

APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

CELEBRATED PROPHET OF ARABIA,

CALLED

Mahomed, The Illustrious

BY

GODFREY HIGGINS Esq.

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TO THE
NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASIATIC
SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

To you, my Lords and Gentlemen, I take the liberty of dedicating this small Tract, because I am desirous of correcting what appear to me to be the erroneous opinions which some of the individuals of your Society (as well as others of my countrymen) entertain respecting the religion of many millions of the inhabitants of the Oriental Countries, about the welfare of whom you meritoriously interest yourselves; and, because a right understanding of their religion, by you, is of the first importance to their welfare. I do it without the knowledge or approbation of the Society, or of any of its Members, in order that they may not be implicated in my sentiments.

With the most sincere wishes for the welfare of the Society, and with great respect.

I remain, my Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
GODFREY HIGGINS,
Member Asiatic Society.

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PREFACE.

THE object of the following Essay is to abate the mischievous spirit of intolerance which has hitherto existed between the followers of Jesus and those of Mahomed, by showing that the religions of both, however unfortunately changed by time, are the same in their original foundation and principle. If the author should succeed in the slightest degree in exciting or increasing a brotherly feeling towards the professors of the Mahomedan faith, so many millions of whom are our fellow-subjects, he will be amply rewarded.

GODFREY HIGGINS.

APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF MAHOMED.

1.

PERHAPS in no previous period had the empire of the Persians, or the oriental part of the Roman empire, been in a more deplorable or unhappy state than at the beginning of the seventh century. In consequence of the weakness of the Byzantine despots, the whole frame of their government was in a state of complete disorganization; and in consequence of the most frightful abuses and corruption of the priests, the Christian religion had fallen into a state of degradation scarcely at this day conceivable, and such as would be absolutely incredible had we not evidence of it the most unquestionable. The feuds and animosities of the almost innumerable sects had risen to the greatest possible height; the whole frame of society was loosened; the towns and cities flowed with blood. Well, indeed, had Jesus prophesied when he said he brought not peace, but a sword. Husband against wife, children against parents, every house divided against itself--all domestic peace destroyed, and destroyed, too, about the most childish and unimportant, yet the most abstruse and unintelligible points of faith, creating disputes which were in their very nature interminable. At this time, in a remote and almost unknown corner of Arabia, at a distance from the civil broils which were tearing to pieces the Roman empire, arose the religion of Mahomed, a religion destined to sweep like a tornado over the face of the earth, to carry before it empires, kingdoms and systems, and to scatter them like dust before the wind.

2. I know no man concerning whom it is more difficult to form an opinion than of Mahomed, the celebrated prophet of Arabia. Bigotry on one side, and malice on the other, have so obscured the history of this extraordinary person, that it is very difficult to come to a certainty as to the truth of most circumstances respecting him. The facts stated to his *disadvantage* by Christians, it is clear on sound reasoning, can no more be admitted as evidence against him, than those can against Jesus Christ stated by Jews; unless in each case this exceptionable evidence by some other means receive confirmation. On the same principle, the facts stated of Mahomed to his *advantage* in the Koran, taken by themselves, cannot be relied on. But if we find any facts there stated which are *disadvantageous* to him, according to the tenets or opinions of his immediate followers who compiled that book, these statements, I think, will be evidence; because they will, in fact, come from unwilling witnesses. Thus, again, I think, that such assertions respecting him as are agreed to equally by Jews, Christians and Mahomedans, may be received.

3. But it will, perhaps, be said, that if the historical facts respecting him be thus pruned away, nothing will be left. But is it not better to have nothing, than to have that which is false? But I think the consequence will not go so far. We shall have left much that is neither particularly good nor bad, but for the truth of which we shall have a strong probability; particularly if it be not contradicted, but assented to *sub silentio*, by his enemies, and be in itself probable and consistent with his general character, that of those about him, and the circumstances of the times--and I may add also, consistent with the general character of human nature, which we learn from experience. But yet these facts will not be proved like those in which both friends and enemies agree, and the distinction ought to be carefully remembered. Besides these, there is a description of facts which must be admitted with great caution respecting Mahomed, on account of the peculiarity

of his case, though admitted both by his friends and enemies. Thus, for example, when it is said that he professed or pretended to be divinely inspired, it is evident, that though this pretension will injure him greatly in the opinion of the philosophers of this day, yet his followers, after his religion once became established, would be very likely to palm it upon him without any fault of his;--the unprincipled part of them, to support their new-formed government either in church or state, and the mere foolish bigots, because they really fancied it raised his character. At the same time that it raised his character in their eyes, it justified their faith and assisted them in blinding themselves and dispensing with the use of their reason. Bigots never reason. The different sects of Christians and Jews supported the Mahomedan bigots in this, because it enabled them to stigmatize with the title of Impostor the man they hated for not thinking precisely according to the creed which their infallibility had decided to be right. The philosophers, if any there were in that day, unfortunately neither thought nor wrote on the subject.

4. As experience teaches us to expect, we find Mahomed branded, both by Jews and Christians, with the worst epithets which vulgar bigotry can invent. He is always denominated an Impostor; but I think I shall be able to show that this is an appellation he is not entitled to, at least to the extent to which it is generally carried. It is said that he pretended to be SENT as a PROPHET from God. This, I think, is a pretension he might make, and yet be no impostor. Nothing is so common as for persons to imagine that they are sent or called to preach or teach reformation to their fellow-creatures, either in morals, politics, or religion, and yet to be actuated by no motives of fraud or deceit--without which a man cannot be an impostor. Besides, being sent may mean nothing supernatural. Every man is sent to fulfill the duties of the station in which God has placed him, and I think I shall show that there is no evidence that Mahomed pretended to anything more than this.

5. But it will be said, that he pretended to be a Prophet also. I think I shall show that we have no proof of this; and I beg the reader to remember that the word prophet in the time of Mahomed, and long previously, did not necessarily convey any idea of supernatural power or influence. When we read in St. Paul's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, chap. xi. 4, that men prophesying with their heads covered, dishonored their heads, and that women prophesying with them uncovered, dishonored them, we must perceive that by the word *prophesying* nothing but preaching is meant. And I think we shall see that, *at least* in the beginning of his mission, Mahomed pretended to nothing more than this--merely that he was sent by God, or inspired, moved in spirit, by God, to preach a reformation in the idolatrous practices of his countrymen.¹ As every man may be said to be moved by God who feels a wish to perform a good act--as our criminal indictments say a man is moved by the devil, who wishes to do a bad one--so the view which I take here of the prophetic part of his character is strengthened by the circumstance, that he is not said by his followers ever to have foretold, or pretended to foretell, any event.

6. Respecting the word Prophet and the Mahomedan profession of faith, it has been observed, "One element certainly is, that *there is no God but God*. The second is, that *Mahomed was a sent (resoul) of God*: not a *prophet* of God, as sometimes rendered, nor THE SENT; for the word is not prophet, and the definite article is excluded by the

¹ The learned Dr. Hyde says, "Testificatio, ea est communis formula quâ quisque se fidei Mohamedanæ addictum profitetur et testificatur, dicendo--*Non est Deus nisi ispe Deus, et Mohamed est propheta Dei* seu potius *Legatus Dei*. Persæ addunt, *Sed Ali est Amicus Dei*.

"The word Islam means *status salutis*, qui Lat. *Islamismus* vocari possit: et statum talem ingrediens est *Muslim* seu *Musliman*."--Hyde's *Tractatus Alberti Bobovii*, Oxford, 1690.

declaration of Mahomed, that the *resouls* are many and their number unknown. *Koran*, iv. 163.”--*West. Rev.* No. IX., p. 226.

7. This at once does away with all question respecting his being a prophet in the common acceptation of the term.

8. I shall abstain from giving any account of, or copying, the disgusting trash which has been written respecting the character and conduct of Mahomed by the Christian priests--some of them (Prideaux, for instance) men of great learning and high respectability--men who, indeed, ought to have been above such conduct, but whose zeal in this case has actually destroyed their sense of right and wrong, and, as it should seem, taken away from them the use of their understandings. If I were to detail the vulgar abuse in which they have indulged, no information respecting the character of Mahomed would thereby be conveyed to any *liberal or reflecting mind*, and the Christian religion would be wounded by the infamous behavior of its professors. The folly of this conduct has been felt and admitted by the Rev. Dr. White, in the celebrated Bampton Lectures; and though, as we may expect from a Christian Doctor preaching to the ultra-orthodox University of Oxford, he was far from unprejudiced, yet he has admitted the truth of many of the assertions of the followers of Mahomed, which a liberal and reflecting mind could not deny, and thereby done himself the greatest honor; and from him, as the very first of Christian authorities, I shall often have occasion to make quotations.

9. It will instantly be seen that this evidence must be considered as that of an unwilling witness. He says:

“In the various writings of the numerous followers of Mahomed, his character is uniformly drawn in the brightest and most amiable colors; he is held up as the unrivalled pattern of every mental and corporeal perfection, and as distinguished by every quality and virtue which can adorn and elevate human nature.” Such is the character which Dr. White informs us he has received from his followers--a character probably overcharged by enthusiasm, but also probably very far from being entirely destitute of foundation in truth, as the following quotation from that Rev. Doctor’s fourth Bampton Lecture will decidedly prove:

10. “The circumstances which attended the earlier years of Mahomed were certainly such as presented no flattering prospects of grandeur, and no probable views of ambition to his future life. Though descended from the most honorable tribe of Arabia, and from the noblest family of that tribe, yet distress and poverty were the only portion which he inherited; a distress and poverty unsoftened by the tender cares and kind indulgence of parental affection.--The education which he received, like that of the rest of his countrymen, was rough and hardy; neither tempered by the elegancies of literature, nor even enlightened by the first and most obvious rudiments of knowledge; but calculated rather to invigorate the powers of the body than to polish and enlarge the mind. The bounty of nature, however, and the exquisite endowments with which she had so liberally adorned the future prophet and monarch of Arabia, abundantly compensated for the unkindness of fortune. Graceful in his person, easy and insinuating in his manners, and endowed with a greatness of mind which could brave the storms of adversity, and rise superior to the disadvantages of an illiterate education, he was in possession of accomplishments more valuable in themselves, and capable of producing more illustrious effects, than all that the influence of wealth, or the authority of hereditary power, could have bestowed.”

11. Such is the character given of this great prophet, conqueror, reformer, or impostor, by the Oriental Professor of the University of Oxford. I shall now proceed to give a general outline of his history.

12. In the city of Mecca, on the eastern coast of the Red Sea, in the 571st year of the Christian era, a widow in indigent circumstances, whose husband had been deceased about two months, was delivered of a boy. The uncle of the child, Abu Taled, a rich man, had compassion on him and sent him five or six miles into the country to nurse. The babe was healthy and beautiful to look upon, and as he advanced in years the sweetness of his disposition rivalled the beauty of his person. Nature had done for him everything, but fortune withheld her favors. He was poor, and though his uncle did not choose to leave him to perish in his infancy, he did not choose to expend any portion of his wealth to educate him, or to raise him above the very lowest situation in life. When old enough, he began to earn his bread as a camel-driver, in which capacity, for many years, he traversed divers countries, by which he acquired a knowledge of men and things, probably much more valuable than the letters which, shut up in a school, a pedant would have taught. This child was Mahomed. As a camel-driver, in the service of his uncle, he continued till he was twenty-five years of age, when he was taken into the employment of a widow of the name of Cadigha, whose husband, a merchant, had died a little time previously, and by whom he had left to her great wealth and complicated mercantile concerns. The business of this lady is stated to have been very extensive, and her husband to have been one of the first merchants of Mecca, his native place. From the age of twenty-five, for about three years, Mahomed managed this concern as a factor, trading for her to Damascus and many other places, when she married him, thereby advancing him from a servant to be all at once one of the principal men of his country, from actual poverty to very considerable wealth. Amidst all the abuse which religious bigotry has lavished upon Mahomed, it is remarkable that it has not dared to advance any thing against him on account of his conduct to this lady. She lived with him two and twenty years *as his sole* wife, and it was not till her decease that he indulged himself, after the manner of his country, in a plurality of wives; but shortly after that event he married Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Beker; and Sewda, the daughter of Zama; and some time afterward, Haphsa, the daughter of Omar; thereby rendering himself son-in-law to three of the men who had become his greatest supporters.

13. Dr. White says, "From this period (*viz.*, his marriage with Cadigha) to the time when he announced his mission as the prophet of the Most High, history has recorded nothing concerning the actions and the pursuits of Mahomed. Fifteen years of his life are involved in the deepest and most impenetrable obscurity. One historian only informs us, that God had inspired his prophet with a love of solitude and retirement. But in this single information we see a ray of light sufficient to clear up the darkness of this mysterious interval. In a lonely cave, in the recesses of Mount Hara, he shunned the society of men."--WHITE, Ser. IV.

14. Again, Dr. White says, "The character of Mahomed, according to Eastern historians, had been hitherto preserved unblemished: his moral qualities, no less than his other accomplishments, had contributed to raise him in the esteem of his fellow-citizens; and his integrity in particular had been honored with the most flattering and distinguished testimony of their approbation. That he might not, however, by too rapid a transition,

² The exact year has been a subject of dispute, like every thing else respecting Mahomed, but I think this is the most probable. It is of little consequence.

become a reformer of those very errors in which he himself had been involved; that he might not too suddenly commence a preacher against that idolatry which he had practiced in common with the rest of his countrymen; and that he might acquire a reputation for sanctity in some measure correspondent with the high and venerable office which he was about to assume; he affected to pass a great part of his time in religious retirement and holy meditation: he became more grave in his deportment, more profuse in his charities, and more assiduous in his devotions.”

15. Notwithstanding the evil intention attributed in the above passage to the new prophet by the reverend lecturer of Oxford, on his own surmise only, without any authority, it is evident that until the fortieth year of his age, when he first undertook the reformation of his countrymen, his conduct had been irreproachable; indeed, such as might well be held up to all as an example. Since the general exemplary life of the prophet could not be denied by the learned Oxonian, but as his merit could not be admitted without danger by a Christian divine, nothing remained but to attribute the conduct of the prophet to hypocrisy, and the most artful and deeply laid plot or design. Fifteen years, it seems, he passed in a voluntary noviciate, before he made known even to his wife, or his most intimate friends, the object of his penance or seclusion, before he announced to them the glorious mission with which he was charged. Thus, to the virtues allowed him by the Doctor, the merit of great patience at least must be added.

16. I beg the reader here to pause, and consider how different an account may be given of these fifteen years of seclusion by the followers of the prophet, and when all his other conduct during this long time is considered, in all probability, too, given with truth. I could easily give it from the Mahomedan authors, but, according to my rule, it is not admissible as evidence.

17. It is not surprising that his wife Cadigha should be the first of his proselytes, if he were sincere in his professions, but very much the contrary, if he were an impostor. He must have played his part very well for fifteen years together to have deceived her;³ for it is admitted, that she was a believer, and not in the pretended plot, or a hypocrite. After Cadigha, his slave Zayd became his second proselyte, who was soon after followed by Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, his uncle. Dean Prideaux says, “His fourth disciple was Abu Beker, who, being one of the richest men of Mecca, and a person of great wisdom and experience, brought with him no small help and reputation to his cause; and his example was soon followed by five others, Othman Ebn Affan, Zobair Ebn’ol Awam, Saad Ebn Abu Waccas, Abdorrahman Ebn Auf and Abu Obeida Ebn’ol Jerah, who were afterwards the principal generals of his armies, and the chief instruments under him, by whose help he established both his empire and his imposture together in those parts of the world.”--PRIDEAUX’S *Life of Mahomed*, p. 12, 8vo. ed.

18. Notwithstanding many striking traits of resemblance may be perceived between circumstances in the early histories of Jesus and of Mahomed, yet there are many others in which they as decidedly differ. The twelve first proselytes of Jesus are allowed to have been uneducated men,⁴ in the most humble situations of life. On the contrary, it appears that, with the exception of his slave, the first of Mahomed’s proselytes were persons of high respectability; and their splendid actions as Caliphs and leaders of the Mahomedan armies, prove them to have possessed first-rate talents, and

³ It has been said, that no great man was ever great in the presence of his valet or his wife. Was Mahomed an exception to this rule?

⁴ Idiotai, unlearned, men of mean capacities or understandings, they have been called by some of the early Christian writers, whence, probably, by no very great perversion of language, our term idiot has been derived. See the controversy respecting this word betwixt Priestley and Horsley.

not to have been men likely to be easily deceived. In the humble characters of the first disciples of Jesus, Mr. Mosheim professes to see much glory to the Christian cause. I am obliged to confess, if I must speak the truth, that, on the contrary, it would have been full as satisfactory to me to have seen among its earliest professors men possessing such characters as those of the Antonines, of Locke, or of Newton. But this only proves how differently the same object appears to different persons.

19. For several years after the beginning of his mission, (as in future I shall call it,) Mahomed appears not to have made any great progress: but nothing dismayed with the insults, the ridicule, or even with the threats of his opponents, he continued his preaching until the fourth year, when he is stated by the Christians to have made, including those before named, only thirty-nine proselytes: but one of these was Omar Ebn'ol Chattab, a man of very high consideration among his opponents, and one whose talents afterward raised him to the Califat and the empire of nearly all Asia. His enemies, the rulers of the state and supporters of the old system the *chief priests and pharisees* of his country, finding that neither ridicule (that generally considered invincible weapon against a bad cause) nor the use of such epithets as sorcerer, magician, liar, impostor, &c., had any effect in preventing the increase of his followers; and finding also their loaves and fishes in danger, determined to have recourse to a more effectual measure, and for this purpose they entered into a combination to assassinate him. This conspiracy would probably have finished the prophet, if it had not finished the religion, had it not been discovered and defeated by his uncle, Abu Taleb, one of the chief men of the government, who was not a believer in his mission, but who defended him against his enemies with more success, perhaps with more zeal, than had been shown by Pilate, his brother idolater, on a similar occasion.

20. It is evident from the unwilling admissions of the Dean of Norwich, that the prophet met the taunts and insults of his countrymen with nothing but mildness and the most insinuating address and manners: to all ranks of persons affable and courteous; and to the poor, kind and charitable.⁵ In his preaching he is said to have had a ready wit, and I think we cannot doubt his having possessed a considerable share of eloquence. To this line of conduct and to these qualities, I think we may attribute the protection which he received from Abu Taleb, which was so favorable to the prophet, and so honorable to the just and liberal-minded idolater.

