INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Al-R‘ad, 13

The chronological place of this Sûra and the general argument of Sûras x. to xv. has been described in the Introduction to S. x.

The special argument of this Sûra deals with that aspect of Allah’s revelation of Himself to man and His dealings with him, which is concerned with certain contrasts which are here pointed out. There is the revelation of the Prophets, which comes in spoken words adapted to the language of the various men and groups of men to whom it comes; and there is the parallel revelation or Signs in the constant laws of external nature, on this earth and in the visible heavens. There is the contrast between recurring life and death already in the external world: why should men disbelieve in the life after death? They mock at the idea of punishment because it is deferred: but can they not see Allah’s power and glory in thunder and the forces of nature? All creation praises Him: it is the good that endures and the evil that is swept away like froth or scum. Not only in miracles but in the normal working of the world, are shown Allah’s power and mercy. Even here there are Signs of the working of his law: plot or plan as men will, it is Allah’s Will that must prevail. This is illustrated in Joseph’s story in the preceding Sûra.

Summary.—The Book of Revelation is true, and is confirmed by the Signs to be seen in visible nature. Allah Who created such mighty forces in outer nature can raise up man again after death. Allah’s knowledge is all-compassing: so are His power and goodness (xiii. 1-18).

The righteous seek the pleasure of Allah and find Peace; the evil ones break His Law, cavil and dispute, and reject faith; the wrath of Allah will take them unawares, but in His Own good time (xiii. 19-31).

So was it with Prophets before: they were mocked, but the mockers were destroyed, while the righteous rejoiced and were established (xiii. 32-43).
1. A.L.M.R. These are
   The verses
   Of the Book: that which
   Hath been revealed unto thee
   From thy Lord is the Truth;
   But most men believe not.

2. Allah is He Who raised
   The heavens without any pillars
   That ye can see;
   Then He established Himself
   On the Throne.
   He has subjected the sun
   And the moon!
   Each one runs (its course)
   For a term appointed.
   He doth regulate all affairs,
   Explaining the Signs in detail,
That ye may believe with certainty
In the meeting with your Lord.  

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!

4. And in the earth are tracts
(Diverse though) neighbouring,
And gardens of vines
And fields sown with corn,
And palm trees—growing  

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.
Out of single roots or otherwise:
Watered with the same water,
Yet some of them We make
More excellent than others to eat. 1807

Behold, verily in these things
There are Signs for those
Who understand!

5. If thou dost marvel
(At their want of faith).
Strange is their saying:
“When we are (actually) dust, 1808
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): 1809
They will be Companions
Of the Fire, to dwell therein
(For aye)!

6. They ask thee to hasten on
The evil in preference to the good 1810

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. Aggâl: 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.
Yet have come to pass,
Before them, (many) exemplary
Punishments! But verily
Thy Lord is full of forgiveness
For mankind for their wrong-doing.
And verily thy Lord
Is (also) strict in punishment.

7. And the Unbelievers say:
"Why is not a Sign sent down
To him from his Lord?"\textsuperscript{1811}
But thou art truly
A warner, and to every people
A guide.\textsuperscript{1812}

SECTION 2.

8. Allah doth know what
Every female (womb) doth bear,\textsuperscript{1813}
By how much the wombs
Fall short (of their time
Or number) or do exceed.
Every single thing is with Him
In (due) proportion.

9. He knoweth the Unseen
And that which is open:

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

\textsuperscript{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-Mustafā should warn and preach and produce the Qurān, and the guidance which he brings is universal guidance, as from Allah.

\textsuperscript{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."
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 forth freely by day.\textsuperscript{1815}

11. For each (such person)\textsuperscript{1816}
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 what is in themselves\textsuperscript{1817}
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

\textsuperscript{1814.} A verse of matchless rhythm in Arabic.

\textsuperscript{1815.} Our most hidden thoughts and motives are known to Him at all times.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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.
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 (fertilising) rain!

13. Nay, thunder repeateth His praises, And so do the angels, with awe. He flingeth the loud-voiced Thunder-bolts, and therewith He striketh whomsoever He will... Yet these (are the men) The while they are Disputing about Allah He is Mighty in Power.

