

Surah 13. Ar-Ra'd

13.1 Alif Lam Mim Ra. These are the Signs (or Verses) of the Book: that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord is the Truth; but most men believe not. ^{1798 1799}

13.2 Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that ye can see; is firmly established on the throne (of authority); He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law)! each one runs (its course) for a term appointed. He doth regulate affairs explaining the Signs in detail that ye may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord. ^{1800 1801 1802 1803}

13.3 And it is He Who spread out the earth and set thereon mountains standing firm and (flowing) rivers: and fruit of every kind He made in pairs two and two: He draweth the Night as a veil o'er the Day. Behold verily in these things there are Signs for those who consider! ^{1804 1805}

13.4 And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighboring and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn and palm trees growing out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold verily in these things there are Signs for those who understand! ^{1806 1807}

13.5 If thou dost marvel (at their want of faith) strange is their saying: "When we are (actually) dust shall we indeed then be in a creation renewed?" They are those who deny their Lord! They are those round whose necks will be yokes (of servitude): they will be Companions of the Fire who dwell therein (for aye)! ^{1808 1809}

13.6 They ask thee to hasten on the evil in preference to the good: yet have come to pass before them (many) exemplary punishments! But verily thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind for their wrongdoing: and verily thy Lord is (also) strict in punishment. ¹⁸¹⁰

13.7 And the Unbelievers say! "Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?" But thou art truly a warner and to every people a guide. ^{1811 1812}

13.8 Allah doth know what every female (womb) doth bear by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight in (due) proportion. ¹⁸¹³

13.9 He knoweth the Unseen and that which is open: He is the Great the Most High. ¹⁸¹⁴

13.10 It is the same (to Him) whether any of you conceal his speech or declare it openly; whether he lie hid by night or walk freely by day. ¹⁸¹⁵

13.11 For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession before and behind him: they guard him by command of Allah. Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah willeth a people's punishment there can be no turning it back nor will they find besides Him any to protect. ^{1816 1817}

13.12 It is He Who doth show you the lightning by way both of fear and of hope: it is He Who doth raise up the clouds heavy with (fertilizing) rain! ¹⁸¹⁸

13.13 Nay thunder repeateth His praises and so do the angels with awe: He flingeth the loud-voiced thunderbolts and therewith He striketh whomsoever He will... Yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah with the strength of His power (supreme)! ^{1819 1820 1821}

13.14 For Him (alone) is prayer in Truth: any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouth but it reaches them not: for the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile) wandering (in the mind). ^{1822 1823}

13.15 Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the earth do prostrate themselves to Allah (acknowledging subjection) with good will or in spite of themselves: so do their shadows in the mornings and evenings. ^{1824 1825 1826 1827}

13.16 Say: "Who is the Lord and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth?" Say: "It is Allah." Say: "Do ye then take (for worship) protectors other than Him such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?" Say: "Are the blind equal with those who see? Or the depths of darkness equal with Light?"

Or do they assign to Allah partners who have created (anything) as He has created so that the creation seemed to them similar? Say: "Allah is the Creator of all things: He is the One the Supreme and Irresistible." 1828 1829 1830

13.17 He sends down water from the skies and the channels flow each according to its measure: but the torrent bears away the foam that mounts up to the surface. Even so from that (ore) which they heat in the fire to make ornaments or utensils therewith there is a scum likewise. Thus doth Allah (by parables) show forth Truth and Vanity: for the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. Thus doth Allah set forth parables. ^{1831 1832}

13.18 For those who respond to their Lord are (all) good things. But those who respond not to Him even if they had all that is in the heavens and on earth and as much more (in vain) would they offer it for ransom. For them will the reckoning be terrible: their abode will be Hell what a bed of misery! ¹⁸³³

13.19 Is then one who doth know that that which hath been revealed unto these from thy Lord is the Truth like one who is blind? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition ¹⁸³⁴

13.20 Those who fulfil the Covenant of Allah and fail not in their plighted word;

13.21 Those who join together those things which Allah hath commanded to be joined hold their Lord in awe and fear the terrible reckoning; ¹⁸³⁵

13.22 Those who patiently persevere seeking the countenance their Lord; establish regular prayers; spend out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (Eternal) Home ¹⁸³⁶

13.23 Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there as well as the righteous among their fathers their spouses and their offspring: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation): ¹⁸³⁷

13.24 "Peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home!"