21. The facts as here stated are admitted by Prideaux, but to him they are gall and wormwood; he can see in them nothing but baseness and infamy: thus religious bigotry blinds the best of men; for Prideaux was, I believe, a very good man. Well has it been observed by Professor White, that the conduct of Christians in representing Mahomed, the man who raised himself from an humble station to the sovereignty of a great empire, as they have often done, to be a perfect monster of vice, devoid of both moral and intellectual faculties,⁶ and as contemptible on account of his abject stupidity as detestable for his enormous vices, they have not left us, if we were to believe them, any other, or scarcely any other resource, than to admit that his success was the effect of a miracle; and they have rendered it difficult at least, if not impossible, to be accounted for by any human means. But this difficulty need not alarm the pious Christian. It does not exist. The unprincipled falsehood and calumnies of his predecessors, the Rev. Oxonian allows. They are, indeed, totally devoid of all credibility.

⁵ Prideaux, *Life of Mahomed*, p. 19.

⁶ White, *Lecture IV.*, pp. 164, 166.

22. The conspiracy having failed to take off the prophet, he fearlessly continued to preach, and kept constantly acquiring new proselytes; until, in the eighth year of his preaching, the government passed a law, whereby they forbade any more persons to join themselves to him. But he paid no attention to this, which availed nothing to his hurt as long as his uncle Abu Taleb lived, but he died two years afterward, and the chief government of the city then remained solely with Abu Sophian, of the house of Ommia, one of his most bitter opponents. How the prophet managed to support himself against his enemies for the next two years does not clearly appear from the Christian authors, for the idle stories they tell cannot be received as evidence. But I think we may believe Prideaux, that in these two years he retired for some time to a place called Tayif, a town of Hagiuz, about sixty miles from Mecca towards the East, where his uncle Abbas mostly lived. Prideaux says he went there with an intent to make proselytes and seize the town, but that, failing entirely in the first object, he returned to Mecca. It is probable that he retired to avoid the fury of his enemies, and that when it had a little abated, or his party had obtained some advantage, he returned. Probably when he was at Tayif he would endeavor to make proselytes, and probably might fail in his attempt.

In the twelfth year of his mission, "some of his followers, to the number of about one hundred persons, (as Prideaux says,) having made themselves more than ordinarily obnoxious to the government, by their practices against it, were forced to fly from Mecca to Nagush, king of Ethiopia, where Mahomed's letters, which they carried with them, obtained their protection, though the men of Mecca sent two of their principal citizens after them in an embassy to that king, to demand them to be delivered unto them. And Mahomed, with the rest that tarried behind, found it very difficult for them to subsist any longer there. For after the departure of so many of his faithfulest adherents into this exile, this farther diminution of his number made him still less able to withstand those insults which his adversaries were continually, on all occasions, making upon him. But what he lost at Mecca, he got at Medina, then called Yatreb, a city lying at the northern end of Hagiuz, two hundred and seventy miles distant from Mecca, which being inhabited the one part by Jews, and the other part by heretical Christians, and these two parties not well agreeing in the same city, the factions and feuds that arose between them drove one of the parties to Mahomed, and on the thirteenth year of his pretended mission, there came to him from thence seventy-three men and two women, who embraced his imposture, and swore fealty to him, whereon he chose twelve out of them whom he retained awhile with him at Mecca, to instruct them in his new religion, and then sent them back again to Yatreb, to be as his twelve apostles, there to propagate it in that town, in which they labored with that success, that in a short time they drew over a great party of the inhabitants to embrace the imposture: of which Mahomed receiving an account, resolved to retire thither, as finding Mecca now grown too hot for him. For the chief men of the city finding that Mahomed's indefatigable industry and cunning still kept up his party, do what they could to suppress it, resolved, without further delay, to strike at the root, and prevent the farther spreading of the mischief by cutting off him that was the chief author of it. Of which he having received full and early intelligence, and finding no other way to avoid the blow but to fly from it, ordered all his party, whom he could prevail with, to accompany him in his banishment, secretly in the evening to withdraw out of the city, and retire to Yatreb. And when he had seen them all gone, he and Abu Beker followed after, leaving only Ali behind, who having set in order some affairs that detained him, came to them on the third day after. As soon as this flight was publicly

known, parties were sent out to pursue after him, and he difficultly escaped them, by hiding himself in a cave till the heat of the pursuit was over.”--PRIDEUX’s *Life of Mahomed*, p. 55.

23. In this account of the Rev. Dean we see the general gloss and canting style which are usually adopted on such occasions by the priests and rulers, with whom he here identifies himself, against all such persons as preach up reformation of the abuses, by means of which, together with the labor of their fellow creatures, they live in ease and luxury. The Dean seems to know perfectly well, to entertain no doubts whatever respecting the private sentiments of the governors of Mecca, and of Mahomed and his followers: nor does he seem the least shocked with their attempts to murder this hitherto peaceable preacher. However, we may receive for true, that a number of his followers fled to Nagush, King of Ethiopia, and that some time afterward, a deputation having come to him from Yatreb or Medina, he fled thither himself with all or most of his followers. All this is perfectly natural, consistent with probability and our experience of the affairs of mankind. It is what happened in similar circumstances to Socrates, to Pythagoras, to Moses, to Luther, and to many others, and even to Jesus Christ⁷ himself. In order to disguise the fact, which cannot be denied, that a number of persons of Medina had become proselytes to his religion, the Dean describes this effect to have happened in consequence of quarrels betwixt the Christians and Jews, which compelled one party to throw themselves into his arms. It does not appear that any disorder or bloodshed took place on his arrival at Medina. His party was so superior to either that of the Jews or of the Christians, that he met with no resistance, and immediately proceeded to take possession of the government.

24. The account of the flight from Mecca to *Medina*, at that time, from its superior state of learning, called the City of the Book, may be read in the uncorrupted version of Gibbon’s History.

25. This flight of Mahomed must not be passed lightly over. It proved in its effects of incalculable importance to the future fortunes of a great part of mankind. From the day of this flight, the sixteenth of July, six hundred and twenty-two of the Christian era, the era of the Hegira takes its date. From this date all the numerous tribes of the followers of Mahomed, wherever scattered, uniformly reckon their time. This is a curious and important fact, but it bears no comparison in point of importance to some other consequences which followed, and were the effects of this cause. It is very certain that until this flight the prophet had confined himself, (whether from principle or prudence I do not know, and it is of no consequence in the argument,) to the use of peaceable means only,--to the power of eloquence and persuasion, for the propagation of his doctrine. By this persecution he was driven to take up the sword in his own defence, and from a preacher he was converted into a soldier, a hero, and a conqueror. From this era must be dated not the Hegira only, but the beginning of great revolutions, causing the death of millions of human beings, the overthrow of great numbers of mighty states and kingdoms, and the foundation of some of the most magnificent empires which the globe has ever seen. In short, from this apparently trifling event, the face of the whole world has been changed.

26. Notwithstanding all the glosses and misrepresentations of Prideaux and other Christian authors, it is very evident that, until the Hegira, the life and moral conduct of Mahomed had been correct in a high degree. Except the wicked object or intention from

⁷ Matt. xii. 15.; Mark iii. 7, &c.

which his actions, either good in themselves or indifferent, are *said* to have originated, not a single charge can be brought against him. After the Hegira I speak not so decisively on this point. Had the foolish bigots of Mecca been persuaded to abolish their idolatry, or been content, like the prophet, to make use only of the weapons of reason and argument, in what a different situation might the world have been placed at this time! What a stupendous effect has arisen from the folly of these few miserable priests of a contemptible religion! What miseries have been brought on the world by this pernicious order of men! In all ages and in all nations, the priests have been the enemies of the happiness of mankind. To them may almost all the great revolutions of the world be traced. *As a society*, they are, *as far as is in their power*, what they always have been. And what they always have been they always will continue. From the nature and constitution of the order they can be no other. By acquiring an influence over the minds and consciences of kings, they have succeeded in preventing them from listening to the complaints of their subjects, and consenting to timely reforms, in consequence of which most of the revolutions of the world have taken place, and which may fairly be charged to their account. It is not to the philosophers and the Carbonari, that the late revolutions of France and Spain are to be attributed, but to the murderers of the family of the Calases, and to the heads of the Inquisition. Nor are Ferdinand and Miguel the persons to whose charge the miseries of Spain and Portugal ought to be laid. They are but the creation of the priests; they are only what the priests, who have the sole merit or demerit of every action of their lives, have made them. An established priesthood has all the dangerous qualities of a corresponding society. All hierarchies have been raised to the height which they acquire at first by the good conduct of the priests. They rise by the prudent behavior of good men in humble life to wealth and power; these once obtained, bad men get possession of the power, and the order then becomes the curse of the world.

27. Dr. Prideaux informs us, that the adherents of Mahomed at Medina were chiefly among the Christians, and that he was received by them with great acclamations; all this, for the reason he gives, seems very probable. After his arrival, as soon as it could conveniently be done, he built himself a house, which he made his usual residence to the time of his death. He also built adjoining to it a mosque, for the celebration of the rites of religion. Of what these consisted I have no information. If we could discover them, no doubt they would be very curious. The circumstance proves that the persons possessing the government of Medina, whether Jews or Christians, and they are said by Prideaux to have consisted of one of these two sects, were favorers of his doctrines. This was the first city which, as a city, adopted his religion. A question naturally arises, as to what this religion could consist of, which could have such an influence? No weapon had yet been used but reason and eloquence; so that the Christian priests cannot attribute this conversion to the fear of the sword. It must be recollected, too, that, if we are to believe Prideaux, this was not a city of idolaters, as Mecca was, but of Jews and Christians, who were his first proselytes. It also seems that he did not go to Medina to make proselytes; but that the Medinese came to seek him.

28. War having now actually commenced betwixt Mahomed and the people of Medina on one side, and the governors of Mecca on the other, the prophet, as might be expected, (but for the first time,) gave orders to his followers to prepare themselves with arms, and after having *mustered* them and *enrolled* them, to use Prideaux's words, for the war, he gave the command of them to his uncle Hamza, constituting him thereby his standard-bearer. After sometime, understanding that the caravan of the people of Mecca

was on the road, he sent out (as Prideaux says) Hamza to attack it with thirty men. What a prodigious enrollment and muster there must have been! But finding it guarded by three hundred soldiers, he made no attempt upon it. The next year, the second of the Hegira, on the approach of the Mecca caravan, guarded by one thousand men, under the command of Abu Sophian, Mahomed himself marched out at the head of three hundred and nineteen men, and, notwithstanding the superiority of the caravan's guard, after a desperate battle defeated it, and obtained a complete victory. Although a considerable part of the caravan was saved by the good conduct of Abu Sophian, and escaped back to Mecca, yet Mahomed took a very large booty.

29. Of course a victory like this over so decided a superiority in numbers, must have given great spirits to his adherents.

30. In the year following, the third of the Hegira, we find him making war upon certain Jews or Jewish tribes of Arabs, commanded by a man named Caab. This is said to have arisen from some satirical verses which Caab wrote upon Mahomed. It is difficult to discover what truth there may be in this, but it ended in favor of the prophet, Caab not only making peace with him, but becoming a proselyte and one of his greatest confidants. Towards the end of this year, he fought a battle with Abu Sophian and the people of Mecca, in which he suffered a defeat, and was wounded. His standard-bearer Hamza was killed. It is said, that if Abu Beker had not come to his assistance, he must have been destroyed. But the battle does not appear to have been attended with any very important consequences, as we find his general, Omar, in the next year, the fourth of the Hegira, carrying on a successful war against the Nadorites, a tribe of the Jewish religion, the whole of which he is said to have put to the sword. The fifth year of the Hegira is remarkable for the war of the ditch, as it is called. Abu Sophian and the people of Mecca having allied themselves to several other tribes, marched against Medina with ten thousand men. This caused the prophet to take the field: but on his meeting them, he found himself much inferior in strength, and therefore encamped, and fortified himself by drawing a ditch in front of his encampment. His enemies besieged him many days without success, and at length were obliged to retreat, their army breaking into dissensions and returning home, in consequence, it is said, of some of them being corrupted by their countrymen in the army of Mahomed. Thus the war this year ended in his favor. In the sixth year, Mahomed having subdued several other Arab tribes, and finding himself very much strengthened, changed the plan of the war, became the aggressor, and marched against the city of Mecca. The armies met near that city, and a battle ensued, in which neither party gaining any decisive advantage, a truce was concluded for ten years. By this truce Mahomed seems to have gained a very great advantage, his partisans having permission to go into and return from Mecca whenever they thought proper, only coming unarmed and keeping the peace. In this year he is said to have been inaugurated by the chief men of his army under a tree near Mecca, to have been declared a king, and to have taken the insignia of royalty, at the same time declaring himself also high-priest of his religion. This may very probably have been the truth, as we find all his successors in the Caliphate following this practice, and uniting in their own persons both the characters of head of the religion, and of the monarchy, precisely as the kings of England do at this day. In this year, the seventh of the Hegira, we are told that he had poison given to him by an inhabitant of a town of Jewish Arabs, called Chaibar, which he had conquered. From the effects of this poison he never entirely recovered.

31. In the eighth year of the Hegira, having greatly increased in power, Mahomed alleging in his justification, how truly I know not, that the governors of Mecca had broken the truce, marched against them, and in a very short space of time obliged the city to surrender at discretion; Abu Sophian, the greatest of his enemies, *having first come over to him* along with his uncle Al Abbas. Immediately on obtaining possession of the city, he proceeded to abolish the idol worship, and to substitute the worship of one only God, which has remained to this day. Soon after the conquest of Mecca, several of the neighboring tribes of Arabs, fearing his increasing power, combined together to attack and reduce him before he should become too powerful for them. At first they obtained several advantages, but he finally succeeded in completely defeating them, and soon after this all the remainder of the different tribes of Arabia submitted to him; and thus, in the eleventh year of the Hegira, he became the sole monarch of the extensive, and, now being united, powerful empire of Arabia, or, as it has been called, of the Saracens. He did not live long to enjoy this high station, but in the twelfth year of the Hegira he gradually declined, and died about sixty-one years of age.

32. He is said to have been aware of his approaching death, and the cool and philosophical manner in which, when he found his end approaching, he prepared for it and arranged his affairs, leave no room to doubt that his mind in that trying moment was undisturbed by the horrors of remorse. In a word, he may justly be said to have lived like a hero, and to have died like a philosopher.

33. The account which I give here of the last hours of the prophet will be denied. It has been too often the practice of Christian devotees to publish accounts of the death-bed scenes of their opponents, when even, if true, in consequence of the failure of the faculties of the mind, no inference of the least importance could be deduced from them. But as long as Mahomed had the undoubted command of his understanding, his conduct was that of a hero and a philosopher. After his fever brought on delirium I know nothing about him.

34. Having finished this slight sketch of the life of Mahomed, in which I have merely noticed such facts as are admitted, and cannot be denied by either his friends or enemies, which is all that on principles of sound criticism can be admitted,--I shall proceed to make a few observations upon the doctrines he taught--a part of my work beyond all comparison the most important, and from the discussion of which I have hitherto most carefully abstained.

35. In the consideration of this part of the subject it is very difficult to ascertain what authorities ought to be received, and what rejected. The very peculiar circumstances in which Mahomed was placed, as I have said before, renders even the evidence of his supporters not always admissible as to facts which we consider unfavorable to him; for they often considered things favorable, which we consider the contrary. Thus, for example, some of his followers, long after his death, believing that he performed miracles, declared that he professed to have that power: a thing he certainly never pretended to.

36. The grand piece of evidence upon which most authors have relied, has been the Koran: every word, and even letter, of which is now held by the Mahomedans to have been written by divine inspiration, and therefore free from error; as many Christians at this day consider the gospels. But notwithstanding these very high pretensions, this work is attended with very many and very great difficulties.

37. This book is said to have been revealed to Mahomed, chapter after chapter, by the angel Gabriel, and to have been announced as such by him, as they were required by circumstances, from day to day, during a space of more than twenty years. Now is this true? Was it thus announced by him, or was it not? If we consider the matter coolly, it seems very unlikely that any one should have believed this when he announced it to them; and to obviate this difficulty, his Christian historians have affirmed that these revelations were often disbelieved and treated with contempt--though they are unwillingly obliged to allow that in the end they were believed. But a new question arises--do we now possess the real papers which he published, or did he publish any? We are told that when he received any of these revelations he dictated them to a secretary who wrote them down, not knowing how either to read or write himself: that then they were read to his followers until they could repeat them; after which they were safely locked up in a chest, under the care of one of his wives, in whose keeping they were at the time of his death. Concerning these papers Dean Prideaux says, "That soon after the decease of Mahomed, Abu Beker thought it necessary to publish these papers, and for this purpose had recourse to the chest, and partly out of the papers he found there, and *partly out of the memory* of those who had learnt them by heart, he composed the book; for, several of these papers being lost, and several so *defaced* that they could not be read, he was forced to take in the assistance of those who pretended to remember what the impostor had taught them, to make up the matter, and under this pretence made use of their advice to frame the book, as he thought would best answer his purpose." Here we have a very curious, but a very probable, account of this immaculate record, by which the actions and opinions of Mahomed are to be tried. I take the liberty of asking any lawyer if he would, in the trial of Mahomed, permit his case to go to a jury upon this evidence? I think he would not. But this is not all; this is only the first amended version. After the prophet had been dead upwards of twenty years, Othman, finding that this version was full of *errors, corruptions, and mistakes*, (that is, in other words, that it did not serve his purpose,) caused all the copies to be called in and burnt, and published a new one, which we now have, and which, in his opinion, was right and correct. If a lawyer would not receive the first version, what will he do with the second? The facts here stated can hardly be doubted, because they seem to be taken by Prideaux from the works of both Christians and Mahomedans. Knowing as we do, the ignorance and bigotry of some of Mahomed's followers, and the knavery also of others, combined with the ignorance and bigotry of the former, we surely can admit no part of this book to be evidence against him, except with the most extreme caution.

