

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Az-Zumar*, 39.

This is the last of the series of six Sūras beginning with S. xxxiv., which deal with some aspects of the spiritual world, as leading up to the Ma'ād, or the Hereafter. See Introduction to S. xxxiv.

Its subject-matter is how Creation in its great variety is yet sorted out in Groups or Classes, all governed by one Plan, and created and sustained by One God, Who will separate Good from Evil at the last Day. The word *zumar* occurs in verses 71 and 73.

It belongs to the later Makkan period.

Summary.—The variety in Creation yet points to unity of Plan: there is only One God: to Him is due all worship and from Him flow all Justice and Grace (xxxix. 1-21).

There is unity in Revelation, and guidance comes from Allah alone: turn to Him only, for all else is false (xxxix. 22-52).

Allah's Mercy is all-embracing: despair not: seek it before it is too late: for Judgment and Justice will come for certain (xxxix. 53-75).

Az-Zumar, or the Groups.

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

1. The revelation
Of this Book
Is from Allah,⁴²⁴²
The Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom.
2. Verily it is We Who have
Revealed the Book to thee
In Truth: so serve Allah,
Offering Him sincere devotion.
3. Is it not to Allah⁴²⁴³
That sincere devotion
Is due? But those who
Take for protectors others
Than Allah (say): "We only
Serve them in order that
They may bring us nearer⁴²⁴⁴
To Allah." Truly Allah
Will judge between them
In that wherein they differ.⁴²⁴⁵

سُورَةُ الزُّمَرِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ
مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿٢﴾

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا
مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا
إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ
كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣﴾

4242. In connection with Revelation two qualities of Allah are mentioned: (1) that He is All-Powerful and can carry out His Will in spite of all opposition; and (2) that He is full of knowledge and wisdom. The first answers those who question how Allah can send Revelation to man; the second explains that true wisdom consists in carrying out Allah's Will as revealed to us.

4243. In the many Signs in Creation as described below, there yet is a clear indication of the unity of Plan, pointing to the Unity of the Creator. Worship or service is due to none but Him. And He wants exclusive and sincere devotion.

4244. Worshippers of Idols or of deities other than Allah, e.g., saints or perhaps Wealth and Power, Science or Selfish Desire, may pretend that these are symbols that may get them nearer to their self-development, nearer to the goal of their life, nearer to Allah, but they are altogether on the wrong track.

4245. This departure of theirs from true worship, this divergence from the right way, produces endless disputations and sects. Allah will judge between them. But if they are determined to go after falsehoods and forget the gratitude and service which they owe to Allah, and Allah alone, they are putting themselves on a Path where they will get no guidance. They are cutting themselves off from revealed Truth.

But Allah guides not
Such as are false
And ungrateful.

4. Had Allah wished
To take to Himself
A son, He could have
Chosen whom He pleased
Out of those whom He⁴²⁴⁶
Doth create: but Glory
Be to Him! (He is above
Such things.) He is Allah,
The One, the Overpowering.

5. He created the heavens
And the earth
In true (proportions):⁴²⁴⁷
He makes the Night
Overlap the Day, and the Day
Overlap the Night:
He has subjected
The sun and the moon
(To His law):
Each one follows a course
For a time appointed.
Is not He the Exalted
In Power—He Who forgives⁴²⁴⁸
Again and again?

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَاصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ
مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ
الْوَحِيدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿١﴾

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ
عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى ۚ أَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٢﴾

4246. It is blasphemy to say that Allah begot a son. If that were true, He should have had a wife (vi. 101), and His son would have been of the same kind as Himself; whereas Allah is one, with no one else like unto Him (cxii. 4). Begetting is an animal act which goes with sex. How can it be consistent with our conception of One Who is above all Creatures? If such a blasphemous thought were possible, as that Allah wanted some one else to help Him, He could have chosen the best of His creatures instead of lowering Himself to an animal act. But glory to Allah! He is above such things! His Unity is the first thing that we have to learn about Him. As He is Omnipotent, He requires no creatures to help Him or bring other creatures to Him.

4247. Cf. vi. 73, and n. 896.

4248. His Power is equalled by His Mercy. Who can there be like unto Him?

6. He created you (all)
 From a single Person.⁴²⁴⁹
 Then created, of like nature,
 His mate; and He
 Sent down for you eight head⁴²⁵⁰
 Of cattle in pairs:
 He creates you,
 In the wombs
 Of your mothers,
 In stages, one after another,⁴²⁵¹
 In three veils of darkness.⁴²⁵²
 Such is Allah, your Lord
 And Cherisher: to Him belongs
 (All) dominion. There is
 No god but He: then
 How are ye turned away⁴²⁵³
 (From your true Lord)?

7. If ye reject (Allah),
 Truly Allah hath no need
 Of you; but He liketh not⁴²⁵⁴
 Ingratitude from His servants:

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
 وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَنِيَّةً أَنْزَلَ خِلْقَتَكُمْ
 فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ
 فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ
 الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦﴾

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ
 الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ

4249. Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504.

4250. See vi. 143-4, where four kinds of cattle are mentioned in pairs in connection with certain Arab superstitions which are there condemned. Here the same four kinds are mentioned as representative of domesticated cattle given by Allah as useful to man. These are sheep, goats, camels, and oxen. In Arab idiom the horse is not included among "cattle".

For the wisdom and goodness of Allah in granting man dominion over cattle, see xxxvi. 71-73.

4251. See xxii. 5, where the gradual physical growth of man in several successive stages is mentioned as one of the Signs of Allah's creative Power and cherishing care.

4252. The three veils of darkness which cover the unborn child are: the caul or membrane, the womb, and the hollow in which the womb is enclosed.

4253. It is clear that you owe your very existence and your maintenance, growth, and preservation, to Allah; How is it that you are turned away by chance things from Him?

