidance to Truth
More worthy to be followed,
Or he who finds not guidance
(Himself) unless he is guided?
What then is the matter
With you? How judge ye?

36. But most of them follow
Nothing but conjecture: truly
Conjecture can be of no avail
Against Truth. Verily Allah
Is well aware of all
That they do.

37. This Qur-ān is not such
As can be produced
By other than Allah;
On the contrary it is
A confirmation of (revelations)
That went before it,
And a fuller explanation¹⁴²⁹
Of the Book-wherein
There is no doubt-
From the Lord of the Worlds.

38. Or do they say,
"He forged it"?
Say: "Bring then
A Sūra like unto it,
And call (to your aid)
Anyone you can,
Besides Allah, if it be
Ye speak the truth!"¹⁴³⁰

لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُنَبِّعَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدَىٰ فَمَا لُكُم كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَمَا يَنْبَغُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يَغْنَىٰ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ نَصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَنَفْصِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَيْنَاهُ قُلْ فَاتُوا بِنُصُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ، وَادْعُوا
مَنْ أَسْطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

1429. *The Book*: Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366. Allah's revelation throughout the ages is one. The Qur-ān confirms, fulfils, completes, and further explains the one true revelation, which has been sent by the One True God in all ages.

1430. Cf. ii. 23 and n. 42.

39. Nay, they charge with falsehood
That whose knowledge they
Cannot compass, even before
The interpretation thereof¹⁴³¹
Hath reached them: thus
Did those before them
Make charges of falsehood:
But see what was the end
Of those who did wrong!¹⁴³²

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا الَّتِي يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهَا وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهَا
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Of them there are some
Who believe therein,
And some who do not:
And thy Lord knoweth best
Those who are out for mischief.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ
وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

SECTION 5.

41. If they charge thee
With falsehood, say:
"My work to me,
And yours to you!"¹⁴³³
Ye are free from responsibility
For what I do, and I
For what ye do!"

وَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ
أَنتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

1431. *Taawil*: elucidation, explanation, final fulfilment, *Cf.*, vii. 53. The Message of Allah not only gives us rules for our every-day conduct, but speaks of high matters of religious significance, which require elucidation in two ways: (1) by experience from the actual facts of life, and (2) by the final fulfilment of the hopes and warnings which we now take on trust through our Faith. The Unbelievers reject Allah's Message simply because they cannot understand it and without giving it even a chance of elucidation in any of these ways.

1432. Wrong-doers always came to grief ultimately. The true course of history shows it from a broad standpoint. But they are so headstrong that they prejudice issues in their ignorance before they are decided.

1433. When the Prophet of Allah is rejected and charged with falsehood, he does not give up his work, but continues to teach and preach his Message. He can well say to those who interfere with him: "Mind your own business: supposing your charge against me is true, you incur no responsibility: I have to answer for it before Allah: and if I do my duty and deliver my Message, your rejection does not make me liable for your wrong-doing: you will have to answer before Allah."

42. Among them are some who
(Pretend to) listen to thee:
But canst thou make the deaf
To hear,—even though
They are without understanding¹⁴³⁴

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ
وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

43. And among them are some
Who look at thee:
But canst thou guide
The blind,—even though
They will not see?

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى
وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

44. Verily Allah will not deal
Unjustly with man in aught:
It is man that wrongs
His own soul.¹⁴³⁵

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

45. And on the day when He will
Gather them together:
(It will be) as if
They had tarried¹⁴³⁶
But an hour of a day:
They will recognise each other.¹⁴³⁷
Assuredly those will be lost
Who denied the meeting
With Allah and refused
To receive true guidance.

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَسُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنَ النَّهَارِ
يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ
وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

1434. Cf. vi. 25, 36, 39 and notes. Hypocrites go to hear and see some great Teacher, but they get no profit out of it because they are not sincerely seeking the truth. They are like the blind, or the deaf, or the imbeciles. It is impossible to guide them, because they have not the will to be guided.

1435. Allah cannot be blamed for man's evil, nor will He deal unjustly with man. He has given him faculties and means of guidance. If man goes wrong, it is because he wrongs himself.

1436. In eternity our life on this earth will look as if it had been just a little part of our little day, and so also will appear any interval between our death and the call to Judgment.

1437. We shall retain some perception of our mutual relations on earth, so that the righteous judgment which will be pronounced will be intelligible to us, and we shall be convinced of its righteousness.

46. Whether We show thee
(Realised in thy life-time)
Some part of what We
Promise them,—or We
Take thy soul
(Before that),—in any case,
To Us is their return:
Ultimately Allah is witness¹⁴³⁸
To all that they do.