38. The difficulty, with respect to these revelations of the box, is increased by the consideration of a fact which seems to be admitted by both sides, both Mahomedans and Christians--namely, that he could neither read nor write; and various stories are told, and persons pointed out as the writers of them--persons whom he procured secretly to write them for him--at one time a Jew, at another time a Persian. It is allowed that this work is written in an uniform style, and is in the most elegant dialect of the Arabian language. This does not look like the work of several persons. Although the Caliphs, after a little time, became men of high refinement and civilization, yet those who were contemporary with the prophet, are said to have been excessively ignorant and illiterate, though they were evidently men of superior talent. The people of Mecca, the native city of the prophet, are said to have been proverbially ignorant. It seems almost incredible that the people possessing within their walls a temple, which was frequented by all the various

tribes of Arabia to offer sacrifice (as the Delphi of the Greeks), the priests of which had power to make them all lay down their arms, and keep the peace for two months in every year, should be so illiterate. In whichever way we look at the Koran, it is attended with great difficulties. However, of this I am certain, that although much of the work *may be* from the pen, or of the dictation, of Mahomed the prophet, yet he cannot be made responsible for a single sentence which it contains to his disadvantage.

39. That the Koran has been acted on in some way or other, if it be not a forgery altogether, is pretty evident from the fact that it is often in itself called by the name of Koran, a word which means *a collection*, alluding to the chapters or loose scraps of which it was composed.⁸

40. Suppose, for the sake of argument, at present we exclude the Koran altogether, what evidence then shall we have respecting him? Truly nothing, but the Christian bigots on one side, and the Mahomedan bigots on the other; and I see no other way than balancing the accounts of one against the other, comparing them both with what general experience of human nature teaches is probable, and thus deducing a conclusion as well as we are able. It is very obvious that the writers we have on either one side or the other, were persons very unlikely to sift and weigh the evidence; every idle story, which gaping credulity propagated, would most likely be greedily swallowed. Much of what our writers give us is taken from a work written by a man called Johannes Andreas, who was an Alfacki, or a doctor of the Mahomedan law, who, in or about the year 1487, at Toledo, in Spain, turned Christian. I confess I take the evidence of a man of this description with very great jealousy and suspicion; besides, his work betrays the most violent hatred in every page. He seems to have been to the Mahomedans precisely what St. Augustine was to the Manicheans, and would probably as little hesitate at a lie to blacken his old companions as the latter, whose profligate lies are as notorious as his hypocrisy was disgusting, and yet he is held up by Lardner as the “GLORY OF AFRICA.”⁹

41. It will, perhaps, not be thought surprising that, under such circumstances, I should suspect such a man as Andreas, after it is known that Grotius could condescend to a pious lie to blacken the impostor in the eyes of Christians, as the following note from Mr. Gibbon proves: “The Christians, rashly enough, have assigned to Mahomed a tame pigeon, that seemed to descend from heaven and whisper in his ear. As this pretended miracle is urged by Grotius (*de Veritate Religionis Christianæ*), his Arabian translator, the learned Pococke, inquired of him the names of his authors; and Grotius confessed that it is unknown to the Mahomedans themselves. Lest it should provoke their indignation and laughter, the pious *lie* is suppressed in the Arabic version; but it has maintained an edifying place in the numerous editions of the Latin text.”¹⁰ If Grotius could stoop to such baseness, well may we be suspicious of a man in the situation of Andreas.

42. In estimating the character of Mahomed, we have no more right to assume that he was a most consummate rogue, hypocrite, liar and villain, totally destitute of all principle, than we have to assume that he was a Socrates. And when I hear him accused of being the former, I immediately have recourse to the general character and conduct

⁸ Vide Erpen. Nol. ad Hist. Joseph., p. 3; also Maracci de Alcor., p. 41; Sale. pref., p. 74.

⁹ This precious renegado says that he travelled into Ethiopia to preach the gospel, and that he *saw* there some men without heads, but with two eyes in the breast, and others with only one eye in the forehead. This great crony of Lardner’s, the glory of Africa, is a pretty sample of a missionary priest.

¹⁰ Pococke, Specimen Hist. Arabum. pp. 186, 187; reland de Religione Mahom. lib. ii., c. xxxix. pp. 259-262; Gibbon, ch. l. p. 249, 4to ed.

which both parties agree he maintained in the early and middle part of his life. I find this to have been irreproachable. Then am I to believe at once that this was mere hypocrisy? Fourteen or fifteen years together, I am told to believe, that he carried this farce on--from twenty-five years old to forty. That until he was twenty-five years of age his life was that of meritorious industry: his integrity unsuspected. That at that time great affluence became his lot as the reward of his honesty and industry; and that this good fortune at once converted this honorable and upright man into a most determined villain. And what was the object which he proposed to himself by this extraordinary conduct? The indulgence of two passions, we are told, was his object: the enjoyment of women, and the gratification of the most stupendous ambition, the ambition of a merchant (not a soldier) of a trading city, to make himself the emperor of the world; and that as a preparative he served a noviciate of fourteen years of seclusion and irreproachable conduct, which irreproachable conduct we must recollect in his case, on account of its hypocrisy, was abandoned profligacy. Have we in the history of the world any thing similar to this? The gratification of the second object of his desires, the enjoyment of women, is attended with a very singular circumstance. He married Cadigha, who was fifteen years older than himself, when he was only twenty-five years of age, the very time of life when youthful passion may be supposed to be at its height; and though, by the laws of his country, he was entitled to have a plurality of wives, he neglected to avail himself of this permission, and continued faithful to her as long as she lived--twenty-two years, having by her a large family. The friends of this *profligate impostor*, I fear, will be so blind as to see nothing in this but gratitude to his kindest friend, the maker of his fortune, unless they should believe that a young man, possessing every personal accomplishment, could have an affection for a woman of forty. His enemies, no doubt, would say that he was devoid of passion, notwithstanding his numerous family, if it were not well known that almost immediately after his wife's death he married three or four very beautiful young women. This, his enemies say, was done to strengthen his party. It seems rather singular that he did not think of this before the twelfth year of his mission, when Cadigha was dead.

43. If ambition were merely the object of Mahomed, why did he not by intrigue endeavor to get himself appointed to be the keeper of the famous Caaba, the temple of Mecca, formerly held by his ancestors, which conveyed to the person holding it the first rank and station in the state, and, indeed, in all Arabia? This was a very celebrated temple, something like that at Delphi, and considered particularly holy. To it flocked great numbers of pilgrims from all Arabia. As I have before observed, for two months in the year that the pilgrimage might be made, all the different tribes ceased from every kind of warfare; so that, however base and degrading its idolatrous rites might be, and Mr. Sale has shown that they were very bad, they were at least attended with one substantial good. Some authors tell us that this temple was built by Ishmael, who resided at Mecca, and that the statue of Abraham was the most distinguished. It contained also those of Noah, Moses, &c., so that the Jewish religion was at the bottom of it. And it is also said that the absolute unity of God, the first part of Mahomed's creed, God is God, was common to all the Arabians before his time, notwithstanding their adoration of idols.

44. But if ambition were the only motive of Mahomed, it seems to me that a much finer opening offered itself to him in declaring himself the Jewish Messiah, than in the line that he pursued, of professing himself a Christian, or follower of Jesus. I can entertain no doubt that if he and his successors had adopted this line of conduct, and had made Jerusalem the place of their abode, that they would have drawn the whole of the

unfortunate Jews into their fold, and as many at least of the flock of Jesus as they obtained by the plan which they adopted; as it appears to me, the banks of the Jordan are on many accounts well situated for the residence and seat of government of the monarch possessing Egypt and Western Asia. With one hand he would have reached the Nile, with the other the Euphrates.

45. In our endeavors to find out the true character of Mahomed, it is, in my opinion, of the first importance to inquire what was the general tendency of the doctrines which *all parties* agree that he taught. His morality is allowed to be excellent. There is no moral precept in the Christian religion which is not found to be inculcated by the Mahomedan, and, in some instances, finely ornamented and embellished by the poetic genius of Arabia. A pretty story is told by Gibbon. A slave of Hassan, the son of Ali, dropped, by accident, a dish of scalding broth on his master; the heedless wretch fell prostrate to deprecate his punishment, and repeated a verse of the Koran: "*Paradise is for those who command their anger.*" "I am not angry," said Hassan. "*And for those who pardon offences.*" "I pardon your offence." "*And for those who return good for evil.*" "I give you your liberty and four hundred pieces of silver."¹¹ Whether the story be true or not is of little consequence; the doctrine of commanding the temper and returning good for evil is finely taught.

46. When the numerous, lengthened and almost unintelligible creeds of the Christian religion are contemplated, a philosopher may perhaps be tempted to heave a sigh of regret for the beautiful, plain, intelligible and unadorned simplicity of the Mahomedan profession of faith: *I believe in one God, and Mahomed the apostle or messenger of God.* In another form: *God is God, and Mahomed is his prophet;* or, *I believe in God and in the doctrines respecting him taught by the preacher Mahomed.* But however much this species of simple brevity may be to the taste of modern philosophy, or of Arabian fraudulent imposture, Divine Wisdom, if we are to believe our priests, has ordained a more complicated system for the religion of Jesus. To deny the wisdom of this dispensation would evidently be profane, though the reality of it may be doubted, and the discussion of it does not appertain to my subject.

47. Among the most important of religious duties enjoined by Mahomed are prayer, fasting and alms-giving. Five times a day every devout Musselman must turn himself to the holy city of Mecca and utter a prayer; "and in the present decay of religious fervor our travellers are edified by the profound humility and attention of the Turks and Persians. Cleanliness is the key of prayer; the frequent lustration of the hands, the face and the body, which was practised of old by the Arabs, is solemnly enjoined by the Koran. The words and attitudes of supplication, as it is performed either sitting, or standing, or prostrate on the ground, are prescribed by custom or authority; but the prayer is poured forth in short and fervent ejaculations; the measure of zeal is not exhausted by a tedious liturgy; and each Musselman, for his own person, is invested with the character of a priest. Every spot for the service of God is equally pure. The Mahomedans indifferently pray in the chamber or in the street. The Friday in each week is set apart for the useful institution of public worship: the people assemble in the mosque, and the iman, some respectable elder, ascends the pulpit to begin the prayer and pronounce the sermon. But the Mahomedan religion is destitute of priesthood or sacrifice; and the independent spirit of fanaticism looks down with contempt on the ministers and the slaves of superstition." How happy would it have been for Europe if the religion of Jesus,

¹¹ Sale's Koran, ch. iii. Note, p. 75.

in a similar manner, had forbidden the use of priests or priesthoods! Only one single, plausible argument can be found for their use, that is, that they are necessary; but the Moravians, the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, and the Mahomedans, prove that it has no foundation, that religion can flourish without them. For surely it will not be said that the religion of Mahomed has not flourished. Mahomedanism is reproached with copying its morality from the gospel; a philosopher, perhaps, may suspect that when the prophet was availing himself of the excellent moral precepts of Christianity, he had sense, not only to take the good, but to leave the evil; to adopt the morality, but to avoid the hired priesthood which, in his day, had filled the world with bloodshed and misery, and was rapidly reducing it to a state of the most debasing ignorance.

48. Persons may speculate upon the reason that caused the *wicked, false and fraudulent imposture* of the Arabian, as it is called, to be devoid of this appendage, which the priests of the true and perfect religion of Jesus have always held to be indispensable to its welfare, if not to its existence, and of course different opinions will be entertained; but, for my own part, I see nothing in the character of Mahomed to prevent me thinking it probable that the experience of what he saw passing around him determined his conduct in this most important affair.

49. In the days of Mahomed, and some centuries before them, a rage for celibacy and monachism had spread itself over the whole world: we read of monks being met with in bodies of many thousands at a time. Though he instituted a fast of thirty days to moderate the passions and to serve as a purification of the soul by the mortification of the body, yet he disapproved the voluntary penance of the Ascetics,¹² the torment and glory of their lives. Works of supererogation were odious to a prophet who censured in his companions a rash vow of abstaining from flesh and women and sleep; and firmly declared that he would have no monks in his religion. Mr. Gibbon has shown that the swarms of fakirs, dervises, &c., which disgrace his religion (as much as Christianity is disgraced by its monks), did not appear till about three hundred years after its institution.

50. Monastic establishment, corresponding societies the most complete and perfect, and also the most pernicious in their consequences to mankind of any that ever were established in the world, have been called the outworks, and monks the light troops, of the religion of purity and truth. The daring genius of the *impostor* despised such aid, and the religion of Islam flourished without, and even in spite of them.

51. In reading the gospels my astonishment has often been excited by the consideration, that the religion of Jesus should have become the most priestly of any religion on the face of the earth; when almost every page of them abounds with expressions of reprobation of priests and chief priests and Pharisees, their supporters, uttered by him, the most perfect model of a virtuous man that ever existed--a being par excellence excellent, (if tradition may be believed), against whose character in the whole world there does not exist an iota of credible evidence. In the gospels not a word can be found, that I know of, to justify or excuse our hierarchies or priesthoods. Priests, excellent, worthy and respectable, as many of them are, as a body, always have been and always will be the enemies, either secretly or openly, of the improvement of mankind. The way in which they have lately incarcerated the Rev. Robert Taylor, and the

¹² Gibbon.

Materialists the Carliles, the modern Vanini,¹³ in Newgate and Dorchester goal, prove what they would do if the power of opinion did not prevent them.

52. Because Mahomed, following the example of the legislator of the oldest ceremonial religion west of the Euphrates, and as all Christians maintain, of the world, Moses, allowed his people, the descendants (as they say, and probably with truth) of Ishmael, the son of the father of the faithful, a plurality of wives,--he has been constantly abused by Christians, to use their words, for *pandering to the base passions of his followers*. But why the allowance of a plurality of wives should be visited with such very harsh censure, I do not know. Surely the example of Solomon, and David, the man after God's own heart, *which he had found to fulfill his law*, might plead for a little mercy, particularly as Jesus nowhere expressly forbids it in any one of the twenty gospels which were written by some or other of the multitude of sects of his followers to record his commands. Biologists and natural philosophers have found other reasons which might serve as some apology for this allowance, which will not apply to us cold-blooded, frog-like animals of northern climates, though they may be applicable to the descendants of Ishmael, natives of the scorching sands of the desert, or of the more favored Arabia Felix, the country which became the lot of the interesting youth, an outcast expelled from his father's house, and thrown under a tree to perish with his unoffending mother, the victims of a termagant's zealous rage. If the unerring book of divine wisdom had not taught me otherwise, I have often thought that I should, in the happy lot of the Arabians, the descendants of Ishmael, so superior to that of the miserable and persecuted Jews, have seen the hand of retributive justice. For surely no one will prefer the temporal lot hitherto of the favored people of God, to that of the wild, independent, high-minded, hospitable tribes of the never-conquered, virgin country of Arabia. The world has bowed before the arms and trembled at the name of the descendants of the outcast Ishmael, but *they* have never either bowed or trembled, and I flatter myself and hope they never will. The history and the fortunes of the outcast Ishmael have always been to me peculiarly interesting. God forgive the wicked thought, if it be wicked; but now knowing the fortunes of the two, and of their families, I would rather be the outcast Ishmael than the pampered Isaac, the father of the favored people of God.

53. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see them restored to the state of civilization, and to the rank they held in the world under their illustrious Caliphs; but I sincerely hope that they will never be civilized by the European sword.¹⁴

54. When Mahomed surveyed the laws and customs of his countrymen, he found many political or religious institutions existing, for which it may be difficult to account. Such as were inoffensive or thought to be conducive to health, he continued: such as were pernicious, as far as was in his power, he abolished: and such of the latter as he could not abolish, he regulated. Of the first, circumcision, for the origin of which health

¹³ Vaninus, a professor of Atheism, burned in France for declaring his opinion, and refusing to play the hypocrite and profess a faith which he did not believe.

¹⁴ For using a similar expression to this in another work, the author has been called a fiend by an anonymous writer, whose bigotry did not permit him to see the difference between conquest and civilization. This learned gentleman, who, the author suspects, could not read the work he criticised, has been kind enough to chide him for his ignorance in treating of the moon's period of twenty-eight days, a period allowed to be taken from the moon, and much used by the ancient Egyptian, Arabian, Chaldean and Indian astronomers. The author is much obliged to this gentleman, whose name he knows very well, and he begs to return his kindness by informing him, that the moon has two periods, one of twenty-seven days and a fraction, and the other of twenty-nine and a fraction, and that twenty-eight is the mean.

In the same manner he has been accused of ignorance in asserting that the Targums were written long after the time of Christ, a fact he inferred from the absence of all notice of them in the works of Origen or the earlier fathers.

is the cause assigned by the celebrated philosophic Jew Philo,¹⁵ is one instance. The prohibition of the use of swine's flesh, considered in those climates to be unwholesome, which he continued, is another (still continued at Rome in summer); and the plurality of wives and concubines, which he could not prevent, he restricted by the most severe enactments, providing for the rights of the wives and the maintenance and comfort of the concubines.

55. I find it asserted in the *Oriental Collections* of Sir W. Ouseley, p. 108, that "the warm regions of Asia make a difference between the sexes not known to the climates of Europe, where the decay of each is mutual and gradual; whereas in Asia it is given to man alone to arrive at a green old age." If this be true, it goes far to excuse Mahomed in allowing a plurality of wives, and it sufficiently accounts for the fact that Jesus never expressly declared himself on this subject, but left it to the regulation of the governments of countries; as it is evident that what would be proper for Asia would be improper for Europe.

56. The passages respecting the wives of Mahomed are evidently contrived by the makers of the Koran to justify the possession of a great number of wives by the monarch; it carries the brand of the Caliph Othman on the face of it so clearly, that it cannot be misunderstood or mistaken.

57. It is probable that the necessity of the regulation of the number of wives did not occur to Mahomed till the latter part of his mission, as we find him exceeding the number allowed by the Koran. It is said, that in the Koran he made an exception of himself, because he was the prophet of God, and had a particular privilege as such. This is the reason very likely to be given by Othman, the compiler of that book; but it is much more likely that by Mahomed the limitation of the number of wives to four, was held to be merely a civil or municipal, but not a religious, regulation; and the mode in which the Grand Seignior and other monarchs, men extremely religious in other respects, indulge in a great number of wives as distinguished from concubines, seems to show that they so consider it. Besides, these wives are held to be strictly legal; for, if the first-born son of the monarch be from the fourth, the fifth, or the tenth wife, if he be only the first-born, he is looked upon as the legal heir to the throne, and the mother receives all the honors due to the mother of the future emperor.