13.25 But those who break the Covenant of Allah after having plighted their word thereto and cut asunder those things which Allah has commanded to be joined and work mischief in the land on them is the Curse; for them is the terrible Home! ^{1838 1839}

13.26 Allah doth enlarge or grant by (strict) measure the Sustenance (which He giveth) to whom so He pleaseth. (The worldly) rejoice in the life of this world: but the life of this world is but little comfort in the Hereafter. ^{1840 1841}

13.27 The Unbelievers say: "Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Truly Allah leaveth to stray whom He will; but He guideth to Himself those who turn to Him in penitence ¹⁸⁴²

13.28 "Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction. ¹⁸⁴³

13.29 "For those who believe and work righteousness is (every) blessedness and a beautiful place of (final) return." ¹⁸⁴⁴

13.30 Thus have We sent thee amongst a People before whom (long since) have (other) Peoples (gone and) passed away; in order that thou mightest rehearse unto them what We send down unto thee by inspiration; yet do they reject (Him) the Most Gracious! Say: "He is my Lord! There is no god but He! On Him is my trust and to Him do I turn!" ^{1845 1846}

13.31 If there were a Qur'an with which mountains were moved or the earth were cloven asunder or the dead were made to speak (this would be the one!) But truly the Command is with Allah in things! Do not the Believers know that had Allah (so) willed He could have guided all mankind (to the Right)? But the Unbelievers never will disaster cease to seize them for their (ill) deeds or to settle close to their homes until the Promise of Allah come to pass for verily Allah will not fail in His promise. ^{1847 1848}

13.32 Mocked were (many) Apostles before thee: but I granted respite to the Unbelievers and finally I punished them; then how (terrible) was My requital! ^{1849 1850}

13.33 Is then He Who standeth over every soul (and knoweth) all that it doth (like any others)? And yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say: "But name them! Is it that ye will inform Him of something He knoweth not on earth or is it (just) a show of words?" Nay! to those who believe not their pretence seems pleasing but they are kept back (thereby) from the Path: and those whom Allah leaves to stray no one can guide. ^{1851 1852}

13.34 For them is a Penalty in the life of this world but harder truly is the Penalty of the Hereafter; and defender have they none against Allah. ¹⁸⁵³

13.35 The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised! beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein: such is the End of the Righteous; and the End of Unbelievers is the Fire. ^{1854 1855 1856}

13.36 Those to whom We have given the Book rejoice at what hath been revealed unto thee: but there are among the clans those who reject a part thereof. Say: "I am commanded to worship Allah and not to join partners with Him. Unto Him do I call and unto Him is my return." 1857 1858

13.37 Thus have We revealed it to be a judgment of authority in Arabic. Wert thou to follow their (vain) desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee then wouldst thou find neither protector nor defender against Allah. 1859 1860

13.38 We did send apostles before thee and appointed for them wives and children: and it was never the part of an apostle to bring a Sign except as Allah permitted (or commanded). For each period is a Book (revealed). 1861 1862 1863

13.39 Allah doth blot out or confirm what He pleaseth: with Him is the Mother of the Book. 1864

13.40 Whether We shall show thee (within thy lifetime) part of what We promised them or take to Ourselves thy soul (before it is all accomplished) thy duty is to (make the Message) reach them: it is Our part to call them to account.

13.41 See they not that We gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders? (Where) Allah commands there is none to put back His command: and He is swift in calling to account. 1865

13.42 Those before them did (also) devise plots; but in all things the master planning is Allah's. He knoweth the doings of every soul: and soon will the Unbelievers know who gets home in the End. 1866

13.43 The Unbelievers say: "No apostle art thou." Say: "Enough for a witness between me and you is Allah and such as have knowledge of the Book." 1867 1868

Author Comments

1798 - For abbreviated Letters generally see Appendix 1.