وَأَمَّا نَرِيكَ بِعَصِّ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتُوفِّيكَ فَآلَيْنَا
مَرْجِعَهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

47. To every people (was sent)
A Messenger: when their
Messenger¹⁴³⁹
Comes (before them), the matter
Will be judged between them
With justice, and they
Will not be wronged.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

48. They say: "When
Will this promise
Come to pass,—
If ye speak the truth?"

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

49. Say: "I have no power¹⁴⁴⁰
Over any harm or profit
To myself except as Allah

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ

1438. The Prophet is assured that the end of evil is evil, just as the end of good is good. Whether this result is made plain before his very eyes in his own life-time or afterwards, makes no difference. The wicked should not rejoice if they are given rope and seem to have the upper hand for a time, nor should the righteous lose heart: for Allah's promise is sure and must come to pass. And in any case, the scales can only be partially, if at all, adjusted in this life. There is the final and complete adjustment on the Day of Judgment. Allah is All-Knowing, and all truth will be before Him.

1439. Every people or generation or nation had its Message or Messenger: Allah revealed Himself to it in some way or another. If that Messenger was ignored or rejected, or his Message was twisted or misused, the Day of Reckoning will come, when perfect justice will be done and the whole Truth revealed. The Unbelievers mockingly say: "If that is true, pray tell us when that Day will come!" The answer of the Messenger is: "It will come in good time: no one can either hasten or retard it. If you want me then to save you or if you fear that I shall harm you for your treatment of me, know that this matter is in the hands of Allah alone, Who will do perfect justice. Even in regard to myself, any harm or good that befalls me is by the command and in the power of Allah".

1440. Cf. vii. 188.

Willeth. To every People¹⁴⁴¹
Is a term appointed:
When their term is reached,
Not an hour can they cause
Delay, not (an hour) can they
Advance (it in anticipation)."

50. Say: Do ye see,-
If His punishment should come
To you by night or by day,-¹⁴⁴²
What portion of it
Would the Sinners
Wish to hasten?

51. "Would ye then believe in it
At last, when it actually cometh
To pass? (It will then be said):
'Ah! now? and ye wanted
(Aforetime) to hasten it on!'

52. "At length will be said
To the wrong-doers: 'Taste ye
The enduring punishment!¹⁴⁴³

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ سَاعَةً
وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنِ اتَّخَذْتُمْ عَذَابَهُ بَيِّنَةً أَوْ نَهَارًا مَاذَا
يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

أَتُمِرُّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ أَمْنُكُمْ بِهِ ؕ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ

1441. This repeats vii. 34, but the significance is different in the two contexts. Here the reply is to the Unbelievers' mocking incredulity (see n. 1439) as to whether there is such a thing as a Hereafter: they suggest to the Prophet of Allah that if his claim to inspiration from Allah is true, he should get them punished at once for rejecting him. In vii. 34 the reference is to the punishment of iniquity as described in vii. 33: sin is not necessarily punished at once: every People or generation gets a chance; when their term is fulfilled, the final adjustment is made.

1442. The mockery of Unbelievers will be turned into panic when the wrath of Allah descends on them. It may do so suddenly, by night or by day, when they least expect it. Will they then say of any bit of it: "Let it be hastened"?

1443. This will be the final doom, and they will themselves have brought it on themselves!

The psychology of the Unbelievers is here analysed and exposed. This particular argument begins at x. 47 and ends at x. 53. It begins with the general statement that every People has had due warning and explanation by means of a Prophet specially sent to them: that Prophet will be a relevant witness at the final Judgment, when the matter will be judged in perfect equity. Then follows a dialogue. The Unbelievers mock and say, "Why not bring on the Punishment now?" The reply to the Unbelievers is, "It will come in Allah's good time". The Believers are told to watch and see how the sinners would take it if the Punishment were to come at once. Would they not think it too sudden? When it actually comes, their panic will be indescribable. "Is that true?" say the Unbelievers. "It is the very truth," is the answer, "and nothing can ward it off".

Ye get but the recompense
Of what ye earned!" "

53. They seek to be informed
By thee: "Is that true?"
Say: "Aye! by my Lord!
It is the very truth!
And ye cannot frustrate it!"

SECTION 6.

54. Every soul that hath sinned,
If it possessed all
That is on earth,
Would fain give it in ransom:¹⁴⁴⁴
They would declare (their)
repentance¹⁴⁴⁵
When they see the Chastisement:
But the judgment between them
Will be with justice,
And no wrong will be done
Unto them.
55. Is it not (the case) that to Allah
Belongeth whatever is
In the heavens and on earth?
Is it not (the case) that
Allah's promise is assuredly true?
Yet most of them do not know.
56. It is He who giveth life
And who taketh it,

هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

وَيَسْتَنْتِظُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ

لَحَقُّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ
بِهِ وَأَسْرَوْا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَقُضِيَ

بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ

حَقٌّ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

هُوَ الْحَيُّ وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

1444. Cf. iii. 91.

1445. *Declare their repentance*: the verb in the original is *asarrû*, which may mean either "declare" or "reveal" or else "conceal" or "hide". The classical Commentators are divided as to the meaning to be adopted here. If the first, which I prefer, the sense would be: "When the Penalty stares the sinners in the face, they would give anything to escape it, and they would even openly declare their repentance, which would be a source of shame and ignominy to them." If the latter meaning be taken, the sense would be: "They would give anything to escape the Penalty; but the hardest thing of all for them is frankly to confess and repent, and so they conceal their sense of shame and ignominy."