58. The Arabian lawgiver provides for the honorable marriage of Jewish and Christian women with Mahomedans, but prohibits them as concubines. Have either Jews or Christians ever thought of making any reciprocal provision?¹⁶

59. But if the allowance of a plurality of wives to his followers, though guarded with many very strict regulations, may afford to the Christian priests a momentary triumph; yet there are some other of his precepts which may induce the cool inquirer after truth to doubt, or perhaps to deny altogether, the charge of *pandering to their base passions*. The fast of the Ramadan, which, by the circulating effect of the lunar year, must often fall in the hottest period of an Asiatic summer, when the pious Musselmen are forbidden to taste a morsel of food, or even a single drop of water to quench their parching thirst, from morning to evening, for thirty days together, is surely something not very like *pandering to their passions* or appetites. What will the votary of pleasure, the indolent son of luxury, say to the pilgrimage to Mecca? Mahomed surely will not be

¹⁵ Boulainvillier, *Vie de Mahomed*, p. 147.

¹⁶ West. Rev. No. IX., p. 221.

accused of pandering to pleasure, in ordering, if indeed he did order (which I doubt), this terrible journey.

60. By the law of Mahomed all games of chance were expressly prohibited: the beneficial tendency of this law surely no one will deny. He is refused all merit for his morality, because it is said that he only copied it from the Bible. I have not observed the prohibition of this vice either in the decalogue or the gospels; but as he admitted the divine missions of both Moses and Jesus, and professed to build his religion on them as a foundation, it does not seem to me that he did any wrong, or acted in any way inconsistently in adopting such parts of both these religions as appeared to him to be their pure and unadulterated doctrine. Indeed, as he was in fact a Christian, I do not see how he could do otherwise.

61. Historians relate that the Arabians, previous to the time of Mahomed, were much addicted to drunkenness as well as gaming. By two decrees of the *impostor*, who, as was just now observed, is accused of *pandering to the passions* of his people, both the use of wine and gaming are totally abolished. We find no canting recommendation to sobriety and moderation; gaming and drunkenness are pronounced unpardonable sins, and cut up by the roots at once. The passions, prejudices, habits of his followers, are all set at defiance; all must be sacrificed, or they could not be his disciples. There was no stopping half way; no house of rest for the weary pilgrim; he must go the whole journey, or he need not set out at all. As Mr. Gibbon justly observes, the painful restraints from these seducing luxuries are, doubtless, infringed by the libertine and eluded by the hypocrite; but the legislator by whom they are enacted cannot surely be justly accused of alluring his proselytes by the indulgence of their sensual passions. Happy, indeed, I think it would have been for Europe, if it had been consistent with the ways of Divine Wisdom to have prohibited them in the religion of Jesus.

62. It is constantly said by the Christians, that though wine be forbidden, opium is not; and, that the abuse of this drug is just as bad as the abuse of spirituous or fermented liquors. This is very true; but perhaps the prophet of Arabia may be excused when it is recollected, that in his day the drug was not known *probably*, and the abuse of it was not known *certainly*; and he never pretended to omniscience or the gift of prophecy. I must abstain, because it would be profane, or at least it would give occasion to malevolence to accuse me of profaneness or arrogance in presuming to propose an amendment to the already perfect religion of Jesus, or otherwise I should have observed, that it appears to my humble comprehension and confined views, that the happiness of mankind would not have been lessened if a prohibition of wine, spirits and games of chance, had been found in the gospels; nor would it have been any worse if the omniscience of Jesus, which he is held to have possessed, but which Mahomed did not pretend to possess, had induced him to prohibit at the same time the use of intoxicating drugs, except in such cases as they were actually necessary as medicine.

63. Persons prejudiced against Mahomed may condemn him for his sensual paradise; but, in fact, no paradise can be imagined which is not sensual, because (as Mr. Locke has proved) no idea can be entertained by man except through the medium of his senses; it, therefore, necessarily follows, that if he is to entertain any idea of a paradise at all, it must of necessity be sensual.

64. But even if we admit the prophet to have taught that the happiness of a future state consisted of sensual enjoyments, when it is recollected that he (not admitting the genuineness of St. Paul's Epistles) had not the benefit of St. Paul's explanation of the

difference between a corporeal body and a spiritual body, it does not seem an unpardonable sin that he should have believed it a necessary consequence, that, if the *real material* body were to rise again to a state of future happiness, its bliss should consist of those pleasures which human experience teaches *us* it is as a body only capable of enjoying. What other pleasures it may be capable of enjoying *we* know not; through the medium of our senses, and from experience, *the only mode by which we acquire ideas*, we can derive no information. St. Paul tells us we die a corporeal body, we shall rise a spiritual body: this is all very well in the mouth of St. Paul, who is believed to have had the benefit of divine illumination to assist him in understanding it, and may be very well for such as have the benefit of his inspiration; but if the prophet had not this assistance, it is no ways surprising that he should not understand that which in common language is a contradiction in terms. In common language, without the assistance of divine illumination, a man may as well say a round square, a silent noise, as a spiritual body; these expressions would be contradictions in terms, if found any where but in inspired writings, in which are many mysteries, and, as St. Peter says,¹⁷ “*things hard to be understood.*”

65. But Mahomed was so far from making all the happiness of a future life to consist of low corporeal enjoyments, that the highest pleasure and reward of the faithful was to consist in the contemplation of the face of God, which was said to give such exquisite delight, that in respect thereof all the other pleasures of paradise will be forgotten and lightly esteemed.¹⁸ However, I think an impartial judge would not say that this was more to be condemned for sensuality than the account which describes the mansions of the blessed as a glorious and magnificent city, built of gold and precious stones, with twelve gates, through the streets of which there runs a river of water of life, with trees which bear twelve sorts of fruits, and leaves of a healing virtue; and which in another place describes the blessed as eating and drinking at the table of their Savior.¹⁹ The reader will please to understand that I mean to cast no adverse reflection on these figurative accounts, but only to observe, that it is very absurd and unjust to approve the one, the Christian, and to condemn the other, the Mahomedan. If he wish to know how the first fathers of the church considered them, he may apply to Iræneus, who describes a bunch of grapes, in the time of the Millenium, as crying to the faithful to come and eat them.

66. Though Mahomed admits the families and wives of the faithful to accompany them to paradise, the latter are described as the most chaste and virtuous, and devoid of those passions which give so much offence to the patrons of monastic institutions. In short, all the expressions respecting a sensual paradise, about which they are so much reprobated by the Christians, the Mahomedans contend are merely figurative.

67. An energetic and liberal-minded writer in the *Westminster Review*,²⁰ has so well vindicated the Prophet of the East, that the author cannot resist the temptation of giving rather a long extract from his essay: “After all the abuse that has been thrown upon Mahomed for his paradise--and it makes the head and front of every man’s vituperative argument--the simple fact is, that he promised the restoration of man to the Mosaic Eden; where, if there were many Adams, it was equally inevitable there must be

¹⁷ Second Epistle, chap. iii. verse 16.

¹⁸ Sale’s Prel. Dis., sect. iv. p. 133.

¹⁹ Rev. xxi. 10, &c., and xxii. 1, 2; Luke xxii. 29, 30, &c.

²⁰ Jan. 1826, No. IX., p. 216.

many Eves. This may not reach the elevation of ‘what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard;’ but it at all events attains the point at which the Christian theology sets out. His words continually are, ‘Theirs shall be the gardens of Eden.’²¹ and then he proceeds to enumerate, the rivers, the trees, the apples, and, above all, the ‘helpmates meet,’ of the Mosaic account. That he excludes women from his paradise is one of the stupid falsehoods that have been fastened on him by his enemies; for he reiterates the declaration that ‘whoso worketh good, whether male or female, shall enter paradise,’²² where the same glories are distinctly promised to both. And lest there should be any doubt whether the wives of the believers are to keep them company, he expressly describes the faithful as entering the garden of Eden ‘with their fathers, their wives, and their children;’²³ while, in another place, he says, ‘they and their wives shall recline in shady groves.’²⁴ But the Eden of Milton is not more chaste, and is infinitely less reserved, than that of the Arabian; and no contrast can be stronger than between his imagery and that of the Hebrew poetry, which he might have taken for his model. In his description of the women of paradise, there is nothing to excite a voluptuous idea. They are said to be virgins--like the virgin daughter of Bethuel: and, like the other believers, they are restored to the prime of youthful beauty, in which mankind may be supposed to have come from the hands of the Creator. But they have neither necks like towers of ivory, nor mouths that cause the lips of those that are asleep to speak, nor bosoms like clusters of the vine, nor breasts like two young roes that are twins feeding among lilies, nor the joints of their thighs like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. They neither invite their paradisaic partner to kiss them with the kisses of his mouth, nor to lie like a bundle of myrrh, etc., etc., * * * nor to turn and be till day-break like a young hart upon the mountains of spices, nor to get him to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense till the shadows flee away, nor to take a thousand current coins from ‘his vineyard,’ while the keeper of the fruit claims two hundred in return, nor tempt him to the fields, under promise of, etc., etc. * * * * These are the luxuries of other creeds, the figures which the nations of Europe think fitted to excite religious hopes and pious expectations. The spouses of the Arabian teacher sit with their dark eyes cast down modestly in the presence of their husbands, like pearls concealing themselves within their shells; and even the patriarchal polygamy seems forgotten, as something tolerable on earth, but not good enough for heaven. The beautiful pairs recline by the never-failing waters of Eden, surrounded by the harmless luxuries which constitute domestic comfort or splendor in the East; and if they sometimes fill their cup with a richer draught, it is described as innocent and harmless, with no power to disturb the intellect or disorder the mind. Their converse is unearthly and pure, and tinged with the delightful consciousness of souls escaped from earth and safe in heaven:

----“No vain discourse there heard, nor thought of sin;
But this one word, Peace--Peace.”²⁵ --*Koran*, lvi. 27, 28.

²¹ *Koran*, xiii. 25; xviii. 32; xxxviii. 52.

²² *Ibid.* xvi. 97; xl. 41; xlvi. 5; lvii. 12.

²³ *Ibid.* xiii. 25.

²⁴ *Ibid.* xxxvi. 55.

²⁵ Non audient ibi sermonem fulem, neque incitationem ad peccatum.
Sed tantum modo dictum: Pax, Pax.--*Translation of Maracci*.

68. "Such are literally the words of the much-abused Arabian; but still the Koran must be licentious, and all the figures of European theologians severe and blameless and divine. To judge from the outcry, it might be supposed that a whole book of the Koran had been devoted to the exhibition of voluptuous delight. And because woman, pure, innocent and downcast, is found seated in the second paradise by her husband's side, comes this sacerdotal hubbub, and monkish delicacy is up in arms in defence of the purity of heaven.--If a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures were published, in which every word capable of the change was altered from the reserved and decent one to that which was vulgar and immodest, and where a licentious commentary was attached to every passage where the subject could, by any perversion, be made the vehicle, attended with insupportable mistranslations and misconstructions for the sake of hanging an odious meaning upon the writer,--it would give some idea of the medium through which the Koran was introduced to Europe. It was thus that juggling monks played their low machinery, that what they called the altar and the throne might flourish, by setting one-half of mankind to hate and worry the other."

69. Though that most Christian and pious emperor, Theodosius, decreed the destruction of the beautiful temples of the ancients, the priests had not the same objections to their rites and ceremonies. The tawdry, dirty, disgusting churches of the Romish and Greek Christians in every part of Europe--their pictures, images, festivals, processions and ceremonies, taken from the very worst parts--the dregs of pagan idolatry--prove that the priests of the religion of purity could condescend to the basest of accommodation to delude or to increase the number of their proselytes, a practice actually recommended by the person admitted by a majority of Christians to be the very head of the religion itself.²⁶ *Pander to the base passions* of his followers, indeed! Where can any thing like this be found in the religion of the *impostor*? The prejudices of the Pagans or of the Christians are equally set at defiance. No holy water, no relic, no image, no picture, no saint, no mother of God, disgrace his religion. No such doctrines as the efficacy of faith without works, or that of a death-bed repentance, plenary indulgences, absolution, or auricular confession, operate first to corrupt, then to deliver up his followers into the power of a priesthood, which would of course be always more corrupt and more degraded than themselves. No, indeed! The adoration of one God, without mother, or mystery, or pretended miracle, and the acknowledgment that he, a mere man, was sent to preach the duty of offering adoration to the Creator alone, constituted the simple doctrinal part of the religion of the Unitarian of Arabia.

70. Like the gospel of Jesus, the Koran is the poor man's friend. The injustice of the great and rich is every where reprobated. It is no respecter of persons. And it is to the immortal honor of the writer of that book, be he Mahomed, the illustrious prophet of Arabia, or his third successor, the Caliph Othman, as the author believes, not a precept in it can be pointed out which contains the slightest leaning to political servility. And as the *Westminster Reviewer* has justly observed, if there by any thing that ever holds an Eastern despot in check, it is probably an unceremonious verse from the Koran in the mouth of a daring remonstrant.²⁷

71. Time and human infirmity in some respects have corrupted the religion of Mahomed, the *impostor*, as they are allowed to have done that of Jesus. But if the religion of the impostor has submitted to the casualties to which every thing in this world

²⁶ The Pope at that time, Gregory.

²⁷ West. Rev. No. IX., p. 222.

is liable, perhaps a little allowance will be made when it is considered, that in much the greatest part of the Christian world, as I have stated above, the religion of purity and truth, the foundation of Mahomedanism, is yet disgraced by the most degrading superstitions.

72. The prophet has been accused of the most cruel and blood-thirsty disposition; but yet it is remarkable that he extended the duties of charity to the brute creation; and the Koran repeatedly inculcates, not as a merit, but as a strict and indispensable duty, the relief of the indigent and unfortunate. Mahomed is perhaps the only legislator who has defined the precise measure of charity: the standard may vary with the degree and nature of property, as it consists either in money, in corn or cattle, in fruits or merchandise; but the Musselman does not accomplish the law, unless he bestows a tenth of his revenue; and if his conscience accuses him of fraud or extortion, the tenth, under the idea of restitution, is enlarged to a fifth.²⁸

73. In no religion, except in that of Mahomed, can anything like this be found. That the Christian priests should teach, *what is not in the gospels*, the necessity of giving to themselves a tenth, is not surprising. But they forgot the poor, *which is there*. Not so Mahomed; he remembered the poor, but forgot the priests.

74. It is true that the Koran indicates the merit and duty of fighting against infidels, and this is indeed what might well be expected; but Mahomed can no more be made responsible for what was written by Othman, than Jesus can for what was taught by Leo IV.²⁹ to the Christians to war against all infidels, enemies of the holy faith, well exemplified in the Crusades and the Knights of Malta. But the battle over, the sword was sheathed, and a trifling tribute was the price of protection and toleration, never denied by the followers of Mahomed.

75. The Mahomedans have been accused of placing a dependence upon their ablutions and purifications. But those are condemned who are superstitiously solicitous in exterior purifications, avoiding those persons who are not so nice as themselves, at the same time that they have their minds lying waste, and overrun with pride, ignorance and hypocrisy.³⁰ And though much praying is inculcated, yet the most punctual observance of the external rites and ceremonies is held to be of little avail, if performed without due attention, reverence, devotion and *hope*: so that the Mahomedans must not be considered to content themselves with the mere *opus operatum*, or imagine their whole religion to be placed therein.³¹

76. But Mr. Sale admits that it is the constant doctrine of the Koran that the felicity of each person will be proportioned to his deserts, and that there will be abodes of different degrees of happiness, great advantage being given in all cases to the poor.³²

77. How different this from the modern superstition of the efficacy of faith without works, so finely refuted by Mr. Locke, when he proves that faith is a matter of necessity, not of choice.

78. The Koran says, “Verily repentance will be accepted with God, from those who do evil ignorantly, and then repent speedily: unto them will God be turned: for God

²⁸ Gibbon.

²⁹ Sale’s Prel. Dis., note, p. 190.

³⁰ Poc. Spec. pp. 302, &c.; Sale’s Prel. Dis. sect. iv. p. 140.

³¹ Ibid. p. 144.

³² Prel. Dis. p. 129.

is knowing and wise. But no repentance will be accepted from those who do evil until the time when death presenteth itself unto one of them, and he saith, Verily, I repent now!”³³

79. This text alone is quite enough to account for the superior state of the morality of most Mahomedan nations over that of Christian nations: a mortifying fact, the truth of which every unprejudiced traveller is obliged to admit. How can any thing but vice and crime be expected where faith is preferred to works, and where the heretical doctrine prevails, that a death-bed repentance is to cure all sin?

80. But how can any thing better be expected by those who give the Bible to be expounded by unlearned mechanics, which it is impossible to understand without a considerable knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and respecting the proper translation of which no two doctors have ever agreed?

81. Mr. Gibbon seems to have fallen into a mistake in supposing that by good works, the prophet only meant such as were performed by the professors of Islamism. No doubt a preference in the heavenly mansions is given in the Koran, as may well be expected, to its believers; but inferior places are assigned to many others, according to *the good works* which they have performed. For great merit is ascribed to those who perform good works, contrary to the pernicious dogma of millions of Christians, who hold, as I have often heard it held from the pulpit, that *merit has nothing to do with salvation*.

82. The Koran says, “Certainly the faithful, (so Mahomed calls his sectaries), the Jews, the Christians, the Sabeans, and in general whoever believes in one only God, and in a day of judgment, *and practices virtue*, will be rewarded by God: he need not be afraid.”³⁴

83. I think if there had been one clear, undisputed passage in the gospels similar in doctrine to this, we should not have seen such associations disgracing all civilized nations as those of the Knights of Malta,--bands of noble and royal banditti--pirates, who ought to be hanged by the Turks whenever they are taken, for the vow they make never to be at peace with them on any terms. The holy allies once wished to re-establish this detestable order of hypocrites and fanatics, but fortunately the public opinion and the press of Britain prevented it.