1799 - Cf. x. 1, n. 1382.

1800 - Should we construe the clause "that ye can see" to refer to "pillars" or "to the heavens"? Either is admissible, but I prefer the former. The heavens are supported on no pillars that we can see. What we see is the blue vault of heaven, but there are invisible forces or conditions created by Allah, which should impress us with His power and glory.

1801 - Cf. x. 3, and n. 1386. We must not think that anything came into being by itself or carries out its functions by itself. Allah is the Creator from Whom everything has its life and being and through Whom everything is maintained and supported, even though fixed laws are established for its regulation and government. The "term appointed" limits the duration of their functioning: its ultimate return is to Allah, as its beginning proceeded from Allah.

1802 - Cf. x. 31, n. 1425. Where the laws of nature are fixed, and everything runs according to its appointed course, the government and regulation behind it is still that of Allah. Where there is limited free will as in man, yet the ultimate source of man's faculties is Allah. Allah cares for His creatures. He does not, as in the idea of polytheistic Greece, sit apart on Olympus, careless of His creatures.

1803 - One manifestation of His caring for His creatures, even where a limited amount of free-will is granted for their development, is that He is careful to explain His Signs both in nature and in express and detailed revelation through His Messengers, lest man should have any doubts whether he has to return ultimately to his Lord and account for all his actions during the "term appointed," when he was given some initiative by way of trial and preparation. If man attends carefully to the Signs, he should have no doubt whatever.

1804 - I think that this refers to sex in plants, and I see M.P. has translated accordingly. Plants like animals have their reproductive apparatus, -male stamens and female pistils. In most cases the same flower combines both stamens and pistils, but in some cases these organs are specialised in separate flowers, and in some cases, even in separate trees. The date-palm of Arabia and the Papaiya of India, are instances of fruit trees which are uni-sexual.

1805 - Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1032. The whole passage there may be compared with the whole passage here. Both their similarity and their variation show how closely reasoned each argument is, with expressions exactly appropriate to each occasion.

1806 - Does "growing out of single roots or otherwise" qualify "palm trees" or "vines" and "corn" as well? The former construction is adopted by the classical Commentators: in which case the reference is to the fact either that two or more palm trees occasionally grow out of a single root, or that palm trees grow sometimes as odd trees and sometimes in great thick clusters. If the latter construction is adopted, the reference would be to the fact that date-palm (and palms generally) and some other plants arise out of a single tap-root, while the majority of trees arise out of a net-work of roots that spread out extensively. Here is adaptation to soil and water conditions, -another Sign or wonder of Creation.

1807 - The date-palm, the crops of food-grains, and the grape-vine are all fed by the same kind of water,

yet how different the harvests which they yield! And that applies to all vegetation. The fruit or eatable produce may vary in shape, size, colour, flavour, etc., in endless variety.

1808 - After seeing the Signs in nature and the Signs in revelation, it is indeed strange that people should deny their Creator. But if they admit the Signs of the Creator, Who works marvels before their very eyes every day, why should they doubt that when they are reduced to dust, they can be raised up again? If one creation is possible, what difficulty can there be in accepting a renewed creation? It becomes then a question of an obstinate and rebellious will, for which the punishment is described.

1809 - Aglal: yokes (of servitude): Cf. vii. 157 and n. 1128. The punishment may be conceived of in two stages: immediately, yokes of servitude to superstition, falsehood, etc., as against the freedom in Faith; and finally, the Fire which burns the very soul.

1810 - The Unbelievers by way of a taunt say: "If there is a punishment, let us see it come down now." The answer to it is threefold. (1) Why do you want to see the punishment rather than the mercy of Allah? Which is better? (2) Have you not heard in history of terrible punishments for evil? And have you not before your very eyes seen examples of wickedness brought to book? (3) Allah works not only in justice and punishment, but also in mercy and forgiveness, and mercy and forgiveness come first.

