

present and the past if there is no future, if everything ceases with death?

But what can we take over into this future?

The functions of our earthly garment, the body, have ceased; the substances which were constantly changing even during our lifetime enter into new chemical combinations, and the earth retains what belongs to it. Not the smallest particle goes astray. Scripture promises us the resurrection of a transfigured body, and of course a separate existence without limitation is not to be considered; yet by this promise we are probably to understand the persistence of personality as opposed to pantheism.

We are entitled to hope that reason and with it everything which we have painfully acquired in the way of knowledge and wisdom will accompany us into eternity, perhaps even the memory of our earthly life. Whether this is to be desired is another question. What if our whole life, our thoughts and acts, would be spread out before us and we ourselves would become our own judges, incorruptible, merciless?

But above all affection must remain, an attribute of the soul if it is immortal. Friendship is based upon reciprocity, and reason has much to do with it, but love can exist without responsive love. It is the purest, the divine flame of our being.

Now scripture tells us that above everything else we should love God, an invisible and wholly incomprehensible being bestowing upon us joy and happiness but also privation and pain. How can we do it except as we follow his commands and love our fellow men whom we see and understand?

If, as the Apostle Paul tells us, faith shall be turned to knowledge and hope to fulfilment and only love will persist, then we may also hope to meet the love of a lenient judge.

A MOSLEM EDITION OF THE KORAN.

BY THE EDITOR.

A NEW translation of the Koran into English is being prepared by a number of modern well-educated adherents of Islam in India, and the first part of it in the shape of an unbound brochure of 118 pages lies before us. Thirty such parts are intended to make the whole, and the editors are prompted not by mercantile

motives but by the zeal of spreading the main source of the true religion. In the foreword they address the reader as follows:

“Seekers after truth and searchers for guidance! Bless your stars that the Book revealed by God for the good of mankind has been made accessible to you in an easily comprehensible form. It is the Message, yes, the self-same Message, which went forth in sweet Arabic accents from the Cave Hira 1300 years ago, at a time when Cimmerian darkness or irreligion had overspread the entire face of the earth and moral turpitude had blunted the consciousness of sin; and which, again, is repeated to-day in the English language for the guidance of those stragglers who, like their predecessors of 1300 years ago, are thirsting for truth but suffer from the lack of a guide.”

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM.

There are many translations of the book whose title is transcribed from the Arabic into English as “Qur-an.” The “Q” replaces the more common spelling of “K” because the Arabic “K” in this case is pronounced with an emphasis that is to be differentiated from our common “K.”

Our new editors find that the “former translations are too poor reading to afford anything like a regular insight into the excellencies of Islam.” They have furnished the present version with annotations which render the meaning more clear and give the spirit of the text. The editors say:

“We have carefully avoided all those baseless tales and unfounded stories which have grievously misled many a translator. Such foolish stories may find room in the folklore, but it will be

a decided injustice to thrust them upon the Holy Qur-an, because, far from disclosing the truth, they give rise to childish nonsense and mental confusion. So we have taken scrupulous care to steer clear of all such unworthy stuff, and have based our translation and explanatory notes first on the Holy Qur-an itself, secondly, on the authenticated sayings of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), thirdly, on standard dictionaries, and fourthly, on reliable history. This process, we hope, will be a great help toward a right understanding of the Holy Qur-an."

The notes are indeed helpful, and we feel we cannot do better than give an instance of them by quoting the comments on the first verse of the Koran. The work begins in the name of Allah. While in English the word "god" is a noun that can be used in the plural so as to speak not only of God in the abstract sense of the only true God, but also in the sense of the gods of polytheism like Jupiter or Wodan, in Arabic *Allah* means God and can never be used in the plural. This is explained in the first note as follows:

"Allah is the name of a Being who is the sole possessor of all perfect attributes and is free from all defects. In the Arabic language, this term is never used for any other thing or being. No other language has a distinctive name for the Supreme Being. The names found in other languages are all attributive or descriptive and are often used in the plural; but the word "Allah" is never used in the plural number. Hence, in the absence of a parallel word in the English language we have retained the original name 'Allah' throughout the translation."

The first verse of the Koran reads as follows:

"I BEGIN with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful,
Master of the Day of Retribution."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ فَلَكَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۝

The edition also gives the Arabic text in clear clean print from which the first verse here quoted is reproduced in a reduced form. The text is accompanied by a transliteration which for the first verse reads:

1. Bismillā-hir-Rahmā-nir-Rahim.
2. Alham-du lillāhi Rabbil-'ālamīn.
3. Arrahmā-nir-Rahim,
4. Mālikī yau-mid-dīn.

We omit, however, the accents and characteristic dots of the letters.

We wish this new translation of the *Qurān* the best possible success not only at home among the English-speaking Moslems but also abroad among the unbelievers who for scholarly and historical considerations take an active interest in comparative religion.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE OPEN COURT FROM OUR
PARIS CORRESPONDENT, M. LUCIEN ARREAT.

(*Translation.*)

PARIS, July 26, 1917.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I was very glad to hear from you (your letter of July 3 reached me on the 21st), and the more so inasmuch as I have not received your magazines for about three months. I have often thought of writing to you myself; but I did not wish to enter into the endless discussions raised by this abominable war from which our people are suffering to the point of martyrdom. In spite of the sorrows and mortifications of the times I have continued in good health, or nearly so. Though my colds become more frequent and more stubborn, still I have no other infirmity than my seventy-six years, and that is infirmity enough for me. You may have seen that I continue to do a little work for the *Revue philosophique*. Need I add that Théodule Ribot's death has affected me greatly? This war is killing men of our age just as surely as the young men. It is sad to end one's life in the midst of these horrors and in want of so many things which make life worth living, or are even most essential to one's existence.

"Why not live and let live?" the poor people say, "Isn't it hard enough to earn our bread?" But, as our La Fontaine said of a whipped dog,

"His reasoning in a master's mouth
Very fine might be;
But from him it has no weight at all—
Merely a cur is he."

[Son raisonnement pouvait être
Fort bon dans la bouche d'un maître.
Ne venant que d'un simple chien
On trouva qu'il ne valait rien.]