84. Spanheim was a very celebrated man, and no man, I apprehend, will doubt his piety and learning, justly applauded by Mr. Sale, who says, though he owned Mahomed to be a wicked impostor, yet acknowledged him to have been richly furnished with natural endowments, beautiful in his person, of a subtle wit, agreeable behavior, showing liberality to the poor, courtesy to every one, fortitude against his enemies, and, above all, a high reverence for the name of God; severe against the perjured, adulterers, murderers, slanderers, prodigals, covetous, false witnesses, &c.; a great preacher of patience, charity, mercy, beneficence, gratitude: honoring of parents and superiors; and a frequent celebrator of the Divine praise.³⁵

85. The Christian priests, in their writings against Mahomed, constantly accuse him of making converts by intimidation; by threats of hell and eternal punishment to those who do not adopt his religion. This is true with respect to some parts of the Koran, and is directly in contradiction to other parts, where it is admitted that Christians, Jews and Sabeans, if *they performed good works*, need not be afraid. But admitting that it is

³³ Sale, ch. iv.

³⁴ Assem. Bibl. Orient. T. III. Pt. ii. pp. 611, 612; Beaus. Hist. Man., Liv. ix. ch. i.; Koran, ch. ii. p. 12; ch. v. p. 135.

³⁵ Hist. Eccles., sec. vii. lem. 5 et 7.; Sale, Pref., p. 6.

really the doctrine of the prophet, it seems rather extraordinary that it should be brought as a charge against him by those who receive the gospels and epistles, where the doctrine is laid down in the broadest language: *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*³⁶

86. With more truth the doctrines of fate and predestination may be brought as a charge against him; of contriving or adopting them to increase or encourage his followers. The doctrines alluded to in the last paragraph seem to be almost a necessary appendage to all religions: but these are not. However, whether right or wrong, designed or undesigned, the belief that every ball was labelled for its owner, that the utmost excess of care could not vary or delay a man's final doom, encouraged his followers to fight with astonishing bravery, and give them the victory in every encounter.

87. In the Koran there is an account of a journey which Mahomed took, along with the angel Gabriel, through the seven heavens to the throne of God. This is evidently nothing but a dream or vision, (similar to the journey of Jesus with the devil from the mountain to the pinnacle of the temple, which divines now defend on the ground that it is a vision and nothing more), and, like most dreams, it is a mass of nonsense. The Christian priests, who are as much afraid of ridicule, when applied to their own religion, as they are fond of applying it to the religions of others, make themselves merry with the horse called Borak, on which Mahomed rode in a few seconds from Mecca to Jerusalem, asking what sort of a horse Borak could be. The fact is, the word in the Oriental language means, and ought to be translated, *a flash of lightning*--a very dangerous horse to ride, indeed, except in a dream or vision. The angel Gabriel took him from the side of his wife Ayesha, when she was asleep, and he performed the wonderful journey before she awoke, so that she never knew that he had been absent. The doctors of the law all consider it a vision. A Mahomedan, who cannot be expected to have much respect for St. Paul, would perhaps observe, that his journey, described in 2 Cor. xii., is not very unlike that of the prophet of Arabia.

88. It seems unfortunate for the cause of humanity, that neither Jesus nor Mahomed should have thought it right to abolish slavery. It may be said, that when they directed their proselytes to do to others as they would be done unto, they virtually abolished it. This is plausible, but unfortunately it is not in practice true. The domestic slavery of the Mahomedans is no doubt indefensible, but what is this compared to the cruelty and horrors of the African slave-trade, and the plantations of the West Indies? We hear enough in all conscience of Popes of Rome and Archbishops of Canterbury, of councils and convocations, of bulls, articles, canons and concordats; but when did we ever hear of any public act of these men against this horrible traffic? Show me the bull, show me the canon or act of convocation. The Bishops of Rome and Canterbury themselves deserve the epithet of *panderers to the base passions of their followers*, which they give to Mahomed, for not having, when the atrocity of this traffic was clearly proved, excommunicated all those engaged in carrying it on, as was done by the Quakers.

89. I am aware that they may make a plausible defence, by alleging that they cannot excommunicate a man for the fact of being the owner of slaves, because the legality of slavery is admitted in almost every page of the gospels and epistles; as wherever the word *servus* or *doàloj* is found and translated servant, the word used ought to be *slave*--the word *servus* literally meaning a person bought or sold in a market; the freed-man answering to our hired servant. But if domestic slavery be unfortunately

³⁶ Mark xvi. 16.

allowed to Christians, it by no means follows that the African slave-trade is allowed, the horrors of which could never have been suspected by the ancients, and which in every respect differs from their domestic slavery.

90. Although the prophet did not, as he ought to have done, abolish that horrid custom, he did not leave it altogether unnoticed; but in declaring that all Mahomedans are brothers, and that no man should hold his brother in slavery, he at once liberated a vast mass of mankind. The moment a slave declares himself a believer he is free. Although Mahomed did not in this go so far as he ought to have done, yet he did something, and that was better than nothing; and while it has probably induced some to avow themselves proselytes without conviction, (on which account it will be reprobated and attributed to a bad motive by the pious Christian, whose zeal is warmed by a live coal from off the altar), yet it has saved from misery millions upon millions. Another modification of slavery, or alleviation of its evils, is to be found in the ordinance, that in the sale of slaves the mother shall on no account be separated from the children, a crime committed by our West Indians every day. I have not observed any ordinance of this kind in the gospels, therefore Mahomed did not copy it from them.

91. We make many professions of a wish to convert the poor Negroes; I advise our missionary societies to use their enormous wealth in giving the Negroes their freedom as soon as converted, declaring them brothers, after the example of the Mahomedans. I can assure them that this will make more proselytes than all their sermons.

92. The *Westminster Review* says, "His law of slavery is, 'If slaves come to you, you shall' --not imprison and then sell by public sale, though no claimant appears, as in the nineteenth century is the law of Christian England in her provinces, but--'redeem them, and it is forbidden to you to send them forth.'³⁷ And this was a man standing up in the wilds of Arabia in the seventh century."³⁸

93. Mahomed says, "Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument, allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one; and if ye know good in them, *give them of the riches of God which he hath given you.*"³⁹ I have not found this in the gospels.

94. The Spaniards, even the avaricious Spaniards, have acted upon a similar plan with regard to their slaves in Cuba, by allowing them gradually to redeem themselves.

95. It has been already observed that Mahomed never pretended to the power of working miracles, but totally denied from the beginning any supernatural endowment of this kind. His miracle-loving followers only allow him to have had revelations from heaven, and in the Koran the working of miracles is repeatedly disclaimed.

96. When the natural propensity of mankind to the marvelous is considered, it is no way surprising that Mahomedan devotees should have been desirous of discovering miracles in the actions of their prophet to raise him, as they imagined, in the estimation of mankind. Thus, out of this dream of the journey to heaven on the flash of lightning, they would make a real journey. But in general the pretended miracles have been of that nature which at the same time proves the sincerity of the devotees and their real occurrence. Thus, when he was hid in a cave for three days, a turtle dove laid her two eggs in a tree at its mouth. Again, a spider spun her web in the entrance, and from

³⁷ Koran, ii. p. 85.

³⁸ West. Rev. No. IX., p. 221.

³⁹ Collier, Lec. ix. p. 365; Koran, Vol. II. ch. xxiv. p. 186.

observing these circumstances, his pursuers were persuaded that he was not in the cave, and thus he escaped. I suspect the college of cardinals would have found out some more miraculous miracles in order to account for the escape of a Romish saint; but perhaps the miracle of a spider spinning a web, and of a dove laying eggs, may be more to the taste of the philosopher.

97. Dr. Lee, of Cambridge, in his work entitled, *Controversial Tracts relating to Christianity and Mahomedanism*, has given us an argument of the Mahomedans which is extremely curious, and furnishes grounds for much reflection. I have before seen it put into the form of a mathematical problem; I pretend not to solve it, but leave it to the mathematicians of the Doctor's Alma Mater; it is an argument which requires deep consideration.

98. Mahomedans say, "As evidence of Christian miracles is daily becoming weaker, a time must at last arrive when it will fail of affording assurance that they were miracles at all: whence would arise the necessity of another prophet and other miracles."⁴⁰ We do not show our wisdom in despising the people who could discover such an argument.

99. Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of Mahomed for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy! Who was it expelled the Moriscoes from Spain because they would not turn Christians? Who was it murdered the millions of Mexico and Peru, and gave them all away as slaves because they were not Christians? What a contrast have the Mahomedans exhibited in Greece! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs and churches; and at the present moment the war between the Greeks and Turks is no more waged on account of religion, than was the late war between the Negroes in Demerara and the English. The Greeks and the Negroes want to throw off the yoke of their conquerors, and they are both justified in so doing. Wherever the Caliphs conquered, if the inhabitants turned Mahomedans, they were instantly on a footing of perfect equality with their conquerors. An ingenious and learned Dissenter, speaking of the Saracens, says, "They persecuted nobody; Jews and Christians all lived happy among them."⁴¹

100. But though we are told that the Moriscoes were banished because they would not turn Christians, I suspect there was another cause; I suspect they, by their arguments, so gained upon the Christians, that the ignorant monks thought that the only way their arguments could be answered was by the Inquisition and the sword; and I have no doubt they were right as far as *their* wretched powers of answering them extended. In the countries conquered by the Caliphs, the peaceable inhabitants, whether Greeks, Persians, Sabeans, or Hindoos, were not put to the sword as the Christians have represented, but after the conquest was terminated, were left in the peaceable possession of their properties and religion, paying a tax for the enjoyment of this latter privilege, so trifling as to be an oppression to none. In all the history of the Caliphs, there cannot be shown any thing half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burned for his religious opinion; nor, do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply not embracing the religion of Islam. No doubt the later Mahomedan conquerors in their expeditions have been guilty of great cruelties; these, Christian authors have sedulously laid to the charge of their religion; but this is not just. Assuredly, religious

⁴⁰ *Contr. Tracts Christ. and Mahom.*, by Lee, p. 13.

⁴¹ Robinson's *Ecc. Res.*, p. 113.

bigotry increased the evils of war, but in this the Mahomedan conquerors were not worse than the Christians. But the sword once sheathed, there was an end of persecution. The Koran says, "If the Lord had pleased, all who are in the earth would have believed together; and wilt *thou* force men to be believers? No man can believe but by the permission of God; and *he* will pour out his indignation on those who will not understand."⁴²

101. Again, it is said, "Let there be no forcing in religion; the right way has been made clearly apparent from the wrong."⁴³

102. Again, "Fight in the way of God with them that fight with *you*; but be not the *aggressors*, for God loveth not the aggressors. And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them from whence they drove *you*. *But if they give over, (be mindful that) God is forgiving and merciful.*"

103. "But if they give over, then no hostility, except against the treacherous."⁴⁴ Is this being "cursed with a religion which inculcates intolerance?"⁴⁵ Read the account of Moses and the Canaanites; of Samuel, Agag, and the Gibeonites; and then compare the two.

104. I request the impartial reader, if such a person can be found, to meditate upon the religious wars of the Christian sects, which have scarcely ever ceased for the last eighteen hundred years, and compare them with the differences which have prevailed between the followers of Omar and Ali, the two great sects among the Musselmen. I call them differences, for they can hardly in any case be said to have proceeded to the extent of actual warfare; and in no case can an instance be produced of a victim at the stake. I do not deny that the evil passions of hatred and bigotry exist among Mahomedans; but Mahomed is no more to be charged with this, than Jesus is to be charged with the hatred of the Irish Brunswickers to the Papists.

105. It is a very great mistake to suppose that the Mahomedan religion was propagated by the sword alone. Mr. Sale has been generally considered to be well-informed on this subject, and he cannot be supposed to have had any unfair partiality to Mahomedanism--he was strictly a Trinitarian Christian--and what does he say? "I shall not here inquire the reasons why the law of Mahomed has met with so unexampled a reception in the world, (for they are greatly deceived who imagine it to have been propagated by the sword alone), or by what means it came to be embraced by nations which never felt the force of the Mahomedan arms; and even by those which stripped the Arabians of their conquests, and put an end to the sovereignty and very being of their Caliphs: *yet it seems as if there was something more than what is vulgarly imagined in a religion which has made so surprising a progress.*" He then goes on to say, he conceives an impartial version of the Koran to be necessary in order to expose the *imposture*.⁴⁶ The word *imposture* shows, that this evidence in favor of the religion of Mahomed is that of an unwilling witness.

106. Mr. Gibbon says, "But the millions of African and Asiatic converts who swelled the native band of the faithful Arabs, must have been allured, rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God. By the repetition of a sentence or the loss of a foreskin, the subject or the slave, the captive or the criminal,

⁴² Koran, ii. 257.

⁴³ Koran, x. 98.

⁴⁴ Koran, ii. 191, et seq.

⁴⁵ Rev. No. LXXXV. art. 5.

⁴⁶ Page 4.

arose in a moment the free and equal companion of the victorious Moslem. Every sin was expiated, every engagement was dissolved; the vow of celibacy was superseded by the indulgence of nature; the active spirits who slept in the cloister were awakened by the trumpet of the Saracens; and in the convulsion of the world, every member of a new society ascended to the natural level of his capacity and courage.⁴⁷

107. The first attack, or one of the first attacks, of the Turks on the Saracens, took place in the latter end of the eighth century. They came from the North betwixt the Caspian and Black Seas, and were not then of the Mahomedan religion. But they soon afterward came over to the religion of the conquered Saracens.⁴⁸

108. In this conversion of their conquerors, a most remarkable and pointed refutation is given to the often-repeated charge, that Islamism was indebted to the sword for its success. For here is a grand proof that Islamism not only converted those whom it conquered, but also those who conquered its adherents: it converted its conquerors.

109. The excessively bigoted character of the modern Mahomedans may, in a great measure, be attributed to the attacks made upon them by the Christian order of Knighthood, the Crusaders, &c., and by the intolerant spirit of the orthodox Christianity, which in its turn produces intolerance. For though the Mahomedans do not refuse a place in paradise to the orthodox Christians, the latter condemn all the former without compunction or exception.⁴⁹ And though this is the doctrine neither of Mark nor of Jesus, it is the doctrine taught to our soldiers and sailors, into whose hands our faulty translations are put, and who believe the plain English which they find there. And it is also the doctrine of nine-tenths of the Romish and Protestant missionaries.⁵⁰

110. I know well that Christians are apt to look down with sovereign contempt upon Mahomedans, and upon every thing relating to them and their religion; but let them inquire, and they will find that the Mahomedans were, soon after the establishment of their religion, the most liberal and enlightened race on the earth; that we are more indebted to them for useful learning than even to the ancients; that their religion abounds with precepts of benevolence and sound morality; and that it is no more just to charge it with the crimes of the ignorant bigots which now disgrace it, than it is to charge the Christian religion with the similar crimes of some of its priests and professors.

111. Europeans are very vain of their present superiority over the Mahomedans in science, arts and arms; and to hear them talk, a person might be induced to suspect, that in no former age had any nations ever risen to any eminence in these elegant and useful acquirements. But in this he would be much deceived. Except, perhaps, in some branches of experimental philosophy and manufactures, there was no branch of art or science which was not almost in as great perfection among the subjects of the Caliphs as they now are in Great Britain.

112. Mr. Richardson, whose authority no one upon this subject will question, says, "In the eighth, ninth and succeeding centuries, when the European world was clouded with barbarity and ignorance, when sovereign princes and great feudal lords could neither read nor write, the Arabians rivalled the Romans of the Augustan age in erudition and genius: whilst with a more extensive empire, they excelled them in magnificence, and the more refined splendor and elegance of life. The Caliphs Al Modhi,

⁴⁷ Vol. V. ch. li. p. 382.

⁴⁸ Vide Recaut's History of the Popes, p. 139.

⁴⁹ Mark, ch. xvi. 16.

⁵⁰ Vide Athanasian Creed.

Al Rashid, Al Mahmoun, and other monarchs of the illustrious house of Al Abbas, were men of learning, genius and politeness. Learning and genius were found, therefore, the surest avenues to royal favor; they were, of consequence, universally cultivated; princes, generals and viziers, being not only magnificent patrons of literary merit, but holding themselves a conspicuous rank among writers of the most distinguished class." Upon this Mr. Maurice observes, "that zeal for the encouragement of learning, which animated the Arabian princes, continued to glow with almost equal fervor in the breasts of the Tartar monarchs, their conquerors and successors."--*Maurice, Hist. Hind., Vol. I, p. 10.*

113. Many Christians will be surprised to learn that the Koran has been cursed or blessed with probably full as many commentators as the gospels, which is proved by thousands and tens of thousands of them yet existing; they are supposed to exceed forty thousand.

114. Sir W. Jones, in his second dissertation on the literature of Asia, observes, "that the Mahomedans are expressly commanded by their lawgiver to search for learning even in the remotest parts of the globe." I think Mahomed did not copy this from the gospels, nor from the Romish canons, which prohibit the study of heathen literature.

115. So far are the followers of Mahomed from believing that he prohibited learning, or from wishing to prohibit it themselves, that one of the sayings which they preserve of him by tradition is, that "the ink of the learned is as good as the blood of the martyrs;" and it is presented to this day to the Moslem school-boy for a copy, in the place of the "Industry is praised" of our domestic calligraphists."--*West. R., IX., 222.*

116. The Christians have made a great outcry against all the followers of Mahomed on account of the destruction of the library at Alexandria, the act of *one* savage barbarian, a disgrace to his religion and the literary character of his Arabian countrymen, *if, indeed, he did burn it;* but they carefully keep out of sight the circumstance that part of the celebrated library of the Ptolemies was burned in one of the battles of Cæsar, and that another part, if not all the remainder, was burned by a decree of the Christian Theodosius, when he burned and destroyed throughout his dominions the temples of the heathens for the glory of God.