And to Him shall ye
All be brought back.

57. O mankind! there hath come
To you an admonition from your Lord
And a healing for the (diseases)¹⁴⁴⁶
In your hearts,—and for those
Who believe, a Guidance
And a Mercy.

58. Say: "In the Bounty of Allah.
And in His Mercy,—in that
Let them rejoice": that is better
Than the (wealth) they hoard.

59. Say: "See ye what things¹⁴⁴⁷
Allah hath sent down to you
For sustenance? Yet ye
Hold forbidden some things
Thereof and (some things) lawful."
Say: "Hath Allah indeed
Permitted you, or do ye forge
(Things) to attribute to Allah?"

60. And what think those
Who forge lies against Allah,
On the Day of Judgment?¹⁴⁴⁸
Verily Allah is full of Bounty

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

قُلْ يَفْضَلُ اللَّهُ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فِدَاكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا
هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ اللَّهُ أَذِنَ
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَعْلَى اللَّهُ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ

1446. Those who do wrong have a disease in their hearts, which will cause their spiritual death. Allah in His Mercy declares His Will to them, which should direct their lives and provide a healing for their spiritual disease. If they accept Faith, the remedy acts; they find themselves in right guidance and receive Allah's forgiveness and mercy. Surely those are far better gifts than material advantages, wealth, or possessions.

1447. "Sustenance" is to be taken in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. In the literal sense, what fine and varied things Allah has provided for us on land and in sea and air, in the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms? Yet narrow minds put artificial barriers against their use. In the metaphorical sense, what enchanting fields of knowledge and spiritual endeavour are provided in our individual and social lives? And who is to say that some are lawful and others forbidden? Supposing they were so in special circumstances, it is not right to attribute artificial restrictions of that kind to Allah and falsely erect religious sanctions against them.

1448. People who lie in Religion or invent false gods, or false worship,—have they any idea of the Day of Judgment, when they will be called to account, and will have to answer for their deeds?

To mankind, but most
Of them are ungrateful.¹⁴⁴⁹

SECTION 7.

61. In whatever business thou
Mayest be, and whatever portion
Thou mayest be reciting
From the Qur-ān,-and whatever
Deed ye (mankind) may be doing,-
We are Witnesses thereof
When ye are deeply engrossed
Therein. Nor is hidden
From the Lord (so much as)
The weight of an atom
On the earth or in heaven.
And not the smallest
And not the greatest
Of these things but are recorded
In a clear Record.¹⁴⁵⁰

62. Behold! verily on the friends
Of Allah there is no fear,¹⁴⁵¹
Nor shall they grieve;

وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ
وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا
إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالٍ
ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦١﴾

الْآيَاتِ أُولَئِكَ اللَّهُ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

1449. Allah is most kind, and gracious, and generous with His gifts of all kinds, material and spiritual. But men do not understand, and are ungrateful in forgetting the Giver of all and setting up false objects of worship and false standards of pride.

1450. There is nothing that men can do but Allah is a witness to it. We may be deeply engrossed in some particular thing and for the time being be quite unconscious of other things. But Allah's knowledge not only comprehends all things, but has all things actively before it. Nothing is hidden from Him. And His knowledge has another quality which human knowledge has not. Human knowledge is subject to time, and is obliterated by time. Allah's knowledge is like a Record and endures for ever. And His Record has a further quality which human records have not. The most permanent human record may be quite intelligible to those who make it but may be ambiguous to others and may become unintelligible with the progress of time, as happens almost invariably to the most enduring inscriptions from very ancient times: but in Allah's "Record" or knowledge there is no ambiguity, for it is independent of time, or place, or circumstance. This is the force of *Mubin* ("clear") here.

1451. Allah's all-embracing knowledge and constant watchful care over all His creatures, may be a source of fear to sinners, but there is no fear for those whom He honours with His love and friendship,-neither in this world nor in the world to come.