4254. Allah is independent of all wants, and therefore man's ingratitude does not affect Allah. But Allah cares for man, and therefore man's gratitude and service earn Allah's Good Pleasure, and man's ingratitude and rebellion are displeasing to Allah.

If ye are grateful, He
Is pleased with you.
No bearer of burdens⁴²⁵⁵
Can bear of burden
Of another. In the End,
To your Lord is your Return,
When He will tell you
The truth of all
That ye did (in this life).
For He knoweth well
All that is in (men's) hearts.

8. When some trouble toucheth man⁴²⁵⁶
He crieth unto his Lord,
Turning to Him in repentance:
But when He bestoweth
A favour upon him
As from Himself, (man)
Doth forget what he cried
And prayed for before,
And he doth set up
Rivals unto Allah,
Thus misleading others
From Allah's Path.

وَزَرَأُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾

﴿٨﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ
ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ
مِّن قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ﴿٨﴾

4255. Cf. vi. 164. The account is between you and Allah. No one else can take your burdens or carry your sins. Vicarious atonement would be unjust. You have to return to Allah in the Hereafter. You will find that He knows all that you did in this life, and its full significance. He will explain to you even better than you can understand yourself; because all your secret hidden motives, which you sometimes tried to ignore yourself, are fully known to Him.

4256. Cf. x. 12. Trouble and adversity often bring a man to his bearings. But if he is not firm and constant, he forgets the lessons which life is meant to teach him. As soon as he gets a little prosperity, he forgets that it is from Allah, and attributes it to something which may only be a secondary cause, e.g., his own efforts or the Powers of Nature, or something which he has invented and made into a god, e.g., idols or fate. Allah is the Ultimate Cause of all things. To set up rivals to him in this way is not only wrong and degrading to the false worshipper himself, but misleads countless ignorant people, who may not be able to make allowances for the figures of speech or the symbolism by which subtler minds can explain away falsehoods.

Say, "Enjoy thy disbelief⁴²⁵⁷
For a little while:
Verily thou art (one)
Of the Companions of the Fire!"

9. Is one who worships devoutly
During the hours of the night⁴²⁵⁸
Prostrating himself or standing
(In adoration), who takes heed
Of the Hereafter, and who
Places his hope in the Mercy
Of his Lord-(like one
Who does not)? Say:
"Are those equal, those who know
And those who do not know?"
It is those who are
Endued with understanding
That receive admonition.⁴²⁵⁹

SECTION 2.

10. Say: "O ye
My servants who believe!
Fear your Lord.⁴²⁶⁰
Good is (the reward)
For those who do good
In this world.

أَمْ مَنْ هُوَ قَنِيتٌ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ
الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ
يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٠﴾

قُلْ يَاعِبَادَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ لِلَّذِينَ
أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ
وَسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾

4257. Those who practise and those who teach evil and blasphemy may seem to flourish in this world. But their satisfaction will be of very short duration. They are treading all the while the Path that leads to the Fire of Perdition.

4258. Cf. iii. 113-117. It is a great thing when a man gets into the attitude of humble devotion to Allah. To him the hereafter is a real thing, and he prepares for it with good works. He does not build his hopes on the vanities of this world, but on Allah's Grace and Mercy. Such a man is "endued with understanding" and receives Allah's Message with fervour and alacrity. He is not to be compared with the cynic or the unbeliever, who knows nothing of the real value of the inner life.

4259. Cf. iii. 19.

4260. The "fear of Allah" (*Taqwā*) is explained in n. 26 to ii. 2. See also n. 2912 to xxiii. 60. The fear of Allah is akin to love, for it means that we are afraid to displease Him.

Spacious is Allah's earth!⁴²⁶¹

Those who patiently persevere
Will truly receive
A reward without measure!"

11. Say: "Verily, I am commanded
To serve Allah
With sincere devotion;

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾

12. "And I am commanded
To be the first⁴²⁶²
Of those who submit
To Allah in Islam."

وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Say: "I would, if I⁴²⁶³
Disobeyed my Lord,
Indeed have fear
Of the Chastisement
Of a Mighty Day."

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Say: "It is Allah I serve,
With my sincere
(And exclusive) devotion:

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدْ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ﴿١٤﴾

15. "Serve ye what ye will⁴²⁶⁴
Besides Him." Say:
"Truly, those in loss

فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ

4261. Cf. xxix. 56 and n. 3489. We must always do right. We cannot plead that the circumstances in which we find ourselves force our hands. If our home conditions do not allow us to act according to the Faith that is in us, we must be preaped to suffer ostracism or even exile.

4262. Cf. vi. 14. "The first" need not necessarily be chronological: it may also refer to the first rank in zeal, and in readiness to suffer for the Cause.

4263. Cf. vi. 15. The worst penalty in a spiritual sense is the Displeasure of Allah, just as the highest achievement, the fulfilment of all desire, is the attainment of Allah's Good Pleasure: vi. 16.

4264. This is not a command or permission but a reproach and warning. The address of the Prophet of Allah may be paraphrased thus: 'Whatever happens I will follow the command of Allah. He has revealed Himself, and I know that He is One, supreme over all creatures. Him alone will I serve. Is there any so ignorant as to seek anyone else? Let him do so and see the result. The loss will be his own. For he falls from Grace into Evil.'

Are those who lose
Their own souls
And their people⁴²⁶⁵
On the Day of Judgment:
Ah! that is indeed
The (real and) evident Loss!

16. They shall have Layers⁴²⁶⁶
Of Fire above them,
And Layers (of Fire)
Below them: with this
Doth Allah warn off⁴²⁶⁷
His servants: "O My Servants!
Then fear ye Me!"

17. Those who eschew Taghut
And fall not into⁴²⁶⁸
Its worship,—and turn
To Allah (in repentance),—
For them is Good News:
So announce the Good News
To My Servants,—

18. Those who listen
To the Word,

الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
أَلَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٥﴾

لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ
ذَلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهَ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ، يَعْبَادُونَ فَأَنْقُوتِ ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ
لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ

4265. The cult of Evil results in the destruction of all that is best and most valuable in us, as well as poisons all the affections which link us to our families, friends, and people, in the Final Adjustment, which we call the Day of Judgment.