117. No doubt these pious acts of legitimacy of both the Christians and Mahomedans had considerable effect in producing the darkness of the succeeding ages, but there were two or three other causes much more effectual. The acts of the barbarian Omar only extended to one city and one moment of time; but the repeated decrees of the Roman Christian emperors for the destruction of books of both heretics and philosophers, and the canons of the Councils and Popes of Rome, and the denunciations of the fathers of the church against the wickedness of reading the books of the Heathen, were, I have no doubt, much more effectual. They extended to the whole world. Add to this the universal practice of the monks and nuns, for a thousand years together, of collecting manuscripts into their monasteries, for the purpose of erasing from them the works of the wicked Heathen, to write their contemptible breviaries and legends upon them, and there will be no necessity to seek for any other cause for the scarcity of manuscripts. For several centuries the art of manufacturing vellum or skin for parchment appears, in many countries, to have been lost, and consequently the price of it became very high. The Christians boast much of the preservation of manuscripts in their monasteries. But they never tell us for what purpose they were preserved. How absurd to believe that the ignorant, bigoted monks would wish to preserve the literature of the Heathens directly in opposition to the canons of their church, by which they were forbidden to read them! On

the revival of letters, no doubt many learned priests exerted themselves to preserve the literature of the ancients which was deposited in the convents, and so far the preservation appears to have been a piece of good fortune. But this was done by enlightened individuals in defiance of the decrees of emperors and the canons of councils; decrees and canons the existence of which cannot for a moment be doubted; but the burning of the library by Omar, Mr. Gibbon has shown by very strong arguments is extremely doubtful. I must fairly say, for my own part, founding my opinion on the arguments used by Mr. Gibbon,⁵¹ I do not believe it. It is nothing but a Christian calumny, to blacken the religion of the impostor.

118. At the time when Christian Europe was involved in ignorance and darkness, as I have just now stated, the Mahomedan empire of the Caliphs flourished in a high state of refinement and civilization. Arts, sciences and literature were carried to a very great degree of perfection: and thus it continued for many centuries, till it was overturned by the then ignorant and barbarous hordes of Turks (who had nothing in common with the polished and enlightened Arabs), barbarians who have equally destroyed the ancient monuments of the Greeks and of the Caliphs, and have almost reduced the finest parts of the world to a desert. Thus it must not be supposed that darkness and ignorance are necessary appendages of Mahomedanism; of Turkish barbarism they are; but the history of the Caliphs proves that they are not so of Mahomedanism. But bad as the Turks are, the remains of the Greek nation prove, that they are more humane than the Christian barbarians who extirpated the Moriscoes of Spain.

119. It is a well-known fact, that the enlightened emperor Akber, great grandfather of Aurengzebe, dispatched an embassy, in the year 1595, to the king of Portugal, to request that missionaries might be sent to instruct him in the Christian religion, in order that, after he had carefully inquired, he might choose the religion which appeared to him to be the true one. Three Jesuits of high character were sent. When they arrived at Agra they were very kindly received, and had a church built for them, at the charge of the Mogul, with many privileges and immunities, all of which were continued to them by the successor of Akber, Jehan Guire, in 1604. The Jesuits published two works for the use of the Emperor and the Musselmen, which were answered by a Persian nobleman named Ahmed Ebn Zin Alabedin. It is very evident that the followers of the prophet obtained as decided a victory by their pens, as they had previously done by their arms. Prideaux cannot conceal his chagrin.

120. He says that the work of the Jesuits *unluckily* (and why *unluckily*?) fell into the hands of this learned Persian, who, to use his words, "*made terrible work with the Jesuits.*" The priests not liking "*this terrible work,*" by orders of the Pope and the college de propaganda fide at Rome, a learned friar undertook to answer it. But this still not being satisfactory, another learned man was chosen, whose work was translated into Arabic and sent into Asia, but this, Prideaux says, did "*by no means answer the design.*" How unfortunate that they did not send to Norwich! I wonder whether the learned Dean would have succeeded better than the Pope, the College, and the Jesuits.⁵²

121. This whole story is very remarkable. Where among Christians shall we meet with an example of liberality equal to this of the Mogul? In this instance, as well as many others, the Mahomedans have shown that they were not afraid of subjecting their religion to fair examination; and it does not appear that they first *tied up the hands of their*

⁵¹ Vide Gibbon, Vol. V. ch. li. p. 343.

⁵² Dow's preface to his translation of Ferishta, Vol. I. p. 26; Maurice, Ind. Ant. Vol. IV. p. 410; Prideaux, Life of Mah., p. 238.

opponents by declaring, that they must not deny its truth, for to deny its truth was to revile it, thereby preventing every thing like fair and free discussion.

122. The exertions of the missionaries of the Christians, though evidently allowed the greatest latitude, do not appear to have had any great success. I have some doubt as to what would happen even in this *enlightened* age, as it calls itself, if the Grand Seignior was to send (as our missionaries did a Mr. Drummond to Geneva, to teach their peculiar doctrines) one of the richest of his muftis to build a mosque, and to preach the doctrines of the Koran in the centre of London. I suspect a well-grounded fear that this would cause a renewal, under the auspices of the priests, of the fires of the year eighty, or of those of more recent date at Birmingham, would cause our ministers to answer him by the mouth of one of our admirals, who might entertain an opinion that it was possible to bombard Constantinople.

123. The Christians would do well to recollect, that the doctrines of Mahomed created a degree of enthusiasm in his followers which is to be sought in vain in the immediate followers of Jesus, and that his religion spread with a rapidity unexampled in that of the Christians. In less than half a century it became triumphant in many great and flourishing empires. When Jesus was led to the cross, his followers fled, their enthusiasm forsook them, they left him to perish; and if they were forbidden to defend him, they might have remained to comfort him, patiently setting at defiance his and their persecutors. The followers of Mahomed, on the contrary, rallied round their persecuted prophet, and, risking their lives in his defence, made him triumph over all his enemies.

124. It is worthy of observation that the religion of Mahomed did not take its rise in an age of religious darkness, but, on the contrary, after the Christian religion had existed a light to enlighten the Gentiles for six hundred years. To this it is replied, that the Christian religion had become much corrupted, so that it could be no longer said to enlighten the world. It seems odd that it should have failed in the object for which it was sent. However, this is the very argument used by the prophet, and one which, no doubt, had great weight with his followers. He said that another prophet or messenger of God had become absolutely necessary to reform the vices of the followers of Jesus, and the corruptions of his religion: and that this argument was specious and plausible cannot surely be denied.

125. The seventh century swarmed with Christian authors: it seems very remarkable that not one of them was bold enough to take up the pen to refute, during his life-time, or the lives of the first Caliphs, the doctrines of the prophet of Arabia. And I believe we have not a single work of the seventh century in refutation of the Mahomedan doctrines.

126. The learned and Rev. Professor of Oxford says, “No representation can convey stronger ideas of the melancholy state of religion in the seventh century, than the description of the character of a good Christian as drawn at that period by St. Eligius, or Eloi, Bishop of Noyon.”

127. “*Bonus Christianus est qui ad ecclesiam frequenter venit, et oblationem, quæ in altari Deo offeratur, exhibet; qui de fructibus suis non gustat, nisi prius Deo aliquid offerat: qui quoties sanctæ solemnitates adveniunt, ante dies plures castitatem etiam cum propria uxore custodit, ut segura conscientia Domini altare accedere possit; qui postremo symbolum, vel orationem dominicam memoriter tenet. Redimite animas vestras de pœna dum habetis in potestate remedia; oblationes et decimas ecclesiis afferte; luminaria sanctis locis, pista quod habetis, exhibite: ad ecclesiam, quoque, frequentius*

convenite: sanctorum patrocina humiliter expetite: quod si observaveritis, securi in die judicii ante tribunal æterni judicis venientes, dicetis, DA, DOMINE, QUIA DEDIMUS.”⁵³

128. A most correct and delightful description of a good priest-made Christian, no doubt, as well in the nineteenth as in the seventh century! For the religions of priests are substantially the same in the nineteenth as in the seventh. The only difference is this, that in the latter a larger dose of priestly medicine was usually administered for the cure of the Christian’s diseased soul than is in the former. It is the same in the Romish and Protestant Churches at this time: from the peculiar education of the follower of the Pope, his stomach is stronger than that of the Protestant, and he takes and probably requires rather a stronger dose. The skill of the priestly doctor consists in correctly estimating the strength of his patient; he compounds his medicine as well as he can to suit each respective case; the former takes rather a stronger dose than the latter, and that is all the difference. One takes a dose called transubstantiation, the other a dose called the Athanasian Creed, and both of them take the following which the bishop utters in the ordination of a priest: “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. *Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*”

129. But, to the credit of the Romish Church, it is right to state that to this they annex a condition. It is no excuse for Protestants to say that in another part of their rites they repeat this with a condition. It is here given absolutely.

130. It is scarcely possible to conceive any crimes or misconduct of Mahomed too great to deprive him of the right of pardon, when a person considers the anxiety displayed by him to abolish priests and monks. The declaration that he would have no monks in his religion is above all praise; and the absence of a hired priesthood placed his religion in practical effect for many generations far above all others. The high state of civilization and polite literature to which the magnificent empires of the Caliphs arose, may probably be attributed to this circumstance. Some reason there must be for this state of things, so different from the state of the kingdoms under the priest-ridden and monk-ridden Christians in the middle ages. There is none more probable than this, for most assuredly the ignorance and darkness of Europe were caused by the priests, as is abundantly proved by the numerous decrees of popes and councils against learning, finishing with the last unavailing effort of the celebrated Council of Trent. In reply to this, solitary examples will be produced of learned monks and priests, but these availed nothing for many centuries against the general policy of *the church*. As little avail a few solitary instances producible to prove anything against the general British and Irish bishops and priests to prove that a hired priesthood has not, in all ages, from the extremest boundary of China to John-a-Grot’s house in Scotland, been the greatest evil to mankind, of all the evils which have ever afflicted them.

131. Religions have been accused by some philosophers of having the effect of working the degradation of mankind; and, indeed, when the state to which the devotees or ultra pious persons of many countries--the Hindoos, Spaniards, Portuguese, &c., &c.--are reduced, is considered, the charge at first seems to be but too well founded. This effect, however, has not been produced by *religion*, but by its *corruption*; and the heaviest part of the charge which I bring against priests is, that, instead of endeavoring to prevent corruptions, or to correct them from time to time as they arise, they have almost always exerted their influence to increase them, till they at last become intolerable.

⁵³ Mosh. Vol. II.; White’s Notes, p. vii.

132. A most estimable Unitarian priest, a friend of the author's, has said, that soldiers have been a greater evil than priests. I say, no. Soldiers are the effects of the turbulent passions of mankind, priests are the causes of them. I desire my reader to look in Portugal, to look in Spain, and finally, to look at home in Ireland, and tremble.⁵⁴

133. These declarations will probably raise against the writer the cry of Atheism. He fears it not, nor its authors. The *true* religion of the incomparable Jesus, (the Nazarene, Ihsòaj Nazwraòj, not Nazarnòj,) of the city of Nazareth, was, in a most peculiar manner, the poor man's religion. It was the religion of the heart; it required neither creeds, altars, nor sacrifices; and if there was one thing more odious to its Founder than another, it was the cant and hypocrisy of Scribes, Pharisees and *Priests*. Priests and chief priests actually stank beneath his nostrils, and Mahomed, in abolishing them, proved himself a better Gospel Christian than we have ever seen since.

134. The *Westminster Reviewer* justly observes, "The man who could take ablutions and fasting, and leave alone great and small tithes, must have had no inconsiderable degree of singleness of eye and honesty of purpose."

135. His description of pure religion is the religion of Jesus himself. He says:

136. "Religion is not turning your faces to the East or to the West; but the religious are they who believe in God and the last day, and give their wealth out of love to their kindred, and to orphans, and to the poor, and to the wayfaring man, and to those who ask charity, and for the redeeming of captives; and who perform their prayers, and give alms, and who keep their engagements when they have made them; and the patient under misfortunes and afflictions, and in the time of adversity. These are they who are in possession of the truth; and these, they are the pious."⁵⁵

137. "If you make your alms to appear, it is well; *but if ye conceal them*, and give them to the poor, this will be better for you."⁵⁶

138. Mr. Sale has pointed out a circumstance which took place in the twelfth year of Mahomed's mission, which seems in a high degree honorable to him, and serves in some measure as an exposition of his principles. He says, "In this year, called by the Mahomedans the accepted year, twelve men of Yatreb, or Medina, of whom ten were of the tribe of Khazri, and the other that of Aws, came to Mecca, and took an oath of fidelity to Mahomed at Al Acaba, a hill on the north of that city. This oath was called the woman's oath; not that any women were present at this time, but because a man was not thereby obliged to take up arms in defence of Mahomed or his religion; it being the same oath that was afterward exacted of women, the form of which we have in the Koran, and is to this effect, viz.: That they should renounce all idolatry; and they should not steal, nor commit fornication, nor kill their children, (as the Pagan Arabs used to do when they apprehended they should not be able to maintain them), nor forge calumnies; and that they should obey the prophet in all things that were reasonable."⁵⁷

139. This oath cannot fail to remind the reader of that taken by the early Christians, described by Pliny in his letter to the Emperor Trajan; which has always been considered so honorable to them.

140. I conceive that the opinion which the great Napoleon entertained of Mahomed must be interesting; and I cannot resist the pleasure of recording it, as it not

⁵⁴ Written in 1828.

⁵⁵ Koran, ii. 178.

⁵⁶ Ibid. ii. 272.

⁵⁷ Preface, p. lxii.

only in some measure agrees with what I thought, but with what I had written, before I saw it. I know not the authority for the date of the Koran which Napoleon seems to speak of as an acknowledged, well-known fact. “The Emperor adverting to the truth of history, expressed his disbelief of all that was attributed to Mahomed. ‘He must, doubtless, have been like all chiefs of sects,’ said he. ‘The Koran, having been written thirty years after his death, may have recorded many falsehoods. The empire of the Prophet, his doctrine and his mission, being established and fulfilled, people might and must have spoken accordingly. Still it remains to be explained how the mighty event, which we are certain did take place, namely, the conquest of the world, could have been effected in the short space of fifty or sixty years. By whom was it brought about? By the hordes of the desert, who, as we are informed, were few in number, ignorant, unwarlike, undisciplined, and destitute of system. And yet they opposed the civilized world, abounding in resources. Fanaticism could not have accomplished this miracle, for fanaticism must have time to establish her dominion, and the career of Mahomed lasted only thirteen years.’”⁵⁸

141. But fanaticism did accomplish it, and to nothing but fanaticism can it be attributed; at least, without fanaticism it could not have taken place.

142. Christians completely blinded, by their prejudices, to the truth respecting their religion, and the state in which it was, and the circumstances in which the world was placed in the beginnings of the seventh century, are surprised at the rapid progress both of Mahomedanism and the empire which accompanied it. The confusion and extraordinary state of uncertainty into which Christianity at that time had fallen are almost incredible, particularly in the East, where the rising despotism of the Roman Pontiff had not yet taken effect in crushing down into one mass the almost innumerable sects, with their almost innumerable sacred and inspired writings, as they considered them,--gospels, revelations, acts, epistles, &c. No two sects agreed in any thing except in mutual hatred, and in persecuting their opponents when they had the power.

143. When this extraordinary, disorganized state of Christianity is considered, it does not seem wonderful that a religion should succeed which promised to put an end to the confusion which prevailed, and by its extreme simplicity seemed upon the plain, sound principles of reason and common sense likely to unite all parties within its pale. Speaking of the state of Christianity at this time, the learned lecturer of Oxford says, “Divided into numberless parties, on account of distinctions the most trifling and absurd, contending with each other from perverseness, and persecuting each other with rancor, corrupt in opinion, and degenerate in practice, the Christians of this unhappy period seem to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian church scarce any vestige remained. The most profligate principles and absurd opinions were universally predominant; ignorance amidst the most favorable opportunities of knowledge; vice amidst the noblest encouragements to virtue; a pretended zeal for truth, mixed with the wildest extravagancies of error; an implacable spirit of discord about opinions which none could settle; and a general and striking similarity in the commission of crimes, which it was the duty and interest of all to avoid.”⁵⁹

144. Again he says, “The images of the saints who had labored to disseminate, and the bones of the martyrs who had died to confirm, the faith, were now, by the arts of

⁵⁸ Las Casas' Journal, Vol. II. Part iii. p. 81.

⁵⁹ Sermon II.

a designing priesthood, and the ignorance of a superstitious multitude, held up as proper objects of religious adoration.”⁶⁰

145. Again he says, “The blind fury of superstitious zeal extinguished the tenderest sentiments of nature; the majesty of the laws was trampled on and violated with impunity: the cities of the East were deluged with blood.”⁶¹

146. The account given by Dr. White is very just, but can any thing be more shocking? It is not surprising that any religion should succeed which promised to put an end to such a state of misery.

147. Dr. White, in the following passage, gives us some of the reasons urged by Mahomed or his followers. They are very striking; and, coming from the learned and reverend Professor, I hope will not be disputed.

148. Dr. White says, “Mahomed alleged, with much plausibility, that God had originally given one grand and universal religion to all the sons of men; that when the cares and avocations of life had obliterated, or the frailty or perverseness of human nature had corrupted this faith, it had pleased the Almighty in his mercy to send forth successive prophets, to instruct and to reform mankind, ever prone to wander from the plain and simple paths of truth. Such was Moses, whose mission was, by the particular designation of Providence, confined within the narrow limits of one people. Such, too, was Jesus; whose more liberal and comprehensive system, proceeding from a fuller and more perfect exertion of Divine goodness, was destined to confer its benefits, without distinction, on all the widely-extended race of mankind: since time, however, had unhappily corrupted the doctrines of Christianity itself, and left men once more to wander in darkness and in error, it had at length pleased the Almighty to elect him, as the instrument of his gracious designs; to commission him to rescue religion from the corruptions which obscured its native splendor by making him the last great restorer of truth and virtue to the world.”--(*White's 4th Ser.*, p. 179.)

149. And surely some one to reform the religion and rescue it from its corruptions was manifestly very much wanting, and the fact admitted by Mahomed of the truth of both Judaism and Christianity, was very likely to draw vast numbers of believers in both into his pale. Though he admitted the truth of Christianity, he maintained that it had become excessively corrupt. In his vision he is made to represent, that Adam, Noah, Moses, &c., begged him to intercede with God for them; but that when he arrived in the last heaven, and met with Jesus Christ, his style changed, and he begged Jesus Christ to intercede for him--thus giving to Jesus the precedence; so that it is evident from this and many other passages in the Koran, that every Unitarian Christian, as well as some of those of other sects, might very consistently become Mahomedans. He reminded the Christians that Jesus had promised to send them a comforter, and it really required no unusual or extraordinary degree of enthusiasm in him to believe himself this person, or to convince others that he was so.