63. Those who believe
And (constantly) guard
Against evil;-
64. For them are Glad Tidings,
In the life of the Present
And in the Hereafter:
No change can there be
In the Words of Allah.
This is indeed
The supreme Triumph
65. Let not their speech¹⁴⁵²
Grieve thee: for all power
And honour belong to Allah:
It is He Who heareth
And knoweth (all things).
66. Behold! verily to Allah
Belong all creatures,
In the heavens and on earth.
What do they follow
Who worship as His "partners"
Other than Allah? They follow
Nothing but conjecture, and
They do nothing but lie.¹⁴⁵³
67. He it is that hath
Made you the Night
That ye may rest therein,
And the Day to make
Things visible (to you).¹⁴⁵⁴
Verily in this are Signs

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
لَا يَبْدِلُ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٤﴾

وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْإِمرَةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا
هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٥﴾

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مِنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ
إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ
وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

1452. Sometimes the words of the unrighteous or their revilings hurt or grieve the righteous man, but there is no occasion for either anger or sorrow: they have no power and they can do no real dishonour, for all power and honour are from Allah.

1453. All creatures are subject to Allah. If, therefore, any false worship is set up, the false gods—so called "partners"—are merely creatures of imagination or false inventions.

1454. Our physical life—and our higher life in so far as it is linked with the physical—is sustained by the alternation of rest and activity, and the fit environment for this alternation is the succession of Nights and Days in our physical world. The Day makes the things "visible to us—" a beautiful symbol, not only of the physical work for which =

For those who listen
(To His Message).

68. They say, "Allah hath begotten
A son!"—Glory be to Him!
He is Self-Sufficient! His
Are all things in the heavens
And on earth! No warrant
Have ye for this! Say ye
About Allah what ye know not?

69. Say: "Those who forge
A lie against Allah
Will never prosper."¹⁴⁵⁵

70. A little enjoyment
In this world!—
And then, to Us
Will be their return.
Then shall We make them
Taste the severest Chastisement
For their disbelief.

SECTION 8.

71. Relate to them the story¹⁴⁵⁶
Of Noah. Behold! he said
To his People: "O my People,

فَالَوْ أَنَّ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَنَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
إِن عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا أَتَقُولُونَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

قُلْ إِن الَّذِينَ يَقْتُرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
لَا يَقْلِحُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

مَتَّعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نَذِقُهُمُ
الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

﴿٢١﴾ وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَنْقُومُ إِن كَانَ
كَبْرُ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَتَذِكْرِي بَيِّنَاتٍ اللَّهُ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ

= we go about by day, but of the higher activities which are fitly associated with seeing, perception and enquiry. Intuition (insight) is a little out of that circle because that may come by night, when our other faculties are resting.

1455. In Quranic language "prosperity" refers both to our every-day life and to the higher life within us,—to the Present and the Future,—health and strength, opportunities and resources, a spirit of contentment, and the power of influencing others. Here there seems to be an extra touch of meaning. A liar not only deprives himself of prosperity in all senses, but his "lie" itself against Allah will not succeed: it will and must be found out.

1456. The reference to Noah's story here is only incidental, to illustrate a special point. The fuller story will be found in xi. 25-48, and in many other passages, e.g., vii. 59-64, xxiii 23-32, xxvi, 105-122, and xxxvii, 75-82. At each place there is a special point in the context. The special point here is that Noah's very life and preaching among his wicked people was a cause of offence to them. But he feared nothing, trusted in Allah, delivered his message, and was saved from the Flood.

If it be hard on your (mind)
That I should stay (with you)
And remind (you) the Signs
Of Allah,—yet I put
My trust in Allah
Get ye then an agreement
About your plan and among
Your Partners, so your plan¹⁴⁵⁷
Be not to you dark and dubious.
Then pass your sentence on me,
And give me no respite.

72. But if ye turn back, (consider):
No reward have I asked¹⁴⁵⁸
Of you: my reward is only
Due from Allah, and I
Have been commanded to be
Of those who submit
To Allah's Will (in Islām)."

73. They rejected him,
But We delivered him,
And those with him,
In the Ark, and We made
Them inherit (the earth),
While We drowned
In the Flood those
Who rejected Our Signs.¹⁴⁵⁹
Then see what was the end
Of those who were warned
(But heeded not)!

74. Then after him We sent
(Many) messengers to their Peoples:

تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ
أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا
إِلَيَّ وَلَا تَنْظُرُونِ ﴿٧١﴾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجَرِيَ إِلَّا
عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأَمِرتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَبَّيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
خَلْفَافٍ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابُ الْغَادِرِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ

1457. Firm in his sense of Truth from Allah. Noah plainly told his people to condemn him to death if they liked, openly and in concert, so that he should at least know who would listen to his Message and who would not. He wanted them to be frank and direct, for he feared nothing.

1458. The Prophet of Allah preaches for the good of his people. But he claims no reward from them, but on the contrary is reviled, persecuted, banished, and often slain.

1459. Cf. vii. 64.

They brought them Clear Signs,
But they would not believe
What they had already rejected¹⁴⁶⁰
Beforehand. Thus do We seal
The hearts of the transgressors.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
كَذَلِكَ نَطْمَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

75. Then after them sent We
Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh¹⁴⁶¹
And his chiefs with Our Signs.
But they were arrogant:
They were a wicked people.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَائِكَةٍ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا
تُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. When the Truth did come
To them from Us, they said:
"This is indeed evident sorcery!"