4266. The consequences of Sin when Judgment comes are aptly figured by Layers upon Layers of Fire, which hem in the sinners above and below. It is also suggested that the Layers, though of Fire, have something dark in them—the scorching quality of Sin.

4267. But Allah does not leave mankind without warning. Man has been granted a limited amount of free-will, and in order to help him in its right use, all the consequences of his action are clearly explained to him. To those who will listen to Reason are given arguments which can be apprehended by their own intelligence; to those who are swayed by affections and emotion, an appeal is made in the name of the love of Allah; to those who understand nothing but fear, the warning is conveyed by a portrayal of the dreadful consequences of wrong-doing.

4268. There is always the danger that Evil may seize us even if we approach it out of mere curiosity. If we take an interest in it we may become its worshippers or slaves. The wise man eschews it altogether, and so he enrolls among the Servants of Allah, and gets the good news of His Mercy and Good Pleasure.

21. Seest thou not that Allah
Sends down rain from
The sky, and leads it
Through springs in the earth?⁴²⁷³
Then He causes to grow,
Therewith, produce of various
Colours: then it withers;
Thou wilt see it grow yellow;
Then He makes it
Dry up and crumble away.
Truly, in this, is
A Message of remembrance to
Men of understanding.

SECTION 3.

22. Is one whose heart
Allah has opened to Islam,⁴²⁷⁴
So that he has received
Light from Allah,
(No better than one hard-hearted)?
Woe to those whose hearts

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعٌ
فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَنُهُ،
ثُمَّ يَهْبِيجُ فَتَرْتَهُ مُتَصَفِّرًا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ لَا أُولَى الْآلَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ
فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ
قُلُوبِهِمْ مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

4273. The circuit of water, by which the rain falls from the clouds, is absorbed through the earth, and flows through rivers or underground streams to the sea, where it again rises as vapour and forms clouds, was explained in notes 3111-12 to xxv 53. Here our attention is drawn to one portion of the process. The rain fructifies the soil and the seeds. Produce of various kinds is raised. The harvest ripens and is gathered in. The plants wither, dry up, and crumble away. Men and animals are fed. And the circuit starts again in another season. Here is a Sign of the Grace and Goodness of Allah, clear to those who understand.

4274. Those who listen to Allah's Message find at each stage Allah's Grace helping them more and more to expand their spiritual understanding and to receive Allah's light, so that they travel farther and farther to their Goal in the Path of Truth and Righteousness. They are not to be compared to those who shut out Allah's Light from their hearts. See next note.

Are hardened against the
remembrance⁴²⁷⁵

Of Allah! They
Are manifestly wandering
(In error)!

23. Allah has revealed
(From time to time)
The most beautiful Message
In the form of a Book,
Consistent with itself,⁴²⁷⁶
(Yet) repeating (its teaching
In various aspects):⁴²⁷⁷
The skins of those who
Fear their Lord tremble⁴²⁷⁸
Threat; then their skins
And their hearts do soften
To the remembrance of

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانٍ
نَفْسَعِرْ مِنْهُ جُلُودَ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ
ثُمَّ تَلِينَ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

4275. Just as there is spiritual progress for those who seek Allah, so there is more and more spiritual retrogression for those who close their hearts to Allah. Their hearts get hardened, and they allow less and less Allah's Grace to penetrate within. But it is obvious that they flounder on the Way, and cannot walk with the firm steps of those of assured Faith.

4276. Is *Mutashābih* here to be understood in the same sense as in iii. 7? See n. 347. The better opinion is that there is a slightly different shade of meaning here, as suggested by the context. In the earlier passage, it was opposed to *Muh-kam*: here it is contrasted or compared to *Mathānī*. The root meaning is: 'having something similar; working by analogy or allegory, or parable; having its parts consistent with each other'. The last meaning I adopt here. The Qur-ān was revealed in parts at different times. And yet its parts all conform to each other. There is no contradiction or inconsistency anywhere.

4277. *Mathānī*: Cf. xv. 87, where we have translated "oft-repeated": "the seven oft-repeated (verses)". See n. 2008 to that passage. Here the meaning is similar, but the context gives a different colour to it, as is seen in the translation.

4278. The skin is the outer integument of the body. It receives the first shock from the impact of anything unusual, and it trembles and its hair stands on end under excitement. So in spiritual matters the first stimulation from Allah's Message is external. Those who receive Faith do it as it were with tremor and not with apathy. But the next stage is that it penetrates their outer nature and goes right into their hearts. Their whole nature is "softened" to receive the beneficent Message, and it transforms them through and through.

Allah. Such is
The guidance of Allah;
He guides therewith
Whom He pleases,⁴²⁷⁹ but such
As Allah leaves to stray,
Can have none to guide.

24. Is, then, one who
Has to ward off the brunt
Of the Chastisement on the Day
Of Judgment (and receive it)
By his face,⁴²⁸⁰ (like one
Guarded therefrom)? It will
Be said to the wrong-doers:
"Taste ye (the fruits
Of) what ye earned!"⁴²⁸¹

25. Those before them (also)
Rejected (revelation), and so
The Punishment came to them
From directions they did not
Perceive.⁴²⁸²

26. So Allah gave them
A taste of humiliation

أَفَمَنْ يَبْقَىٰ بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْتَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخُرْزَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْعَذَابُ

4279. "Whom He pleases" and "leaves to stray" are explained fully in n. 2133 to xvi.
93. See also xiv. 4 and n. 1875.