1811 - After all the Signs that have just been mentioned it is mere fractiousness to say, "Bring down a Sign." Al-Mustafa brought Signs and credentials as other Prophets did, and like them, refused to satisfy mere idle curiosity.

1812 - The last sentence of this verse has usually been interpreted to mean that the Prophet's function was merely to warn, and that guidance was sent by Allah to every nation through its Prophets. I think the following interpretation is equally possible: 'it is itself a Sign that Al-Mustafa should warn and preach and produce the Qur-an, and the guidance which he brings is universal guidance, as from Allah.

1813 - The female womb is just an example, a type, of extreme secrecy. Not even the female herself knows what is in the womb,-whether it is a male young or a female young, whether it is one or more, whether it is to be born short of the standard time or to exceed the standard time. But the most hidden and

apparently unknowable things are clear to Allah's knowledge: there is no mere chance; all things are regulated by Allah in just measure and proportion. The general proposition comes in the last sentence: "every single thing is with Him in (due) proportion."

1814 - A verse of matchless rhythm in Arabic.

1815 - Our most hidden thoughts and motives are known to Him at all times.

1816 - See last verse. Every person, whether he conceals or reveals his thoughts, whether he skulks in darkness or goes about by day,-all are under Allah's watch and ward. His grace encompasses everyone, and again and again protects him, if he will only take the protection, from harm and evil. If in his folly he thinks he can secretly take some pleasure or profit, he is wrong, for recording angels record all his thoughts and deeds.

1817 - Allah is not intent on punishment. He created man virtuous and pure; he gave him intelligence and knowledge; he surrounded him with all sorts of instruments of His grace and mercy. If, in spite of all this, man distorts his own will and goes against Allah's Will, yet is Allah's forgiveness open to him if he will take it. It is only when he has made his own sight blind and changed his own nature or soul away from the beautiful mould in which Allah formed it, that Allah's Wrath will descend on him and the favourable position in which Allah placed him will be changed. When once the punishment comes, there is no turning it back. None of the things which he relied upon- other than Allah-can possibly protect him.

1818 - Here then is the climax to the answer of the sarcastic challenge of the Unbelievers for punishment, in language of great sublimity. Why look to evil rather than to good?-to punishment rather than to mercy?-to the fear in the force and fire of the lightning rather than to the hope of good and abundant crops in the rain which will come behind the lightning clouds?

1819 - Nay, thunder itself, which may frighten you, is but a tame and beneficent force before Him, declaring His praises, like the rest of creation. THUNDER thus aptly gives the name to this Sura of contrasts, where what we may think terrible is shown to be really a submissive instrument of good in Allah's hands.

1820 - And the angels, whom we think to be beautiful creatures of power and glory nearest to Allah, yet feel reverence and awe even as they praise His holy name.

1821 - Who is puny man, to call Allah in question? Cf. some variations on this theme in the Book of Job, e.g. chapters 38 to 41.

1822 - Haqq=truth; right; what is due, befitting, proper. All these meanings are to be understood here. If we worship anything other than Allah (whether it is idols, stars, powers of nature, spirits, or deified men, or Self, or Power, or Wealth, Science or Art, Talent or Intellect), our worship is both foolish and futile.

1823 - Without Faith, it is obvious that prayer or worship has no meaning whatever. It is but an aberration of the mind. But there is a deeper meaning. You may have false faith, as in superstitions or in worshipping things other than Allah, as explained in the last note. In that case, too, you are pursuing mere phantoms of the mind. When you come to examine it, it is mere imbecility or futility. Worship and prayer are justified only to Allah, the One True God.

1824 - Notice that the original of what I have translated "whatever being" is the personal pronoun man, not ma. This then refers to beings with a personality, e.g., angels, spirits, human beings, and possibly other things of objective (not necessarily material) existence, as contrasted with their Shadows or Simulacra or Appearances, or Phantasms, mentioned at the end of the verse. Both these Beings and their Shadows are subject to the Will of Allah. See notes 1825 and 1827.