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا
إِنَّ هَذَا السِّحْرُ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Said Moses: "Say ye (this)
About the Truth when
It hath (actually) reached you?
Is it sorcery (like) this?
But sorcerers will not prosper."¹⁴⁶²

قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ
أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلَا يُفْطِحُ السَّحَرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. They said: "Hast thou
Come to us to turn us
Away from the ways
We found our fathers following,—
In order that thou and thy brother

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنُلْفِئَنَّا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءُنَا
وَتَكُونَ لَكُمُ الْكِرْبِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمُ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

1460. I understand the meaning to be that there is a sort of spiritual influence descending from generation to generation, among the Unbelievers as among the men of Faith. In history we find the same problems in many ages,—denial of Allah's grace, defiance of Allah's law, rejection of Allah's Message. These influences cause the hearts of the contumacious to be sealed and impervious to the Truth Cf. ii. 7 and notes. What they do is to prejudice the issues even before the Prophet explains them.

1461. The story of Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh is fully told in vii. 103-137, and there are references to it in many places in the Qur-ān. The incidental reference here is to illustrate a special point, viz., that the wicked are arrogant and bound up in their sin, and prefer deception to Truth: they do not hesitate to charge the men of Allah, who work unselfishly for them, with mean motives, such as would actuate them in similar circumstances!

1462. Sorcery is the very opposite of Truth,—being deception of plausible shows by the powers of evil. But these cannot succeed or last permanently, and Truth must ultimately prevail.

May have greatness in the land?¹⁴⁶³
But not we shall believe in you!"

79. Said Pharaoh: "Bring me
Every sorcerer well versed."

80. When the sorcerers came,
Moses said to them:
"Throw ye what ye (wish)
To throw!"

81. When they had had their throw,¹⁴⁶⁴
Moses said: "What ye
Have brought is sorcery:
Allah will surely make it
Of no effect: for Allah
Prospereth not the work
Of those who make mischief.

82. "And Allah by His Words¹⁴⁶⁵
Doth prove and establish
The Truth, however much
The Sinners may hate it!"

SECTION 9.

83. But none believed in Moses
Except some children of his
People.¹⁴⁶⁶

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ أَتَنْتَوْنِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمُ مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ
مُلْقُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
سَيَبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

وَيُخَوِّذُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ يَكَلِّمُنِيهِ، وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَمَاءٌ أَمِنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ قَوْمِهِ عَلَى خَوْفٍ

1463. Notice how they attribute evil motives to the men of Allah, motives of ambition and lust of power, which the men of Allah had been sent expressly to put down. The same device was used against Al-Mustafā.

1464. When they threw their rods, the rods became snakes by a trick of sorcery, but Moses's miracles were greater than any tricks of sorcery, and had real Truth behind them.

1465. Allah's Words or Commands have real power, while Sorcerers' tricks only seem wonderful by deceiving the eye.

1466. The pronoun "his" in "his People" is taken by some Commentators to refer to Pharaoh. The majority of Pharaoh's people refused to believe at the time, but the sorcerers believed (vii. 120), and so did Pharaoh's wife (lxvi. 11), and ultimately Pharaoh himself, though too late (x. 90). If we took "his" to refer to Moses, it would mean that the Israelites were hard-hearted and grumbled (vii. 129) even when they were being delivered from Egypt, and only a few of them had any real faith in Allah's providence and the working of His Law, and they feared Pharaoh even more than they feared Allah.

Because of the fear of Pharaoh
And his chiefs, lest they
Should persecute them; and certainly
Pharaoh was mighty on the earth
And one who transgressed all bounds.

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ
لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. Moses said: "O my People!
If ye do (really) believe
In Allah, then in Him
Put your trust if ye
Submit (your will to His)."

وَقَالَ مُوسَى يَقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ
أَمِنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا
إِنْ كُنتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. They said: "In Allah
Do we put our trust.
Our Lord make us not
A trial for those¹⁴⁶⁷
Who practise oppression;

فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. "And deliver us by Thy Mercy
From those who reject (Thee)."

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. We inspired Moses and his brother
With this Message: "Provide¹⁴⁶⁸
Dwellings for your People
In Egypt, make your dwellings
Into places of worship,
And establish regular prayers:
And give Glad Tidings
To those who believe!"

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوِّءَ الْقَوْمَ كَمَا
بِمِصْرَ يَبُوتَاءَ وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. Moses prayed: "Our Lord!
Thou hast indeed bestowed

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ

1467. A trial for those who practise oppression: the various meanings of *Fitnat* have been explained in n. 1198 to viii. 25. The prayer is that the righteous people, being weak, should be saved from being used as objects of oppression or punishment at the hands of powerful enemies. Weakness tempts Power to practise oppression, and is thus an occasion of trial for the oppressors.