4280. The unrepentant Sinners will receive the full Penalty on the Day of Judgment. They will receive it full in the face, i.e., their whole being will be affected by it. Their hands will be tied, and they cannot therefore use their hands to ward off the Penalty of the Fire: in any case their hands will not have the power to ward it off. Are such helpless people to be compared for a moment with people who have received Grace and are therefore guarded from all harm and danger? Certainly not. To the evil the fruit of their deed, and to the good the grace of their Lord!

4281. That is, of all their misdeeds, all the evil which they did in the world.

4282. Cf. xvi. 26. They will be punished from quarters or in ways they do not perceive. From their Unbelief and Rebellion they think they derive great advantages, but they suddenly find out, when too late, that that which they exulted in was the cause of their own undoing.

In the present life,⁴²⁸³
But greater is the Punishment
Of the Hereafter,
If they only knew!

27. We have put forth
For men, in the Qur-ān
Every kind of Parable,⁴²⁸⁴
In order that they
May receive admonition.

28. (It is) a Qur-ān
In Arabic,⁴²⁸⁵ without any
Crookedness (therein):⁴²⁸⁶
In order that they
May guard against Evil.

29. Allah puts forth a Parable—
A man belonging to many⁴²⁸⁷
Partners at variance with each other,
And a man belonging entirely

الْآخِرَ وَآكِبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ

مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَنْذَكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّسُونَ
وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا

4283. Cf. ii. 114. Sin often brings disgrace and humiliation in this life, but the greater and truer punishment is in the Hereafter. But men often do not know the inwardness of this matter. If they flourish here for a time, they think they will escape the real consequences in the Hereafter. Or if they suffer little harm here, they think that will make up the Penalty, and they will escape the Hereafter. Both ideas are wrong.

4284. Men can only understand high spiritual truths by parables and similitudes and these are given abundantly in the Qur-ān. The object is, not merely to tell stories, but to teach lessons of spiritual wisdom.

4285. Previous revelations had been in other languages. Now the revelation was given in Arabia in Arabic itself, the language of the country which all could understand. And it is a beautiful language, straight and flexible, and fit to be the vehicle of sublime truths.

4286. See xviii. 1 and n. 2326. Cf. also vii. 45, n. 1024; and xix. 36, n. 2488.

4287. The difference between the creed of Polytheism and the Gospel of Unity is explained by the analogy of two men. One belongs to many masters; the masters disagree among themselves, and the poor man of many masters has to suffer from the quarrel of his many masters; it is an impossible and unnatural position. The other serves only one master, his master is good, and does all he can for his servant; the servant can concentrate his attention on his service; he is happy himself and his service is efficiently performed. Can there be any doubt as to (1) which of them is the happier, and (2) which of them is in a more natural position? No man can serve two, still less numerous, masters.

To one master: are those two
Equal in comparison?
Praise be to Allah!⁴²⁸⁸
But most of them
Have no knowledge.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

30. Truly thou wilt die⁴²⁸⁹
(One day), and truly they
(Too) will die (one day).
31. In the End will ye
(All) dispute⁴²⁹⁰ on the Day
Of Judgment,
In the presence of your Lord.

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ
تَخَصِّمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

SECTION 4.

32. Who, then, doth more wrong
Than one who utters
A lie concerning Allah⁴²⁹¹
And rejects the Truth
When it comes to him!
Is there not in Hell⁴²⁹²
An abode for the unbelievers?

﴿٤٢﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَبَ
بِالصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ ۗ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

4288. Allah is praised that He has put us, not under gods many and lords many, but has, out of His infinite Mercy, allowed us direct approach to Him, the One, the True, the Eternal.

4289. Even the prophets are not exempt from bodily death, much less the righteous, but they live in their beneficent work and the memories they leave behind them. All men have to die, good and bad alike. But there is a life after death, and in that life all the unexplained things about which people dispute in this world will be made clear in the presence of Allah.

4290. See last note.

4291. When the creature deliberately adopts and utters falsehoods against his own Creator, in spite of the Truth being brought, as it were, to his very door by Allah's Signs, what offence can we imagine more heinous than this? In Christian theology this is the blasphemy "against the Holy Ghost" spoken of in Matt. xii. 31-32: "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man", (Christ), "it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come".

4292. Cf. iii. 151; xvi. 29.

33. And he who brings the Truth
And he who confirms⁴²⁹³
(And supports) it—such are
The men who do right.
34. They shall have all
That they wish for,⁴²⁹⁴
With their Lord:
Such is the reward
Of those who do good:
35. So that Allah will
Remit from them
(Even) the worst in their deeds⁴²⁹⁵
And give them their reward
According to the best
Of what they have done.
36. Is not Allah enough⁴²⁹⁶
For His servant? But

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا
وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ

4293. This is true of the Prophet, and all Prophets of God and all righteous persons. Any one who preaches the Truth and brings home Allah's Signs to men is performing the duty of a right and noble life. In this he confirms the teaching of all previous Prophets of Allah. Any one who supports and confirms such a teacher is also doing his duty and on the right way.

4294. At that stage their wills will have been purified. If an earthly king gives a decoration, how much greater is the honour when the investiture takes place by the king himself personally?

4295. The conjunction (*lām* in Arabic, translated "so that") indicates here the results, not the purpose. Allah's Reward is so bounteous, that if we truly and sincerely put our will into His keeping, He will remove the consequences not only of our minor faults but of the worst of our sins, and judge us according to the very best of our deeds.

4296. The righteous man will find Allah enough for all the protection he needs, all the rest and peace he craves for, and all the happiness he can imagine. If Satans wish to frighten him with false gods, he knows that that is mere superstition. In the case of idols to whom worship is paid, this is easily intelligible. But there are other false gods which men worship,—wealth, position, power, science, selfish desire, and so on. The idea may occur to them: "this is the right course, but what will men say?" or "shall I lose my case if I tell the truth?" or "will it ruin my chances if I denounce sin in high places?" All such false gods will only mislead and leave their victims in the lurch. The worship of them will lose them the Mercy of Allah, which wants to guide and comfort all who seek Allah.