1825 - "Prostrate themselves": the posture means that they recognise their subjection to Allah's Will and Law, whether they wish it or not.

1826 - "In spite of themselves": Satan and Evil. They would like to get away from the control of the All-good Allah, but they cannot, and they have to acknowledge His supremacy and lordship over them.

1827 - Even the Shadows-creations of the Imagination, or projections from other things and dependent on the other things for their existence, as shadows are to substance- even such shadows are subject to Allah's Laws and Will, and cannot arise or have any effect on our minds except by His permission. The Shadows are longest and therefore most prominent when the sun is level, and tend to disappear as the sun approaches the zenith. But even when they are longest and most prominent, they are still subject to Allah's Will and Law.

1828 - The meaning of "Rabb" is explained in n. 20, to i. 2.

1829 - Cf. v. 76.

1830 - This verse may be analysed into six parts, each two parts going together like question and answer. Each except the fifth part is introduced by the word "Say", which is equivalent in old Arabic to inverted commas. The fifth part, "or do they assign similar?" is not introduced by "Say", because it is in the indirect form. (1) Who is the Lord and Sustainer of the Worlds? It is Allah, (2) And yet you worship other gods? No, no one can be equal to Him, any more than darkness is equal to light. (3) Your other gods have created nothing by which you can be misled? No indeed; He is the only Creator, the One and Supreme.

1831 - This verse is full of parables. (1) It is Allah Who sends rain and sends it to all. See how it flows in different channels according to their capacities. Some are sluggish-, some have a swift current. Some form great rivers and irrigate wide tracts of country; some are clear crystal streams, perhaps in hilly tracts, with beds of clean pebbles which you can see through the water. Some produce delicious edible fish; and some are infested by crocodiles or injurious monsters. And there are degrees and degrees among brooks, streams, lakes, rivers, and seas. So with the rain of Allah's mercy and the knowledge and wisdom and guidance which He sends. All can receive it. Different ones will respond according to their capacities. (2) In the physical world, water is pure and beneficial. But froth and scum will gather according to local conditions. As the floods will carry off the scum and purify the water, so will the flood of Allah's spiritual mercy carry away our spiritual scum and purify the water. (3) The froth may make a greater show on the surface, but it will not last. So will there be frothy knowledge, which will disappear, but Allah's Truth will endure.

1832 - In continuation of the last note, the fourth parable is that of metal ores: (4) the ore is full of baser admixture, but the fire will separate the gold from the dross for ornaments, or (5) some metal of household utility, with which you make every-day utensils, which the fire will separate from admixtures which you do not want. So the fire of Allah's test, either by adversity or by affluence, will search out the true metal in us and reject the dross. It will show us what is valuable or what is useful, all sorts of scum and vanity which we collect and miscall knowledge.

1833 - Cf. iii. 91 and x. 54.

1834 - In this section the contrast between Faith and Righteousness on the one hand and Infidelity and Evil on the other is set out. The righteous man is known as one who (1) receives admonition; (2) is true to his covenants; (3) follows the universal Religion of Faith and Practice joined together; (4) is patient and persevering in seeking Allah; and in practical matters he is known to be; (5) regular in prayer; (6) generous in true charity, whether open or secret; and (7) not revengeful, but anxious to turn off evil with good, thus breaking the chain of evil which tends to perpetuate itself.

1835 - That is, join faith with practice, love of God with love of man, and respect for all Prophets alike, i.e., follow the right Religion, and not odd bits of it.

1836 - Their journey in this life was at best a sojourn. The Heaven is their eternal Home, which is further prefigured in the two following verses.

1837 - The relationships of this life are temporal, but love in righteousness is eternal.

1838 - This is the opposite of the things explained in xiii. 21 above, n. 1835.

1839 - This is in contrast to the state of the blessed, described in xiii. 22-24 above, The Curse is the

opposite of the Bliss, and the Terrible Home is the opposite of the Eternal Home, the Gardens of perpetual bliss.