1468. This instruction, we may suppose, was given when the sorcerers were brought to faith, and some of the Egyptians believed. Moses was for a little while to remain in Egypt, so that his Message should have time to work, before the Israelites were led out of Egypt. They were to make their houses into places of prayer (*Qibla*), as Pharaoh would not probably allow them to set up public places of prayer, and they were now to be only sojourners in Egypt. These were the glad tidings (the Gospel) of Islam, which was preached under Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and completed under Muhammad.

On Pharaoh and his Chiefs
 Splendour and wealth in the life¹⁴⁶⁹
 Of the Present, and so,
 Our Lord they mislead (men)
 From Thy Path. Deface
 Our Lord the features of their
 wealth,¹⁴⁷⁰

And send hardness to their hearts,
 So they will not believe
 Until they see
 The grievous Chastisement."

89. Allah said: "Accepted is
 Your prayer (O Moses and Aaron)!
 So stand ye straight,
 And follow not the path
 Of those who know not."¹⁴⁷¹

90. We took the Children
 Of Israel across the sea:
 Pharaoh and his hosts followed them
 In insolence and spite.¹⁴⁷²
 At length, when overwhelmed
 With the flood, he said:

وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا
 لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَى أَمْوَالِهِمْ
 وَاشْدُدْ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوْا
 الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمْ فَاستَقِيمَا
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعَان سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ
 فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّى إِذَا أَذْرَكَهُ

1469. Moses's prayer, in which Aaron joined, for he was always with him, may be paraphrased thus: "O Allah! we understand that the glitter and the wealth of the Egyptians are not to be envied. They are but the ephemeral goods of this life. They are a disadvantage, in that in their pride of possessions the Egyptians mislead themselves and others. Let their pride be their undoing! Turn their wealth into bitterness and their hearts into hardness, for they reject Thee, and they will not believe until they actually see the Punishment of their sins!"

1470. A terrible curse! Let their wealth and splendour become so defaced in their features, that instead of being objects of desire, they become objects of loathing! The heart is the seat of affections and joy: let it be so hardened by their unbelief that it becomes the seat of hatred and grief! It is when they see the Penalty that they will believe!

1471. Be not dazzled by their splendour, but stand out straight for Truth, for that is your salvation! Addressed in form to Moses and Aaron, in substance it is addressed to the Israelites.

1472. Notice the swiftness of the action in the narrative. The execution of poetic justice could not have been described in fewer words.

"I believe that there is no god
Except Him Whom the Children
Of Israel believe in:¹⁴⁷³
I am of those who submit
(To Allah in Islām)."

91. (It was said to him:)
"Ah now!-But a little while
Before, wast thou in rebellion!-
And thou didst mischief (and
violence)!"

92. "This day shall We save thee
In thy body, that thou
Mayest be a Sign to those
Who come after thee!
But verily, many among mankind
Are heedless of Our Signs!"

SECTION 10.

93. We settled the Children
Of Israel in an honourable¹⁴⁷⁴
Dwelling-place, and provided
For them sustenance of the best:
It was after knowledge had been
Granted to them, that they
Fell into schisms. Verily

أَلْفَرَقُ قَالَ ءَامَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي ءَامَنْتُ
بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَءِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

ءَالْفَنِّ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ
مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِدُنَاكَ لِيَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَكَ ءَايَةً
وَإِنْ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ ءَايَاتِنَا لَغَفُلُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ دِيَارَ بَصُرَتِهِمْ
مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّى جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

1473. That is, in the One True God. This was death-bed repentance, and even so it was forced by the terror of the catastrophe. So it was not accepted (cf. iv. 18) in its entirety. Only the body was saved from the sea, and presumably, according to Egyptian custom, it was embalmed and the mummy was given due rites of the dead. But the story commemorated for ever Allah's working, in mercy for His people, and in just punishment of oppressors.

1474. After many wanderings the Israelites were settled in the land of Canaan, described as "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8). They had a prosperous land; and they were supplied with spiritual sustenance by men sent to deliver Allah's Message. They should have known better than to fall into disputes and schisms, but they did so. This was all the more inexcusable considering what bounties they had received from Allah. The schisms arose from selfish arrogance, and Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment.

Allah will judge between them
As to the schisms amongst them,
On the Day of Judgment.