They try to frighten thee
With other (gods) besides Him!
For such as Allah leaves
To stray, there can be
No guide.

37. And such as Allah doth⁴²⁹⁷
Guide there can be
None to lead astray.
Is not Allah Exalted
In Power,
Lord of Retribution?⁴²⁹⁸

38. If indeed thou ask them
Who it is that created⁴²⁹⁹
The heavens and the earth,
They would be sure to say,
"Allah". Say: "See ye then?
The things that ye invoke
Besides Allah,—can they,
If Allah wills some affliction
For me, remove His affliction
Or if He wills some Mercy
For me, can they keep back⁴³⁰⁰
His Mercy" Say: "Sufficient
Is Allah for me!

مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ
فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ
الْيَسَّ اللَّهُ بِعِزِّ ذِي الْقِيَامِ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّيهِ
أَوْ أَرَادَنِيَ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَتُ رَحْمَتِهِ
قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

4297. On the other hand if any one holds fast to Allah's Truth, nothing can mislead or betray him.

4298. Allah's Power can protect, and will defeat all plots against His Will, as well as punish Evil when it gets beyond bounds.

4299. Cf. xxix. 61; also n. 2927 to xxiii. 85. Most worshippers of false gods are not either atheists or sceptics. They admit the existence of Allah but it has not come into their hearts and souls: it has not been translated into their lives. They run after false worship on account of ancestral custom or on account of their thoughtlessness or false environment, or on account of their own selfish desires or limited outlook. To them is addressed the argument: 'Ultimately your false gods can do nothing for you: why not turn to the One True God, on Whom you depend, and Who can give you Grace and Mercy, Justice and Punishment?'

4300. Cf. xxxiii. 17.

In Him trust those
Who put their trust."⁴³⁰¹

39. Say: "O my people!
Do whatever ye can:
I will do (my part):⁴³⁰²
But soon will ye know-

40. "Who it is to whom
Comes a Chastisement⁴³⁰³
Or ignominy, and on whom
Descends a Chastisement that
abides."

41. Verily We have revealed
The Book to thee
In Truth, for (instructing)
mankind.⁴³⁰⁴

He, then, that receives guidance
Benefits his own soul:
But he that strays
Injures his own soul.
Nor art thou set⁴³⁰⁵
A Custodian
Over them.

قُلْ يَنْقُومِ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانِكُمْ
إِنِّي عَمِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ
مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ
فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا
يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ يَوْكِيلَ ﴿٤١﴾

4301. Cf. xii. 67 and xiv. 12. Allah alone is He Who will and can discharge any trust put in Him. All other things will fail. Therefore those who put their trust in anything should put their trust in Allah.

4302. Cf. xi. 121 and n. 1624-A.

4303. Cf. xi. 93. The two clauses, about those who suffer a Penalty of ignominy and those on whom descends a lasting Penalty, apparently refer to the same persons in two different aspects: (1) they suffer shame, and (2) their punishment endures.

4304. Revelation is sent by Allah through His messenger, but it is for all. It is given in order that men and women may be taught Righteousness. It is given in Truth: there is no pretence about it. It is for their own good. If they reject it and follow Evil, the loss is their own.

4305. Allah's messengers do all they can to teach mankind. But they cannot force men's wills. If men reject their teaching, the account of the rejecters is with Allah Cf. vi. 107 and n. 935.

SECTION 5.

42. It is Allah that takes
 The souls (of men) at death;⁴³⁰⁶
 And those that die not
 (He takes) during their sleep:⁴³⁰⁷
 Those on whom He
 Has passed the decree
 Of death, He keeps back⁴³⁰⁸
 (From returning to life),
 But the rest He sends
 (To their bodies)
 For a term appointed.

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ
 فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ
 وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

4306. The mystery of life and death, sleep and dreams, is a fascinating enigma, of which the solution is perhaps beyond the ken of man. A vast mass of superstition as well as imaginative and psychological literature has grown up about it. But the simplest and truest religious doctrine is laid down here in a few words. In death we surrender our physical life, but our soul does not die; it goes back to a plane of existence in which it is more conscious of the realities of the spiritual world: "Allah takes the soul".

4307. Cf. vi. 60. What is sleep? As far as animal life is concerned, it is the cessation of the working of the nervous system, though other animal functions, such as digestion, growth, and the circulation of the blood, continue, possibly at a different pace. It is the repose of the nervous system, and in this respect it is common to man and animals, and perhaps even to plants, if, as is probable, plants have a nervous system. The mental processes (and certainly volition) are also suspended in sleep, except that in ordinary dreams there is a medley of recollections, which often present vividly to our consciousness things that do not or cannot happen in nature as we know it in our co-ordinated minds. But there is another kind of dream which is rarer—one in which the dreamer sees things as they actually happen, backwards or forwards in time, or in which gifted individuals see spiritual truths otherwise imperceptible to them. How can we explain this? It is suggested that our soul or personality,—that something which is above our animal life—is then in a plane of spiritual existence akin to physical death (see last note), when we are nearer to Allah. In poetic imagery, Sleep is "twin-brother to Death".

4308. Sleep being twin-brother to Death, our souls are for the time being released from the bondage of the flesh. Allah takes them for the time being. If, as some do, we are to die peacefully in sleep, our soul does not come back to the physical body, and the latter decays and die. If we have still some period of life to fulfil according to Allah's decree, our soul comes back to the body, and we resume our functions in this life.

Verily in this are Signs⁴³⁰⁹

For those who reflect.

43. What! Do they take
For intercessors others⁴³¹⁰
Besides Allah? Say: "Even if
They have no power whatever
And no intelligence?"

44. Say: "To Allah belongs
Exclusively (the right)
To grant) Intercession:⁴³¹¹
To Him belongs the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth:
In the End, it is to Him⁴³¹²
That ye shall be
Brought back."