1840 - Allah, the Sustainer and Cherisher of all His creatures, gives sustenance to all. To some He grants it in abundance; to others He gives it in strict measure. No one can question Him, for His Will is supreme, and it is the measure of all good.

1841 - Cf. ix. 38. The meaning here may also be: This present life is just a furniture, a convenience, a stepping stone, a probation, for the life to come. In itself it is less important than the Hereafter.

1842 - The question is repeated from xiii. 7 above; for the line of reasoning there suggested in answer is now completed, and another line of reasoning is now taken up. Allah provides every guidance for those who turn to Him in penitence, but He will leave those to wander astray who deliberately close their eyes and their hearts to His grace and the comfort that comes from remembering Him and celebrating His praises.

1843 - The Sign or Miracle is not something external: it is something internal, something in your mind, heart, and soul. It depends on your inner spiritual experience. If you turn to Allah, that light, that experience, will come. If you do not, Allah will not force you.

1844 - "Blessedness": Tuba: an internal state of satisfaction, an inward joy which is difficult to describe in words, but which reflects itself in the life of the good man, through good and ill fortune, through good report and evil. And then, there is always the final goal to which his eyes are turned, the beautiful Home of rest in the Hereafter, after this life's struggles are over. That goal is Allah Himself.

1845 - Our Prophet came later in time than other Prophets, to complete their Message and universalise Religion. And certainly it is after his age that the process of the unification of the world began. That process is not complete yet, but is proceeding apace.

1846 - Faith tells us that no amount of opposition from Unbelievers can ever stop Allah's Plan.

1847 - Everything is possible and in Allah's power. His Plan is beneficent and all-embracing. But it is not for His creatures to dictate to Him, or demand what He should do, or how He should do it. The Command is with Allah in all things. The Believers know His omnipotence, and they also know that He will order His world for the best.

1848 - Let not the Unbelievers think that if they seem to prosper for a time, that is the end of the matter. They are warned about three things. (1) their ill deeds must carry evil consequences for them all the time, though they may not perceive them for a certain time. (2) Their homes, their places of resort, the circles in which they move, will also be haunted by their ill deeds and their consequences. For evil makes a complex of its environment. The walls of Jericho, when they fall, must bring down all Jericho in its ruins. (3) The ultimate Disaster, the final Reckoning, must come, for Allah never fails in His promise. True values must eventually be restored: the good to the good, and the evil to the evil, The Commentators draw illustrations from the life of the Prophet, his exile from Makkah, and his restoration. A similar miracle works in all history. But the Command is with Allah.

1849 - Cf. vi. 10.

1850 - The punishment was in many cases deferred. But when it did come, how terrible and exemplary it was!

1851 - Cf. xii. 40. 'You have but to name your false gods, and you will see that they are nothing but names. There is no reality behind them, whereas Allah is the One great Reality. He penetrates everything through and through and knows all things. Do you dare to tell Him of something on earth that He does not know? Or is it just a trick or a show of words?

1852 - All pretences and fancies seem attractive to their inventors, but alas! They are a great obstruction to the Path of Religion and Truth. However, if by their contumacy, they have cut themselves off from

Allah's grace, who can guide them or reclaim them from their errors?

1853 - The consequences of sin may be felt in this life itself, but they are nothing compared to the final penalties in the life to come.

1854 - For the comprehensive meaning of the root akala (literally "to eat"), see v. 66, n. 776. In its derived meaning it means fruit and enjoyment of all kinds, spiritual as well as other. The joys of heaven are not like the joys of the earth, which fade away or cloy. The joys of heaven are pure, lasting, and without any of the drawbacks which we associate with the joys of the sense.

1855 - Zillun: literally shade, hence, shelter, protection, security. All these meanings are implied. Shade is one of the delights of a garden. Cf. iv. 57 and n. 579.