150. The Koran constantly bears testimony to the divine mission of Jesus, calling him the Messiah; Jesus, the son of Mary; the sent of God; and his word which he conveyed unto Mary; and a breath (emanation) from him:⁶² and insists on the miraculous circumstances of his birth, in the same identical terms as the Christian Evangelists.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Koran, iv. 169.

⁶³ Ibid. xix. 20.

151. In the following extract I perfectly accord with Mons. Constant's description of the early ages of Mahomedanism: "Nous dirons plus: dans le cours de nos recherches, un fait nous a frappé, un fait qui s'est répété plus d'une fois dans l'histoire. Les religions constituées, travaillées, exploitées par les hommes, ont fait souvent du mal. Toutes les crises religieuses ont fait du bien. Voyez l'Arabe; brigand sans pitié, assassin sans remords, époux impitoyable, père dénaturé, l'Arabe n'était qu'un animal féroce. On peut consulter sur ses anciens mœurs les observations critiques de Sale, à la tête de sa traduction du Coran. Les Arabes, avant Mahomed, considéraient les femmes comme un propriété. Ils les traitaient en esclaves. Ils enterraient leurs filles vivantes. Le prophète paraît, et deux siècles d'héroïsme, de générosité, de dévouement, deux siècles, égaux sous plus d'un rapport aux plus belles époques de la Grèce et de Rome, laissent dans les annales du monde une trace brillante. Nous avons à dessein cité l'Islamisme, de toutes les religions modernes, la plus stationnaire, et par la même, aujourd'hui la plus défectueuse et la plus nuisible."

152. When the Christian priests maintain that the doctrine of Mahomed was indebted solely to the sword for its success, they evidently put the cause for the effect. The sword is of no value without a hand to use it; and it was the enthusiasm of the persons who used it which gave them the victory; and this enthusiasm was produced by a lively faith in the truth of Mahomed's doctrine. Paradise, instant and future happiness, and that for ever, was believed to be the lot of the true believer who fell in the cause of the one only God, and in defence of his prophet. How absurd, and unprofitable, too, it was, then, not to brave all dangers, secure the glorious reward, and enhance the merit by the utility of their exertions in the cause; particularly when it was known that the final, inevitable lot of every man was fixed, predestinated before the creation of the world, which nothing could prevent or delay! In the bed or in the field, a man *must* die in the manner predestined. No care, no danger, could change the inevitable decree. The contagious or epidemical nature of enthusiasm is well known, and in Mahomed's case it seems to have been exhibited in a very wonderful manner. As we have seen, the city of Medina was won before the Prophet's sword was drawn; therefore to the sword the conquest cannot be attributed. His first expedition consisted of only thirty-eight men, a very small force with which to begin the conquest of the world; his second, of three hundred; and thus every battle, whether won or lost, seems to have increased the number of his soldiers. It will be said that it is no uncommon thing for victory to increase the number of a general's soldiers. This is very true; but he took no recruits into his ranks who did not at least *profess* to believe in his religion--*That God was God, and Mahomed his prophet*,--a plain, simple dogma, certainly not difficult to comprehend or to remember. But the enthusiasm of his followers seems to have increased with the increase of their numbers, and the great and numerous armies of his successors had this quality, so desirable for a conqueror, in as really high perfection as the smaller armies of the prophet himself. The case was evidently this; every victory gave to the preachers of the holy religion (and every soldier was a preacher) a new opportunity for the exertion of his talents, and a most favorable field to exercise them upon.

153. In addition to happiness in the life to come, liberty was the instant reward of the Jewish or Christian prisoner. To the man whose freedom, by the laws of war, had become forfeited; who, without entirely giving up his early Jewish or Christian prejudices, could persuade himself to believe that Mahomed was specially ordained *to complete, not to overthrow*, his religion, the miraculous success of the Prophet and of the

Crescent was a seducing argument. This was no miracle hid under a bushel, but a great and burning light, well calculated to dazzle the eyes and understandings of the thinking, as of the unthinking, part of mankind. To the young and thoughtless was added whatever has been tempting to a soldier's eye--glory, plunder, women, and, above all, success. To the settled, peaceable fathers of families in the countries subdued, ease and security, and the chance of a better government; for it is evident that in the time of Mahomed very few of the conquered countries could have had a *worse*. These were among the causes which increased the numbers, but there must have been something else which created the enthusiasm.

154. A person having a slight inclination towards the religion of the Prophet might easily persuade himself that in his doctrine there was nothing repugnant to the religion of Moses or of Jesus, nothing directly at variance with either. Moses had promised, in the Pentateuch, that a Prophet greater than himself would be sent by God. So to the ten tribes of Samaria, who were at this time very numerous, and who rejected all the other books of the Old Testament, and who, perhaps, looked for a conquering prophet, not a spiritual Messiah, there would appear to be no reason why Mahomed, the descendant of Ishmael, should not be the man. If they asked for a miracle, the victory of the Crescent is the answer; and the sword of the conquering and invincible prophet the rod of Aaron, which was giving to him the conquest of the world. With the sect of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin he does not appear to have been so successful as with the rest of the tribes of Israel; for he seems to have entirely swallowed up the latter. If they be not absorbed among his followers, what has become of them? Christians and Jews say that the Samaritans were nothing but descendants of Cuthite idolaters.⁶⁴ Cuthites or Israelites, they were just as bigoted to the law of Moses as the other two tribes, and must have been very numerous, or they could not have sent out armies from time to time to fight, sometimes with strangers, and sometimes with their brethren of Judah.

155. After the destruction of Jerusalem, we know that the Romans sold a very great number of unfortunate Jews into captivity; and we may be well assured that the followers of Mahomed would leave no argument unused to bring into the pale of the Prophet the descendants of these miserable, unoffending captives, as well as such other of their countrymen as a state of wretchedness laid peculiarly open to their attacks; not the attacks of persecution, not the attacks of fire and sword, but attacks of a much more dangerous nature--the temptation of ease, comfort and happiness, operating upon the exhausted patience and the disappointed hopes of misery and woe. The experience of all ages has taught, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church; and that the sword and faggot never succeeded in making proselytes. We occasionally see a Jew really converted to Christianity; but it is seldom when he cries Old Clothes, but when he has become possessed of half a million.

156. With the Christians, Mahomed, the messenger of the one only true God, must have had less difficulty than with the Jews. His system is built essentially upon the Christian foundation. No Jew can become a Mahomedan without first admitting that Jesus was a prophet divinely inspired by God. How much more than this is it that the Unitarian Christian believes? It does not appear that Mahomed believed any more, or that

⁶⁴ If it be allowed that the natives of Samaria were descended from Cuthite idolaters, the history informs us that they were taught the law of Moses by a priest sent by the King of Babylon for that purpose, and they had become exceedingly numerous in the time of the Romans. They had possessed a most magnificent temple on Mount Gerizim to the time of King Hircanus, who destroyed it. They supposed themselves to consist of the descendants of the ten tribes, and therefore my argument will apply to them just the same, whether they were really the descendants of the tribes or not.

he required any more to be believed by his disciples, though they might believe almost as much more as they chose. But there is another very striking argument, an argument of the first importance, which aided him very much with the Christians, which has been recorded both by friends and foes, but to which the latter have not paid so much attention as it deserves. It was the universal tradition, as well as the words of the record, the gospel histories, that Jesus, before his ascension, promised his disciples that he would send a person to them, in some capacity or other; the Greek of our Gospels says, as a Paraklhtoj, translated Comforter.

157. The Mahomedans maintained, and yet maintain, that Mahomed was this person foretold by Jesus Christ, the same as Cyrus was by Isaiah--both by name;--that he was called by Jesus, not by a word which ought to be rendered in the Greek language, as in our gospel histories, paraklhtoj but periklutoj, which means not comforter, but famous or illustrious, and which, in Arabic, is the meaning of the word Mahomed; that the gospel of the Christians⁶⁵ had originally the latter of those words, but that it was corrupted to disguise the truth. They also allege that the Christians cannot deny that there are corruptions, or various readings, in their present copies, and they say that all the autographs were destroyed to conceal this passage. The fact of the loss of the autographs cannot be denied, and is a fact very difficult satisfactorily to account for; and as for ancient copies, there does not exist one before the sixty century.⁶⁶

158. In reply to this it will be said, that it may be proved, by passages in Tertullian and other ancient fathers, that the true reading of the gospel histories was anciently, long before the time of Mahomed, as it is now, and, therefore, that they have not been corrupted. But it will be necessary to show that the works of these ancient fathers have not been corrupted, which they may have been. Those who would destroy the ancient manuscripts of the gospel histories, would not scruple at rewriting a skin of parchment on which an ancient father's work was written: and it is admitted by the first divines of the Christians that they have been corrupted to serve other purposes:⁶⁷ and those who would do it in one case would do it in another. That the word being confessed to be Hebrew, if it be wrong written, it is much more likely that the early Christian writers, the *greatest liars upon earth*, should lie to serve their own purpose, than that St. John, a Hebrew, understanding both Hebrew and Greek, (even without allowing to him the gift of tongues) should have made a mistake, and rendered the word, by wrong Greek letters, klhtoj instead of klutoj--and that, therefore, it follows that the text of John has been corrupted.

159. They further add, that it is a well-known fact that a person was expected by great numbers of Christians, in accordance with the prophecy, from a very early period, which shows that the construction put on the passage in the Acts, by the Roman Church and by Protestants, was not general. Of this, Montanus, in the second century, earlier than Tertullian, furnishes an example. He was considered by his followers to be the promised person, which afforded to his opponents an opportunity for propagating the unfounded and malicious report that he pretended to be the Holy Ghost. That it was to meet these persons, particularly Montanus, that the gospel histories were falsified, long before the time of the real true paraclete, or periclyte, as Mahomed, by his success, is proved to have been. That after the time of Montanus, but long before the time of Mahomed,

⁶⁵ John xiv. 16, 26, and xv. 26, and xvi. 7.

⁶⁶ Vide Marsh's Michaelis.

⁶⁷ Vide Marsh's Michaelis, chap. ix.

Manes was also held by his followers, who constituted, as Mons. Beausobre has proved, a great, learned and powerful sect, to be the promised person. These persons seem, of all others, to have been the most likely to have understood the language in which Jesus spoke, and they could not discover the person in the twelve tongues of fire. But the result proved that Manes was not the person, and that his followers were mistaken.

160. They also add, that it is perfectly clear that the Christians might have preserved the precious autographs, if they had thought proper, as easily as they have preserved the relics of great numbers of saints--the remains of St. John the Baptist, the Virgin, the bodies of St. Peter, Paul, &c., all which are to be seen every day in Italy.

161. The Mahomedans, who must be heard in this case, will not fail to press upon the Christians that all the manuscripts were destroyed or falsified to conceal this mistranslation; that if they were not, why were they destroyed? and the Christians will be put to no little difficulty to find a satisfactory answer; for the fact of the destruction of the manuscripts cannot be denied, as they do not exist. But they will go further, and allege that, taking the Christians on their own ground, that a comforter was promised, it is a mere abuse of language to say that the appearance of twelve tongues of fire can be this person; that, in fact, Mahomed answers to this person, and that there has never been any one but *he* who does. That the *Acts of the Apostles*, the book of the Christians, itself by no means says or implies that the filling of the apostles with the holy spirit was the sending of the comforter promised; and that the language will warrant no such conclusion.

162. That at the feast of Pentecost this comforter or paracletos is said to have come to the apostles; but that certainly a cloven fiery tongue settling upon each apostle, communicating to them at that moment the power of speaking all languages, would appear to a person whose mind was not prejudiced by education, to be a strange way for a person to come; and with respect to the mere endowment with the Holy Ghost, this could not be necessary, because it appears, from the twenty-second verse of the twentieth chapter of John, that Jesus himself had already endowed them with this gift a little before his ascension, not two months before the day of Pentecost, the time of which we are speaking.

163. That the book of the *Acts* nowhere says that these fiery tongues, giving them the power of speaking all languages, were the promised comforter, which it would have done if so they had been.

164. If, in answer to this, it be said that the gifts related in Matthew, and the endowment with the Holy Ghost, recorded in the twenty-second verse of the twentieth chapter of John, were only temporary and were withdrawn, the Mahomedan will reply, that this is a mere subterfuge, not warranted by the text or context. These passages, from the sacred book of the Christians, the Mahomedans have a right in argument to quote against them, though they do not admit their authority.

165. The argument of the Mahomedans respecting the translation of the word into *paraklutoj*, instead of *paraklhtoj*, receives a strong support from the mode adopted by St. Jerome in the Latin Vulgate in rendering it by the Latin word *Paraclitus*, instead of *Paracletus*. This shows that the copy from which St. Jerome translated must have had the word *paraklutoj*, and not *paraklhtoj*. This also strongly supports the Mahomedan assertion relating to the destruction of the old manuscripts.

166. Upon the meaning of this word *paraklhtoj* much diversity of opinion has arisen among divines. The celebrated Michaelis says, "Ernesti has very properly

remarked, that it signifies neither Advocate nor Comforter; and adds, *Ego certissimum arbitror paraklhton, ubi de Spiritu Sancto dicitur, nihil aliud significare quam doctorem, magistrum, divinæ veritatis interpretem*. I agree with him in his opinion of the impropriety of the common translation, though, instead of doctor or magister, I would rather use Monitor.⁶⁸ The meaning which he has given it has been adopted by many, yet his mode of demonstration is somewhat extraordinary; for, instead of attempting to discover paraklhtoj in a classic author, and explain its meaning from actual use, he has recourse to the verb from which it is derived, and the assistance of a pretended Hebraism.”

167. Respecting this word the learned and venerable Bishop Marsh observes, “We have the choice, then, of three interpretations of *îaraklhtoj*. 1, that of Advocate, its classical sense, and adopted by the Greek fathers; 2, that of *Interpres*, given by Ernesti, and grounded on the authority of the Chaldee word *Uylqrp*, which admits that sense, and was probably used by Christ himself; 3, that of Monitor, adopted by our author, on the authority of a passage in Philo.” Hence it is very evident that great uncertainty and doubt hang over the meaning of this celebrated word, and of the nature of this messenger which Jesus had promised to send. This, I think, cannot be denied.

168. Of the gospel of Barnabas, Mr. Sale says, in the preface to his translation of the Koran, p. 98, “This book appears to be *no* original forgery of the Mahomedans, though they have no doubt interpolated and altered it since, the better to serve their purpose; and in particular, instead of the Paraclete, or Comforter, they have in this apocryphal gospel inserted the word *Periclyte*, that is, the famous or illustrious, by which, they pretend, their prophet was foretold by name, that being the signification of Mahomed in Arabic: and this they say to justify that passage of the Koran where Jesus Christ is formally asserted to have foretold his coming under his other name of Ahmed, which is derived from the same root as Mahomed, and of the same import.”

169. It must be confessed that the word, as written by Bishop Marsh, and as it is almost certain that it must have been used (as he observes) by Jesus Christ, appears strongly to support the assertion of the Mahomedans, as here stated by the very learned Mr. Sale. I am of opinion that the Mahomedans have as much right to render this word by the word *Periclyte* or *Periclyte*, as the Christians have by the word *Paraclete*. Nay more, I maintain that the balance of probability is on the side of the Mahomedans, because the Christians cannot be justified in rendering the Chaldee *jod* in the last syllable by the Greek letters *e* or *h*, instead of the letter *i*.

170. The Chaldee *i* or *jod* is the tenth letter of the alphabet, and has the power in notation of the number ten, and it ought, if the word is to be literally transferred from one language into the other, to be rendered by the letter in the Greek which stands for the number ten, and was originally the tenth in the alphabet before the Greeks lost the digamma, as I have abundantly proved in my *Essay on the Celtic Druids*.

171. But I go further than this, and I say that, if the word used by Jesus was *Uylqrp*, *PRQLIT*, and that this word does mean, as Mr. Sale says, illustrious, then that the translation of it into the Greek word *îaraklhtoj* is wrong (a various reading); and that all the translations of both Bishop Marsh and Ernesti are wrong, and that it ought to be rendered by a term answering to the word *illustrious*, which of course must be *periklutoj*.

172. But this ought not to be translated *a paraclete*, as a proper name, but a name of description, as the Mahomedans do, viz., *illustrious*. If this were a Chaldee, Hebrew or

⁶⁸ Marsh's *Mich.*, chap. iv. sect. 14, p. 188.

Arabic word, used by Jesus, it ought to have the sense given to it which the word in those languages means. If it be a Chaldee word derived from an Arabic root, then it ought to be rendered in the meaning which the Arabic root conveys, and then it would be illustrious, or an illustrious person.

173. If my reader will turn to his Scupula he will see that the word klutoj is used, for an illustrious man, both by Homer and Hesiod. Thus, I think, there is quite plausibility enough in the argument of the Mahomedans to render it no way wonderful that there should be much difficulty in convincing them that they are wrong. This is saying the least. But I have not seen their argument refuted.

174. The following is the passage which the Mahomedans say was expunged: *And when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, verily, I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmed."*⁶⁹

175. But I have something still more to say respecting this celebrated word Prqlit. It is admitted by Bishop Marsh, an authority not to be disputed, when quoted in argument by a Mahomedan, that it is a Syro-Chaldee, Hebrew or Arabic word, and not Greek. One or both of these languages must have been spoken or at least understood by Mahomed, and there is no reason to believe that the Greek translation of the word would ever become a subject of discussion by him. What had he to do in Arabia with GREEK TRANSLATIONS of the speeches of Jesus? What had they to do there? Of what use could they be to people who did not understand a word of them, but who understood the original spoken by Jesus? He would take the word as handed down to him by tradition, or if written in the word named by Mr. Sale, which meant illustrious, and he probably never inquired any farther. How absurd to suppose that he would go to writings in a foreign language to explain to him the meaning of a word in his own! He received the word as a human person, like many other sects in that day, and would as little allow it to mean the third person of a Trinity as the Unitarians do at this day. It is even possible that he might receive it in the sense of illustrious, and might never have any dispute or doubt on the subject.