45. When Allah, Alone
Is mentioned, the hearts

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ

4309. If we contemplate these things, we can see more clearly many spiritual truths: e.g. (1) that our bodily life and death are not the whole story of our existence; (2) that in our bodily life we may be dead to the spiritual world, and in our bodily death, may be our awakening to the spiritual world; (3) that our nightly Sleep, besides performing the function of rest to our physical life, gives us a foretaste of what we call death, which does not end our personality; and (4) that the Resurrection is not more wonderful than our daily rising from Sleep, "twin-brother to Death".

4310. Let alone worship, men should not rely upon any power or person other than Allah to help them out or intercede for them. When it is idols, they are poor lifeless things which have obviously neither power nor intelligence. But even prophets or saints or heroes have no power to intercede except as Allah wills and permits. See next note.

4311. For *Shafā'at* (Intercession, Advocacy) see ii. 255; x. 3; xx. 109, n. 2634; and xxi. 28, n. 2688. It follows that no one can intercede with Allah, except (1) by Allah's permission, and (2) for those who have prepared themselves by penitence for Allah's acceptance. Even in earthly Courts, Advocacy is not permitted to any one; the Advocate must be granted the position of Advocate before he can plead before the judge. Nor can it be supposed that a plea for forgiveness or mercy can be put forward except on grounds recognised by equity and justice.

4312. At all times, including our present life, all dominion belongs to Allah. At the End of the present plane of existence, we shall be placed before Allah for Judgment. Cf. x. 4.

Of those who believe not
In the Hereafter are filled
With disgust;⁴³¹³
But when (gods) other than He
Are mentioned, behold,
They are filled with joy!

46. Say: "O Allah!

Creator of the heavens
And the earth!
Knower of all that is
Hidden and open⁴³¹⁴
It is Thou that wilt
Judge between Thy Servants
In those matters about which
They have differed."

47. Even if the wrong-doers

Had all that there is
On earth, and as much more,⁴³¹⁵
(In vain) would they offer it
For ransom from the pain
Of the Chastisement on the Day
Of Judgment: but something
Will confront them from Allah,

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ
فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَبَدَأَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ
مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

4313. To evil ones, the mention of the exclusive service of Good is hateful: they only rejoice when other motives are added, e.g., personal indulgence, ancestral custom, and numerous things in life which compete with Allah's Law in this world.

4314. The mysteries of life and death, of worship and spiritual growth, are matters of high moment, which it may be difficult for us to apprehend in this present life. It is no use arguing about them and plunging in endless controversies. The proper attitude is to appeal to Allah humbly to accept our purified hearts and Faith, in the firm hope that everything which is now vague to us will be cleared up in the Hereafter, and to pray to Him for His guidance and mercy.

4315. Cf. xiii. 18. Those who reject Allah's Message must realise that the time will come when they will wish they had sacrificed everything in the cause of Truth and Righteousness. It will be too late then. Why not examine the matter seriously now and accept Allah's Grace and Light?

Which they could never
Have counted upon!⁴³¹⁶

48. For the evils of their Deeds
Will confront them,
And they will be (completely)⁴³¹⁷
Encircled by that which
They used to mock at!

49. Now, when trouble touches man,
He cries to Us:⁴³¹⁸
But when We bestow
A favour upon him⁴³¹⁹
As from Us,
He says, "This has been
Given to me because of
A certain knowledge (I have)!"⁴³²⁰
Nay, but this is
But a trial, but most
Of them understand not!

50. Thus did the (generations)
Before them say! But
All that they did
Was of no profit to them.

51. Nay, the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them.⁴³²¹
And the wrong-doers
Of this (generation)–

وَبَدَأَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ
نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ
بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

فَدَقَّالَهُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا عَنَى
عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا

4316. This something will be beyond anything they can conceive of in this life. Just as the righteous will then attain a bliss which no human imagination can conceive of now, so the unrighteous will be in a misery of which they can form no conception now. See next note.

4317. How humiliating it will be for them to realise that the things they used to mock at are realities all around them, and the things they were so eager to pursue are mere falsehoods or vanities!

4318. Cf. xxx. 33 and n. 3545.

4319. Cf. xxxix. 8 above.

4320. Cf. xxxviii. 78, and n. 3408. Prosperity may be a trial as much as adversity.

4321. Cf. xvi. 34.

The evil results of their deeds
Will soon overtake them (too),⁴³²²
And they shall not escape!

52. Know they not that
Allah enlarges the provision⁴³²³
Or restricts it, for any
He pleases? Verily, in this are
Signs for those who believe!

SECTION 6.

53. Say: "O my Servants who
Have transgressed against their souls!
Despair not of the Mercy
Of Allah: for Allah forgives⁴³²⁴
All sins: for He is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
54. "Turn ye to your Lord
(In repentance) and submit
To Him, before⁴³²⁵
The Chastisement comes on you:
After that ye shall not
Be helped.

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِمَعْجِرَاتِنَا

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلُمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ

4322. It is the same story through the ages. People laugh at Truth, persecute Truth, and try to destroy Truth. But Allah's Plan is never to be frustrated. It will be carried out, and only the enemies of Truth will accomplish their own undoing. So it happened in Arabia: so will it happen always and everywhere.

4323. Cf. xxviii. 82. Allah's gifts are given to all men—to some in a greater degree than to others. But it is all done according to His wise Plan, for His Will is just and looks to the good of all creatures. No one should therefore be puffed up in prosperity or cast down in adversity. Prosperity does not necessarily mean merit on man's part, nor adversity the reverse. Thinking men bear in mind the large Plan—which is visible in all Allah's Signs.

4324. *Forgives all sins: i.e., on sincere repentance and amendment of conduct.*

4325. The exhortation in brief is: 'Repent and work righteousness, before it becomes too late'. No help will come to you when the Judgment is actually established and you stand before Allah.