1856 - In this, as in other places, the Fire is contrasted with the Garden, as Misery is contrasted with Bliss. We can also imagine other incidents in contrast with those of the Garden, e.g., with the Fire will be drought, aridity, thirst, instead of beautiful rivers; pain and suffering, instead of perpetual delight; no protection against the fierceness of the heat, as contrasted with the cool shades ever deepening as you proceed in the Garden.

1857 - The Book: in a general sense, Revelation. "Those to whom the Book hath been given" are both (1) the People of the Book of previous revelations, who study the new Revelation in Arabic without prejudice and find in it confirmation of what their ancestors had received and believed in it, and (2) the Muslims who receive the Qur-an with such joy.

1858 - Ahzab (plural of hizb = parties, sects, troops, clans. The reference may be to the clans mentioned in xxx. 20 and 22 (that whole Sura is called Ahzab). But we can understand it in a perfectly general sense. Among all sections of the people there are persons who would receive a portion of Allah's truth but reject whatever does not suit them or fall in with their selfish aims or vain desires. The proper answer to them is: Surely, Allah's command is universal, -to worship and serve Him and refuse to bend the knee to any other; the man of God finds his staff and support in it; but he must invite all to share in its blessings; it came from Allah, and to Allah shall we all return.

1859 - The Qur-an is in Arabic; therefore the Arabs, among whom it was promulgated, could have no difficulty in understanding its precepts and using it in judging of right and wrong in all their affairs. But it is also universal; therefore no one should give preference to his own vain fancies against this authoritative declaration.

1860 - Cf. ii. 120. The variation is in the single word "Waq" here in place of "Nasir" in ii. 120. In each case the apt word is chosen not only for the rhythm in its own passage but for the general meaning in the Argument.

1861 - All the Prophets of whom we have any detailed knowledge, except one, had wives and children. The exception is Jesus the son of Mary. But his life was incomplete; his ministry barely lasted three years; his mission was limited; and he was not called upon to deal with the many-sided problems that arise in a highly organised society or State. We pay equal respect to him, because he was Allah's Messenger; but that is not to say that his Message covers the same universal ground as that of Al-Mustafa. There is no reproach for a normal human being if he lives a normal human life; there is glory if he beautifies it and sets a nobler example of virtue than other men, as did Al-Mustafa.

1862 - No Prophet performed any Miracle or showed forth any "Signs," except as Allah willed. Allah's Will (Mashiyat) is an all-wise, universal Plan, which is not formed for the benefit of one tribe or millat or of one age or country (see also next verse). The greatest Miracle in history was and is the Qur-an. We can apprehend its beauty and grandeur today as much as did the people of Al-Mustafa's day, -even more, as our collective knowledge of nature and of Allah's creation has increased.

1863 - Kitab: means "a Law decreed" or "a Decree established."

1864 - Umm-ul-Kitab: Mother of the Book: the original foundation of all revelation; the Essence of Allah's Will and Law. Cf. iii. 7, and n. 347.

1865 - In the Prophet's ministry at Makkah, the most stiff-necked opposition came from the seat and centre of power in Makkah. The humbler people-the fringe of Makkan society-came in readily, as also did some tribes round about Makkah. After the Hijrat there was a hard struggle between Makkah and Madinah and at last the bloodless conquest of Makkah in A.H. 8 made the Pagan structure finally collapse, though it had already been sapped to its foundations. So, generally, Truth finds easiest entrance through the humble and lowly, and not in the beginning at the headquarters of power, but in the fulness of time it makes its way everywhere with irresistible force.

1866 - Cf. iii. 54 and n. 393.

1867 - The enemies of Islam have to acknowledge that Al-Mustafawas a great and noble character, but they deny his Prophethood. He could point to his credentials from Allah in the work which he achieved, and the Qur-an which he brought.

1868 - That is, those who have knowledge of revelation generally will recognise Allah's revelation in the holy Qur-an. An alternative reading is "min 'indi-hi", which is written the same in Arabic, with only three vowel points different. If we adopt that, the last clause will be: "and from Him is (all) knowledge of the Book": i.e., 'as all knowledge of the Book comes from Allah, the Qur-an also bears witness to me'.

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