14. To Him is due the true prayer 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 mouths But it reaches them not:

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. Ḥaqq=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 mā. 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.
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."

17. He sends down water
From the skies, and the channels
Flow, each according to its measure:

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.
Like one who is blind?\textsuperscript{1834}

It is those who are
Endued with understanding
That receive admonition;—

20. Those who fulfil the Covenant
Of Allah and fail not
In their plighted word;

21. Those who join together
Those things which Allah
Hath commanded to be joined,\textsuperscript{1835}
Hold their Lord in awe,
And fear the terrible reckoning;

22. Those who patiently persevere,
Seeking the countenance of 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,—\textsuperscript{1836}

23. Gardens of perpetual bliss:
They shall enter there,
As well as the righteous
Among their fathers, their spouses
And their offspring\textsuperscript{1837}

\textsuperscript{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.

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

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{1837}. The relationships of this life are temporal, but love in righteousness is eternal.
And angels shall enter unto them
From every gate
(with the salutation)

24. “Peace unto you for that ye
Persevered in patience! Now
How excellent is the final Home!”

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!

26. Allah doth enlarge, or grant
By (strict) measure, the
Sustenance
(Which He giveth) to whomsoever
He pleaseth. (The worldly) rejoice
In the life of this world:
But the life of this world
Is but little comfort
Compared to the Hereafter.

SECTION 4.

27. The Unbelievers say: “Why

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.
Is not a Sign sent down
To him from his Lord?\textsuperscript{1842}
Say: “Truly Allah leaveth, 
To stray, whom He will; 
But He guideth to Himself 
Those who turn to Him 
In penitence,—

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.\textsuperscript{1843}

29. “For those who believe
And work righteousness,
Is (every) blessedness,\textsuperscript{1844}
And a beautiful place
Of (final) return.”

30. Thus have We sent thee
Amongst a People before whom
(Long since) have (other) Peoples
(Gone and) passed away;\textsuperscript{1845}

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{1844} “Blessedness”: \textit{Tubā}: 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.

\textsuperscript{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.
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!"

31. If there were a Qur-ān
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 all things! 1847
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. 1848

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 beneficient 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
Mocked were (many) messengers
Before thee: but I granted Respite to the Unbelievers,
And finally I punished them:
Then how (terrible) was My requital!

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 devising

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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 *akafa* (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. *Zillum*: 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-án with such joy.
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."

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.

SECTION 6.

We did send messengers
Before thee, and appointed
For them wives and children.

1858. *Ahzāb* (plural of *ḥizb* = parties, sects, troops, clans. The reference may be to
the clans mentioned in xxx. 20 and 22 (that whole Sūra is called *Ahzāb*). 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-ān 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 "Wāqī" here in place of "Nāṣrī"
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 =
And it was never the part
Of a messenger to bring a Sign
Except as Allah permitted1862
(Or commanded). For each period
Is an appointment).1863

39. Allah doth blot out
Or confirm what He pleaseth:
With Him is
The Mother of the Book.1864

40. Whether We shall show thee
(Within thy life-time)
Part of what We promised them
Or take to Us 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.

41. See they not that We
Gradually reduce the land
From its

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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 to-day as much as did the people of Al-Muṣṭafā’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-Kitāb: Mother of the Book; the original foundation of all revelation; the Essence of Allah’s Will and Law. Cf. iii. 7, and n. 347.
Outlying borders? Where Allah Commands, there is none
To put back His command:
And He is Swift
In calling to account.

42. Those before them did (also)
Devise plots; but in all things
Allah is the devising altogether. He knoweth the doings
Of every soul: and soon
Will the Unbelievers know
Who gets home in the End.

43. The Unbelievers say: “No
messenger Art thou.” Say: “Enough
For a witness between me
And you is Allah, and such
As have knowledge of the Book.”

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-Mustafā was 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-ān which he brought.

1868. That is, those who have knowledge of revelation generally will recognise Allah’s revelation in the holy Qur-ān. 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-ān also bears witness to me”.

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