55. "And follow the Best⁴³²⁶

That which was revealed
To you from your Lord,
Before the Chastisement comes
On you—of a sudden,
While ye perceive not!—

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ
بَغْتَةً وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. "Lest the soul should (then)

Say: 'Ah! woe is me!—⁴³²⁷
In that I neglected
(My Duty) towards Allah,
And was but among those
Who mocked!—

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ بِحَسْرَتٍ عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ
اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. "Or (lest) it should say:⁴³²⁸

'If only Allah had guided
Me, I should certainly
Have been among the righteous!—

أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هَدَانِي لَكُنْتُ
مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. "Or (lest) it should say⁴³²⁹

When it (actually) sees

أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي كَرَّةً

4326. Cf. xxxix. 18, and n. 4269. Allah's Command meets the weakness of His weakest servants, and only asks that His servants should surrender their selfish will to Allah's Will. In divine compassion, therefore, we are allowed to do just what we can, even though our standard should fall short of the highest standard. But our aim should be to follow the highest standard, and Allah's Grace will come to our assistance. But we must do so in this life,—and at once, as soon as the Word penetrates our mind or understanding. We must not delay a moment, for the Judgment may come at any time, suddenly, before we even perceive where we are.

4327. Many kinds of sighs and regrets will then assail us. In the first place, we shall see our shortcomings: we were negligent when we should have been serious: we mocked when we should have tried to learn and understand. But it will be too late then to retrieve our position.

4328. In the second place, we might be inclined to say, 'I wish I had received warning or guidance'. But this would not be true, because the warning and guidance are being conveyed in the clearest manner in Allah's Revelation. That is the force of 'lest it should say'. It could have said so, had it not seen that the objection is clearly anticipated in the call to repent and in the warning about the Hereafter.

4329. In the third place, when we stand face to face with the Penalty of our own deeds, we might say, 'I wish I had another chance' But not one, but many, chances are being given, especially when we are told (verse 53 above): 'Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'. The force of 'lest it should say' here is the same as explained in the last note.

The Chastisement: 'If only
I had another chance,
I should certainly be
Among those who do good!'

59. "(The reply will be:) 'Nay,⁴³³⁰

But there came to thee
My Signs, and thou didst
Reject them: thou wast⁴³³¹
Haughty, and became one
Of those who reject Faith!"

60. On the Day of Judgment
Wilt thou see those
Who told lies against Allah;-
Their faces will be turned⁴³³²
Black; is there not
In Hell an abode⁴³³³
For the Haughty?

61. But Allah will deliver
The righteous for they have earned
Salvation:⁴³³⁴ no evil
Shall touch them,
Nor shall they grieve.

فَأَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَكَ ءَايَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا
وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ
وُجُوهُهُمْ مُسْوَدَّةٌ أَلْيَسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمِثْقَاتِ لَآئِمَسُهُمْ
السَّوَاءَ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

4330. The reply explains how all such pleas have been anticipated and met. It was deliberate rejection that will deserve and meet its consequences. It is further explained that the motive of sin, as with Satan, was haughtiness and Self.

4331. Cf. ii. 34. The example of the arch-sinner illustrates what happens in a minor degree in every kind of sinner.

4332. As spotless white is the symbol of purity, honour and truth, so black is the symbol of evil, disgrace, and falsehood. Perhaps "black" in connection with Hell also refers to the scorching punishment of the Fire.

4333. Cf. above, xxxix. 32, and n. 4292, where the subtle implication of the interrogative form is explained.

4334. *Mafāzat*: place or state of safety or salvation, place or state of victory or achievement; accomplishment of wish or desire. This contrasted against the frustration, failure, and perdition of the children of evil,—what may be called damnation in theological phrase.

62. Allah is the Creator
Of all things, and He
Is the Guardian and Disposer⁴³³⁵
Of all affairs.

اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَكَيلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. To Him belong the keys
Of the heavens
And the earth:
And those who reject
The Signs of Allah,—
It is they who will⁴³³⁶
Be in loss.

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

SECTION 7.

64. Say: "Is it
Some one other than Allah
That ye order me⁴³³⁷
To worship, O ye
Ignorant ones?"

قُلْ أَفَعَيَّرَ اللَّهُ تَأْمُرُونَ بِأَعْبَادِ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. But it has already
Been revealed to thee,⁴³³⁸
As it was to those
Before thee,—“If thou

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ
أَشْرَكَتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ

4335. Allah has not only created all the Worlds, but He maintains them and cares for them. He does not sit apart from His world. Everything depends upon Him.

4336. Allah has nothing to lose by the rebellion or disobedience of His creatures. It is they who lose, because they go counter to their own nature, the beautiful mould in which Allah created them.

4337. "Order me": there is great irony here. The Prophet of Allah turns to his critics and says: "You arrogate to yourselves the right to *order me* how to worship! But who are you? You are only ignorant men! My commission is from Allah. It is the same as came to Prophets of Allah before me in all ages, viz., (1) that the only Truth is in the Gospel of Unity; and (2) that if you worship other things and turn away from Allah, your life will be wasted and all your probation will have been of no account."

4338. The Message of Unity, renewed in Islam, has been the Message of Allah since the world began.

Wert to join (gods
With Allah), truly fruitless⁴³³⁹
Will be thy work (in life),
And thou wilt surely
Be among the losers."

66. Nay, but worship Allah,
And be of those who
Give thanks.⁴³⁴⁰

67. No just estimate
Have they made of Allah,⁴³⁴¹
Such as is due to Him:
On the Day of Judgment
The whole of the earth
Will be but His handful,⁴³⁴²
And the heavens will be
Rolled up in His right hand:
Glory to Him!
High is He above
The Partners they attribute
To Him!

68. The Trumpet will (just)
Be sounded, when all
That are in the heavens
And on earth will swoon,⁴³⁴³

وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا
قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ
بِيمِينِهِ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ

4339. Cf. v. 6. False worship means that we run after fruitless things, and the main purpose of our spiritual lives is lost.