94. If thou wert in doubt
As to what We have revealed
Unto thee, then ask those
Who have been reading
The Book from before thee:¹⁴⁷⁵
The Truth hath indeed come
To thee from thy Lord:
So be in no wise
Of those in doubt.¹⁴⁷⁶
95. Nor be of those who reject
The Signs of Allah,
Or thou shalt be of those
Who perish
96. Those against whom the Word
Of thy Lord hath been verified¹⁴⁷⁷
Would not believe—
97. Even if every Sign was brought
Unto them,—until they see
(For themselves) the Chastisement
Grievous.
98. If only there had been
A single township (among those
We warned), which believed,—

فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ
يَقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ
حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٩٧﴾

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ أَمَنَتْ فَنَنفَعَهَا إِيمَنُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمٌ

1475. Allah's Truth is all one, and even in different forms men sincere in Religion recognise the oneness. So sincere Jews like 'Abdullāh ibn Salām, and sincere Christians like Warāqa or the Nestorian monk Bahīra, were ready to recognise the mission of Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā. "The Book" in this connection is Revelation generally, including pre-Islamic revelations.

1476. Cf. iii. 60 and n. 399.

1477. Allah has given frequent warnings against Evil and want of Faith in all ages, through Signs and through inspiration,—the latter ("the Word") being even more direct and personal than the former. Those who did not heed the warning found to their cost that it was true, and they perished. Such contumacy in the rejection of Truth only yields when the actual penalty is in sight. Belief then is induced by irresistible facts: it is not efficacious as Faith, as was proved against Pharaoh. See x. 90 and n. 1473.

So its Faith should have
 Profited it,—except the People¹⁴⁷⁸
 Of Jonah? When they believed,
 We removed from them
 The Chastisement of Ignominy
 In the life of the Present,
 And permitted them to enjoy
 (Their life) for a while.¹⁴⁷⁹

يُؤْسُ لِمَاءَ أَمْنًا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ
 فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾

99. If it had been thy Lord's Will,
 They would all have believed,—
 All who are on earth!
 Wilt thou then compel mankind,
 Against their will, to believe!¹⁴⁸⁰

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ
 جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

1478. Allah in His infinite Mercy points out the contumacy of Sin as a warning, and the exceptional case of Nineveh and its Prophet Jonah is alluded to. The story of Jonah is told in xxxvii. 139-148, which would be an appropriate place for further comments. Here it is sufficient to note that Nineveh was a very ancient town which is now no longer on the map. Its site is believed to be marked by the two mounds on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the flourishing city of Mosul on the right bank, about 230 miles north-north-west of Bagdad. One of the mounds bears the name of "the Tomb of Nabi Yūnus." Archaeologists have not yet fully explored its antiquities. But it is clear that it was a very old Sumerian town, perhaps older than 3500 B.C. It became the capital of Assyria. The first Assyrian Empire under Shalmaneser I, about 1300 B.C., became the supreme power in Western Asia. Babylon, whose tributary Assyria had formerly been, now became tributary to Assyria. The second Assyrian Empire arose about 745 B.C., and Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) beautified the town with many Public Works. It was destroyed by the Scythians (so-called Medes) in 612 B.C. If the date of Jonah were assumed to be about 800 B.C., it would be between the First and the Second Assyrian Empire; when the City was nearly destroyed for its sins, but on account of its repentance was given a new lease of glorious life in the Second Empire.

1479. The point of the allusion here may be thus explained. Nineveh was a great and glorious City. But it became, like Babylon, a city of sin. Allah sent the prophet Yūnus (Jonah) to warn it. Full of iniquities though it was, it listened to the warning, perhaps in the person of a few just men. For their sakes, the All-Merciful Allah spared it, and gave it a new lease of glorious life. According to the chronology in the last note the new lease would be for about two centuries, after which it perished completely for its sins and abominations. Note that its new lease of life was for its collective life as a City, the life of the Present, i.e., of this World. It does not mean that individual sinners escaped the spiritual consequences of their sin, unless they individually repented and obtained Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

1480. If it had been Allah's Plan or Will not to grant the limited Free-will that He has granted to man, His omnipotence could have made all mankind alike: all would then have had Faith, but that Faith would have reflected no merit on them. In the actual world as it is, man has been endowed with various faculties and capacities, so that he should strive and explore, and bring himself into harmony with Allah's Will. Hence Faith =

100. No soul can believe, except
By the Will of Allah,¹⁴⁸¹
And He will place¹⁴⁸²
Abomination on those
Who will not understand.

وَمَا كَانَتْ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. Say: "Behold all that is
In the heavens and on earth";
But neither Signs nor Warners
Profit those who believe not¹⁴⁸³

قُلْ أَنْظَرُوا مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُعْجِبُ
الْآيَاتِ وَالنَّذْرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

102. Do they then expect
(Any thing) but the like of (what
happened
In) the days of the men
Who passed away before them?
Say: "Wait ye then:
For I, too, will wait with you."¹⁴⁸⁴

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانظُرُوا إِلَى مَا تُفْعَلُونَ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

= becomes a moral achievement, and to resist Faith becomes a sin. As a complementary proposition, men of Faith must not be impatient or angry if they have to contend against Unfaith, and most important of all, they must guard against the temptation of forcing Faith, i.e., imposing it on others by physical compulsion. Forced faith is no faith. They should strive.

