

18 THE MOSLEM DOCTRINE OF GOD

The Koran is never weary of reiterating the formula which expresses God's unity, and the one hundred and twelfth Surah, specially devoted to this subject, is, so Moslems say, equal in value to one-third of the whole book. It is related by Zamakhshari in his commentary that Mohammed said, "The seven heavens and the seven earths are built on this Surah and whoever reads it enters paradise."

Now in spite of the emphasis thus put on the doctrine of God's unity by Moslems, and in spite of the fact that it is *this* part of their creed which is their glory and boast, there has been a strange neglect on the part of most writers who have described the religion of Mohammed to study Mohammed's idea of God. It is so easy to be misled by a name or by etymologies. Nearly all writers take for granted that the God of the Koran is the same being and has like attributes as Jehovah or as the Godhead of the New Testament. Especially is this true of the rationalistic students of Islam in Germany and England. Is this view correct? The answer, whether affirmative or negative, has important bearing not only on missions to Moslems but on a true philosophical attitude toward this greatest of all false faiths. If we have to deal with "an eternal truth" linked to "a necessary fiction" our simple task is to sever the link and let the eternal truth stand to make men free. On the other hand, if the necessary fiction is put as the foundation of a distorted truth, there can