4340. To "give thanks" is to show by our conduct that we esteem the gifts of Allah and will use them in His service.

4341. Cf. vi. 91, and n. 909; and xxii. 74. In running after false gods or the powers of nature they have forgotten that all creatures are as nothing before Allah.

4342. See last note. The whole earth will be no more to Allah than a thing that a man might enclose in the hollow of his hand, nor will the heavens with their vast expanse be more than a scroll, which a man might roll up with his right hand, the hand of power and action. Cf. xxi. 104, and lxxxi. 1.

4343. *Ṣa'iqa* implies the idea of a swoon, or loss of all consciousness of being: it implies a cessation of the normal functioning of the usual powers of life or feeling. With the first Trumpet of the Resurrection the whole world will cease to be in the form and the relations which we see now: there will be a new heaven and a new earth, see xiv. =

Except such as it will
Please Allah (to exempt).
Then will a second one
Be sounded, when, behold,
They will be standing
And looking on!

69. And the Earth will shine
With the light of its Lord:⁴³⁴⁴
The Record (of Deeds)
Will be placed (open);
The prophets and the witnesses
Will be brought forward;
And a just decision⁴³⁴⁵
Pronounced between them;
And they will not
Be wronged (in the least).

70. And to every soul will be
Paid in full (the fruit)
Of its deeds; and (Allah)
Knoweth best all that⁴³⁴⁶
They do.

أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ
وَجَاءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

وُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

= 48, n. 1925; human souls will for the time being be dazed and lose all memory or consciousness of time or place or personality. With the second one, they will stand in a new world; they will see with clearer vision than ever before; and judgment will proceed.

4344. It will be a new Earth. All traces of injustice or inequality, darkness or evil, will have gone. There will be the one universal Light, the Glory of Allah, which will now illuminate all. Falsehood, pretence, and illusion will have disappeared. Everything will be seen in its true light.

4345. It is in such a scene of Reality that Judgment will be held. Before the Throne of Allah, the book of each man's deeds and motives will be placed wide open, which all may see; the Prophets and Preachers of Truth and the martyrs who gave their lives or made their real sacrifices in the cause of Truth, will be in the Court, to give evidence; and the decision pronounced will be absolutely just, for the Judge will not only be just, but He will know every fact and circumstance, and His wisdom will give due weight to everything, great or small.

4346. In an earthy court, a decision may possibly go wrong because the judge is deceived; here no deceit or mistake will be possible, for Allah knows all, and knows it better than any one else can.

SECTION 8.

71. The Unbelievers will be
Led to Hell in groups:⁴³⁴⁷
Until, when they arrive there,
Its gates will be opened.
And its Keepers will say,⁴³⁴⁸
"Did not messengers come
To you from among yourselves,
Rehearsing to you the Signs
Of your Lord, and warning you
Of the Meeting of this Day
Of yours?" The answer
Will be: "True: but
The Decree of Chastisement
Has been proved true"⁴³⁴⁹
Against the Unbelievers!"
72. (To them) will be said:
"Enter ye the gates of Hell,
To dwell therein:
And evil is (this)
Abode of the arrogant!"⁴³⁵⁰
73. And those who feared
Their Lord will be led

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ فَانْتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ
هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ
عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فِئَتٍ
مِّنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا

4347. *Groups*: this is the word which gives the key-note to the Sūra. If the soul does not stand to its own convictions or search out the Truth by itself, it will be classed with the crowds that go to Perdition!

4348. The Keepers may be supposed to be angels, who know nothing of the conditions of evil on this earth, and are surprised at such crowds coming to the "Evil Abode".

4349. *Cf.* x. 33. The answer is perhaps given by other angels: 'yes; messengers were sent to them from among themselves, to warn them and proclaim to them Mercy through repentance; but the decree of Allah, which warned them of punishment, has now come true against them, for they rebelled and were haughty; they rejected Truth, Faith, and Mercy!'

4350. As elsewhere, the root of Evil is pointed out to be in self-love and arrogance. *Cf.* ii. 34, etc.

To the Garden in groups:⁴³⁵¹
 Until behold, they arrive there;
 Its gates will be opened;
 And its Keepers will say:
 "Peace be upon you!
 Well have ye done!⁴³⁵²
 Enter ye here,
 To dwell therein."

74. They will say: "Praise be⁴³⁵³
 To Allah, Who has
 Truly fulfilled His promise
 To us, and has given us
 (This) land in heritage:⁴³⁵⁴
 We can dwell in the Garden
 As we will: how excellent
 A reward for those
 Who work (righteousness)!"

75. And thou wilt see
 The angels surrounding
 The Throne (Divine)
 On all sides, singing Glory
 And Praise to their Lord.
 The Decision between them
 (At Judgment) will be
 In (perfect) justice,

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
 خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا
 خَالِدِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا
 وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْفَرَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ
 حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

وَرَأَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ
 يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمُ بِالْحَقِّ
 وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

4351. The righteous ones will also go in crowds, and not be alone. There is now a true sorting out. Verses 73-75 are parallel in contrast to verses 71-72 above.

4352. The angels in heaven are not surprised at the advent of the good and righteous souls. They are glad; they greet them with the salutation of Peace; they congratulate them; and they welcome them in.

4353. This is said by the new arrivals in heaven. As is right, they begin with the Praises of Allah, which shows at once their satisfaction and their gratitude.

4354. *In heritage:* i.e. as our Portion. Cf. iii. 180, and n. 485; vi. 165, and n. 988. There is no question here of their passing on any property to heirs. They are the final possessors of Heaven for eternity, by the grace of Allah.

And the cry (on all sides)
Will be, "Praise be to Allah,"⁴³⁵⁵
The Lord of the Worlds!"

4355. These are the opening words of the first Sūra, and they describe the atmosphere of the final Bliss in Heaven, in the light of the Countenance of their Lord, the Lord of all!