1481. To creatures endued with Will, Faith comes out of an active use of that Will. But we must not be so arrogant as to suppose that that is enough. At best man is weak, and is in need of Allah's grace and help. If we sincerely wish to understand. He will help our Faith; but if not, our doubts and difficulties will only be increased. This follows as a necessary consequence, and in Quranic language all consequences are ascribed to Allah.

1482. *Rijs* (from *rajisa*, *yarjasu*, or *rajusa*, *yarjusu*) has various meanings: e.g., (1) filth, impurity, uncleanness, abomination, as in ix. 95; (2) hence, filthy deeds, foul conduct, crime, abomination, thus shading off into (1), as in v. 90; (3) hence punishment for crime, penalty, as in vi. 125; (4) a form of such punishment, viz., doubt, obscurity, or unsettlement of mind, anger, indignation, as in ix. 125, and here, but perhaps the idea of punishment is also implied here.

1483. If Faith results from an active exertion of our spiritual faculties or understanding, it follows that if we let these die, Allah's Signs in His Creation or in the spoken Word which comes by inspiration through the mouths of His Messengers will not reach us any more than music reaches a deaf man.

1484. Cf. x. 20 and n. 1408. The argument about Allah's revelation of Himself to man was begun in those early sections of this Sūra and is being now rounded off towards the end of this Sūra with the same formula.

103. In the end We deliver
Our messengers and those who
believe:
Thus is it fitting on Our part
That We should deliver
Those who believe!

SECTION 11.

104. Say: "O ye men!
If ye are in doubt
As to my religion, (behold!)¹⁴⁸⁵
I worship not what ye
Worship other than Allah!
But I worship Allah—
Who will take your souls¹⁴⁸⁶
(At death): I am commanded¹⁴⁸⁷
To be (in the ranks)
Of the Believers,¹⁴⁸⁸
105. "And further (thus): set thy face
Towards Religion with true piety,
And never in any wise
Be of the Unbelievers;
106. "Nor call on any,
Other than Allah;—
Such can neither profit thee
Nor hurt thee: if thou dost,

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا
عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ
الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِن آَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي
يَتَوَفَّنَكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَن أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

وَأَن أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
وَلَا تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ
فَإِن فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِن الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

1485. Other people may hesitate, or doubt, or wonder. But the righteous man has no doubt in his own mind, and he declares his Faith clearly and unambiguously to all, as did Al-Muṣṭafā.

1486. The worship of the One and True God is not a fancy worship, to be arrived at merely by reasoning and philosophy. It touches the vital issues of life and death—which are in His hands and His alone.

1487. Nor is the worship of One God an invention of the Prophet. It comes as a direct command through him and to all.

1488. Individual Faith is good, but it is completed and strengthened by joining or forming a Righteous Society, in which the individual can develop and expand. Islam was never a religion of monks and anchorites. It laid great stress on social duties, which in many ways test and train the individual's character.

Behold! thou shalt certainly
Be of those who do wrong."

107. If Allah do touch thee
With hurt, there is none
Can remove it but He:
If He do design some benefit
For thee, there is none
Can keep back His favour:
He causeth it to reach
Whomsoever of His servants
He pleaseth. And He is
The Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.¹⁴⁸⁹

108. Say: "O ye men! Now
Truth hath reached you
From your Lord! Those, who receive
Guidance, do so for the good
Of their own souls; those
Who stray, do so to their own loss:
And I am not (set) over you
To arrange your affairs."¹⁴⁹⁰

109. Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till Allah,
Do decide: for He
Is the Best to decide¹⁴⁹¹

وَأِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَأَنْ يَرُدَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ
بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ
فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِمَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَأَصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُضِّمَ اللَّهُ
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

1489. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Even when we suffer under trials and tribulations, it is for our good, and no one can remove them except He, when, in His Plan. He sees it to be best for all concerned. On the other hand, there is no power that can intercept His blessings and favours, and His bounty flows freely when we are worthy, and often when we are not worthy of it.

1490. The *Furqān*, the Criterion between right and wrong, has been sent to us from Allah. If we accept guidance, it is not as if we confer favours on those who bring us guidance. They suffer unselfishly for us, in order that we may be guided for our own good. On the other hand, if we reject it, it is our own loss. We have a certain amount of free-will, and the responsibility is ours and cannot be shifted to the Prophets sent by Allah.

1491. When, in spite of all the efforts of the Prophets of Allah, people do not accept Truth, and evil seems to flourish for a time, we must wait and be patient, but at the same time we must not give up hope or persevering effort. For thus only can we carry out our part in the Plan of Allah.