176. This much respecting the prophecy of Mahomed in the New Testament. But he was also, as his followers say, foretold by name in the Old. The Reverend and very pious Mr. Parkhurst, a most unwilling witness, on the root dux H M D, says, "This word is applied to all sorts of sacred things, both of the true and false worship, which were to the respective parties eminently the *objects of their desire and affections*. See, inter al., Hag. ii. 7, *And the desire of all nations shall come: vakv ,yvnh lk xrux*--From this root the pretended prophet Mohammed or Mahomed had his name."

177. On this passage of Mr. Parkhurst's a Mahomedan would exclaim, "Here you see, that he was actually foretold by name in the Old as well as in the New Testament,--that the application of this prophecy to Jesus Christ has, in fact, been a mistake; it was intended, as the name shows, for the person sent by Jesus himself to complete his mission, and referred to by him in the word epaggelian, Luke xxiv. 49. And for this I have the authority of your own very celebrated divine, Parkhurst. That it was meant for Mahomed and not for Jesus, or the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit or a divine influence, is evident, because it foretells the former by name. No Mahomedan corruption of a text can be pretended here."

⁶⁹ Koran, Vol. II. c. lxi. p. 423 and note on ditto by Sale in loc.

178. The exact time when, from Idolater, Mahomed became Christian, I have not been able to discover; for it is probable to suppose himself the *resoul* or the sent of God. It does not seem at all unlikely that he should have made considerable progress in converting his countrymen from their idolatry, before the prophecy of the Christians led him to believe himself the person foretold. But when he contemplated his prospect of success, and the striking fact that he bore the name of the person actually said to be foretold, it does not seem unlikely that these very circumstances should have had much influence in confirming him in the belief of Christianity. And the fact, that the Greek gospel histories represented the person foretold by Jesus in a different manner from the oriental histories, and the general belief of the people in *his* country, *might* be a principal reason for his refusing to receive them. For it must not be forgotten that the Montanists, one of whom was the very celebrated apologist, Tertullian, and all the Cerinthians, the Marcionites, the Gnostics, and the rich, splendid and learned sect of the Manichæans, refused to receive the texts alluded to in the sense in which they were received by the Trinitarians of the Roman church. All these people believed that the head of his sect was the sent of God, the person promised. Tertullian did not join the Montanists till (as is alleged by the orthodox writers) after he published his *Apology for Christianity*; till he had all the advantage of experience, and was considered advanced in years. He did not obtain a bishopric by adopting this opinion, as Augustine did when he quitted the Manichæans, and who must have believed that Mani was the Paraclete as long as he continued with them, viz., nine years. When St. Augustine gave up the opinion that Mani was the Paraclete, and went over to the Romish faith, he quitted the cell of a monk for the palace of a bishop; for the elect of the Manichæans were, in fact, monks.

179. I request my reader to place himself in imagination in the situation of, I think I have now a right to say, this *illustrious* reformer--this philosophical reformer of idolatry in the midst of idolaters, and consider what he would see. On every side he would find himself surrounded with the most base and degrading superstition. Among the Christians scarcely any thing but idols and the adoration of bits of rotten wood, relics, creeds and sects innumerable, and every where civil and religious warfare: gospel histories in scores, among which it would be impossible for him to make a selection: for he could not select the four from any great pre-eminence of merit, as, to him, they must have appeared contaminated with the gross absurdities of demoniacs, and the passages respecting the temptation in the wilderness, and the pinnacle of the temple, which are now allowed to have a very different meaning from the letter of them, which was then universally received. This is on the supposition that he saw the four gospel histories, which is very doubtful, and which I cannot allow to be taken for granted, without some show of proof. A few similar loose expressions in the spurious Koran cannot be admitted as evidence, even if they should be found; nor even, as evidence against Mahomed, an actual quotation itself from that disputed book.

180. It must be remembered that the sect of Nestorius prevailed in Arabia; and I think, when it is considered that this sect in the time of Mahomed received the gospel called the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, it is very improbable that it should have received the Romish four, so that it is not only possible, but very probable, that Mahomed never saw our four.

181. The Nestorians, at least those reconciled or united to the Roman church, now received the four, but it is my opinion that the sect did not always received them.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See the proceedings of the Portuguese at Goa against the Malabar Christians, who were excommunicated expressly for receiving this

182. It is pretty clear that a person called in the Asiatic languages PRQLIT was believed by all the Eastern nations to have been foretold by Jesus, whose gospel and prophecies appear to have been known to, and believed by, Mahomed; but it does not appear to be certain that he was acquainted with the four Romish gospel histories: therefore he *probably* did not know, and *certainly* would not care, as it no way concerned him, in what manner the Greek had translated into their language the Eastern word of his country, which he must understand. He only knew that a person was foretold, and it is no way surprising, under all the circumstances, that he should fall into a belief that he was that person. It was not absurd in him to say, "If I be the person foretold, like Cyrus, God will so dispose events and the hearts of men, that success will crown my efforts in the good cause in which I am engaged, and prove the truth of the prophecy. If I be destined to succeed, the minds of men will be disposed without miracles to receive the truth, and that without the necessity of using force or violence." And accordingly we find no burnings or persecutions in the beginning of Mahomedanism.

183. In this he was also probably sincere, imagining himself, like Johanna Southcote, Baron Swedenborg, John Wesley, and many others, to be inspired. The words of our gospels which seem to convey the meaning of *spirit*, were held by him to be corrupt.

184. I have already observed, that the way in which the several sects declined, in a little time, was in itself a sufficient proof of their mistake in supposing their leaders to be the promised person, and they gradually became extinct. Montanus has been vilified by the orthodox priests for calling himself the Holy Spirit. But this was a gross misrepresentation. Although he admitted the gospel of Jesus, he denied the authority of our four histories, and maintained that the person promised was not a spirit, but a human person. This was the origin of the false charge against him, as has been most satisfactorily proved by Mons. Beausobre.

185. In the same way with Montanus, probably Mahomed supposed himself to be the person promised. Many very extraordinary circumstances united to justify his belief. In the first place, I repeat, the word Prqlit had the same meaning as the word Mo-Ahmed; and he might conceive himself to be thus foretold in Haggai by name, as Cyrus was of old by Isaiah. Secondly, the necessity of some one to reform and correct the abuses which had crept into Christianity and deluged the world with blood, was sufficiently evident; and, thirdly, his success might appear to him to prove the truth of his mission, and lead him to exclaim, If this continue, it will continue to prove that I am, as I believe I am, a resoul, or person sent by God, or pre-ordained to this service. Although I am endowed with no supernatural powers, like Jesus,⁷¹ the reason may be that they are not now required; he by his miracles may have prepared the way, and the world, if I be not mistaken, is ready for my doctrines,--doctrines of truth, with which I FEEL that I am inspired, and of which feeling I only can be the judge,--doctrines which are, in fact, nothing more than the pure, unadulterated doctrines of the gospel of Jesus, which have been lost sight of by the numerous sects which are persecuting one another about them. If I succeed, my success being without the aid of miracles, the evidence will not be liable to deterioration from the lapse of time--and universal success will be the proof of its truth.

186. Christians, to blind themselves, may turn into ridicule as much as they please the idea that Mahomed was the promised person, but this will not change the fact, that he

gospel history.

⁷¹ It must not be forgotten that the divine mission, and the truth of the assertion that Jesus performed miracles, are admitted in almost every page of the Koran.

was so considered, and is yet so considered, by one hundred and fifty millions of persons. When, as I have read, forty thousand commentators were at work on the Koran, it cannot be supposed that every thing which Arabian skill and sagacity could devise, would fail to be said. It cannot be supposed that the subject of the Paraclete would not have justice done to it. It cannot and will not be denied, that the circumstances of the world were, in a very peculiar manner, favorable to the reception of a reformer of the then corrupted religion of Jesus; and probably hundreds of millions of those who received Mahomed, never heard of the words in our Gospels and Acts relating to the Holy Spirit; and if they had, they would have denied their authority. But even if they had received them, a short answer might satisfy willing hearers: "You say the New Testament teaches that the spirit of truth should come. True, the spirit of truth did come; he came in Mahomed, who was inspired with the spirit of truth. This is the true meaning of your figurative expression, and the whole that it will fairly bear."

187. Under all these circumstances, admitting even that the meaning of this celebrated word is doubtful, it requires no very great stretch of imagination to believe that a person a little tinctured with fanaticism might readily persuade himself that he was actually the person prophesied of and sent by Jesus, as we find other persons at different time actually imagined themselves to be the person (some of whom suffered persecution, and were ready to seal, and I believe actually did seal, their faith with their blood). The life of solitude and retirement which Mahomed led for many years, was not unlikely to create such imaginations; and the success of his efforts, every day opening new and unexpected objects to his view, was not unlikely to foster and cherish them. The climate of Arabia, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, always celebrated for the liveliness of their imagination and their poetical genius, strengthen the probability that the prophet himself might be the victim or dupe of this hallucination. When the circumstances of his early life, so honorable and praiseworthy, are considered, it is difficult to believe in his subsequent villainy and total want of all principle, and it is also very uncandid and uncharitable to attribute his actions to evil motives, so long as good ones can be consistently and with probability pointed out.

188. I am quite certain that no unprejudiced person can doubt the sincerity of Johanna Southcote, Emanuel Swedenborg and John Wesley, to whom I have already alluded, in the profession of their divine commissions; and if Mahomed found a person foretold, who was designated as *illustrious*, or the *desire of all nations*, and his name had the same meaning; when he contemplated his success in converting the chief persons of his country, and in overthrowing its idols, can it be wondered at that he should turn Christian and suppose himself the person foretold? I confess, under all the circumstances, I cannot very well see how he could help it.

189. I will venture to say, that there never has been an instance of any individual who had more powerful reasons for turning Christian than were possessed by Mahomed. He was, if the Koran may be taken as authority, a believer in the divine mission of Jesus, in the doctrines which he preached, in his immaculate conception, in the miracles which he performed, and in his resurrection⁷² and ascension.

190. However, whether the alleged prophet was the dupe of mental delusion or not, it is very certain that he was believed to be, and was held up by his followers to the Christians to be, the paraclete actually promised by Jesus; and to the millions of persons in the Asiatic nations who admitted the tradition of the promise of Jesus, but did not

⁷² Although, like many other Christians of his day, he held that Jesus only *appeared* to be crucified, but was not so in reality.

admit the four gospels of the Romish church, whether corrupted or not, the argument would apply with peculiar force. The promise was not denied, and the utility, not to say necessity, of some one to heal the dissensions and put a stop to the endless feuds and bloody contests of the numerous sects, seemed to admit of no doubt. Thus I think we may fairly conclude that all the sects which did not admit our gospels, soon merged in the followers of the paraclete of Arabia. Among these were the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Marcionites, Manichæans, and all the different sects of Gnostics, as well as many others. With the Christians who admitted the four gospels there would be a little more difficulty; but the same arguments which weigh with the Unitarians of this day to prevent them from seeing the third person of the Trinity in the Paraclete named in the fourteenth chapter of John and the second of the Acts, we may readily conceive would very easily operate upon numbers of the wretchedly ignorant fanatics of the seventh century, particularly when aided by the seductive arguments of peace and liberty.

191. No doubt all these reasons for the success and rapid increase of Mahomedanism will be produced by the zealous Christians as a reproach. But how could Mahomed be to blame for this state of things? It is evident that it was not the effect of design; it was the effect of unforeseen circumstances. And the Mahomedan will say that it is no reflection upon Mahomed that, when God thought proper to inspire him to promulgate the truth to mankind--the unity of God and a future state--he did it in such a way and under such circumstances as would insure success. The Christian must take care how he uses this kind of reproach in argument; it is a two-edged sword, and may cut the hand that uses it.

192. It is a striking circumstance that the Mahomedans do not deny that our four histories of the gospel were the works of the persons whose names they bear; they only say they have been so corrupted by the Christian priests, that no dependence can be placed upon them: and, unquestionably, if a Turk were asked for an example, a Christian would find much difficulty in replying to him if he produced the seventh verse of the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of John, the interpolation of which is demonstrated in the works of Porson and Newton, as well as some others, which might easily be found in White's *Synopsis Griesbachia*.

193. The gospel history of Barnabas, from which Mahomed is said mostly to quote in the Koran,⁷³ had a very great circulation in the East. In it the coming of Mahomed is repeatedly foretold. Dr. White says it is interpolated to serve the purpose of Mahomed. This is possible. Nor can we be surprised at it when we find Romish and Protestant Christians have done the same thing, with the most unblushing effrontery, in their sacred writings, in both ancient and modern times.⁷⁴

194. For example: the passage of John, named above. This impudent fraud was probably executed by the priests of the Romish church. Luther, in the Bible which he published, omitted it, and, on his death-bed, is said to have most earnestly requested his followers not to let it be inserted with his name. However, this was disregarded, and in the Bible, said in the title-page to be the work of Luther, it is inserted by the united authority of the Lutheran church of Germany. Thus, if this pious fraud was begotten by the Romish priests, it was adopted by the Protestants, who have not been, and are not yet,

⁷³ White's Sermons, notes, p. xi.

⁷⁴ It is from Christian authors I learn that the quotations in the Koran are from the gospel history of Barnabas, not from the Mahomedans. I am by no means certain that Mahomed knew any more of it than of the Romish gospel histories, though Othman might. I do not think Mahomed would have had any thing to do with so contemptible a performance. Persons forget the important distinction between the gospel or doctrine taught by Barnabas and the gospel history supposed to have been written by him.

less zealous in its protection. This is only one of the thirty thousand various readings confessed by divines to exist in the gospels and epistles. The *Codex Montfortianus*, now in the public library at Dublin, was forged for the express purpose of supporting this text.⁷⁵

195. It would be unjust to the Roman church not to add here the fact, that a version of this epistle was published at Rome long after the forgery, (with the Papal authority of course), in one of the oriental languages, in which this passage was omitted; which shows that the forgery might be the act of some low priests, and not of the Papal church itself.

196. Notwithstanding the eminence both of Dr. White and Mr. Sale, I take the liberty of saying, that I am not convinced by their mere assertion that the gospel history of Barnabas, such as it is, has been interpolated. Unless they have some variation of manuscripts to plead, or some other similar substantial reason to assign, I cannot assent to their opinions; and that they have no such reason I am justified in believing, because they have not assigned it. Though, of course, I am no believer in the divine inspiration of the gospel history of Barnabas, I am by no means certain that the prophecy was not originally there; and I am also by no means certain that it may not have conduced to its own fulfillment, which has been the case with many prophecies besides this, both of what have been called sacred and profane. The difficulty of interpolating the gospel histories after the third century, has been very forcibly dwelt upon by Michaelis and Bishop Marsh. All the arguments against the interpolation of our gospel histories in the third or fourth centuries, apply with equal, indeed with greater, force against the interpolation of the gospel of Barnabas in a much *later* period--the seventh century. The later it was, the more difficult it would evidently be.

197. This gospel was received by multitudes of Christians long before the time of Mahomed. It seems difficult to conceive that the learned Musselmen who swarmed in the second century of the Hegira, should not have discovered these interpolations, if they had been as gross as they have been represented. It seems unaccountable that, on the revival of letters, the Romish priests should not have discovered some old manuscripts in Greek, in Arabic, Syriac, or Coptic, in which the passages alluded to were wanting. Considering the triumphant argument these manuscripts would have afforded to the Christians in their controversies with the Mahomedans, it is surely unaccountable that not even one can be produced from the almost innumerable Christian monasteries of Greece, Syria, Egypt, &c., &c. On behalf of the Mahomedans, I challenge the Christian priests to produce a single manuscript copy of this gospel in which these passages are not found. Copies are common in Mahomedan countries, where there are plenty of Christian monasteries, in which they must still be if they have not been purposely destroyed.

198. To the different sects of Christian religionists, I think we may look for the recruits to the armies of the prophet; and in the circumstance that they would not be serving like mere soldiers of fortune, for pay, but men actually engaged by principle in his cause, we shall not look in vain for the reason of the enthusiasm by which they were actuated. If many, as would certainly be the case, were lukewarm at first, fanaticism would not be long before it would convert them heartily to the cause. Nothing is more infectious than fanaticism; and in this case it would be aided by the doctrines of fate and predestination, and by a variety of self-interested motives, which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out.

⁷⁵ Vide Marsh's Michaelis.

199. To the reasons which the reader has seen for the rapid propagation and success of Mahomedanism, may be added the total abstinence in its followers of persecution, at least as far as concerned Jews and Christians. As the Rev. Mr. Robinson has said, "Jews and Christians all lived happily among them." This will surprise Christians at this day very much, but it is nevertheless true. The enlightened subjects of the Caliphs persecuted none; and had their empire continued, instead of having been overthrown by the Turks, then in a state of barbarism, and had extended to European Greece, I have no doubt that the same effect would have been produced as that which was produced in Persia, Arabia, and most parts of Asia and Africa. Scarcely a Christian would have been left at this day. Mere barbarism may be thought insufficient to account for the excessive hatred of the modern Turks to the Christians. I have no doubt that their bigotry and their hatred of the Christians were in a great measure caused by the bigotry and the hatred of the Christians towards them--by the Crusades, the expulsion of all the Moriscoes of Spain whom the Christians were unable to murder, and by the perpetual piracies of the pious Knights of Malta. What would the Christians have said if the Turks had expelled all the inhabitants of Greece when they took Constantinople, as the Christians expelled the Moriscoes from Spain, instead of leaving them in possession of their lands, houses, patriarchs, bishops, priests, churches and monasteries? To these causes, joined to excessive ignorance, may be attributed the difference between the Turks and their precursors, the Saracens; and to the persecuting spirit generated by these causes may be attributed the fact of the existence of a single Christian in Greece. It is this spirit of intolerance which is increasing the members of the Roman church in Ireland, and has prevented the propagation of Mahomedanism in Greece.

200. The tolerant spirit of the Caliphs appears to be strictly accordant with that of Mahomed, as may be seen in the following passage, in which enough escapes to show to an impartial person the true character of the prophet: coming from Mr. Sale, it is the admission of an unwilling witness:--"Hitherto, Mahomed had propagated his religion by fair means, so that the whole success of his enterprise, before his flight to Medina, must be attributed to persuasion only, and not to compulsion. For, before this second oath of fealty or inauguration at Al Akaba, he had no permission to use any force at all; and in several places of the Koran, which he pretended were revealed during his stay at Mecca, he declares his business was only to preach and admonish; that he had no authority to compel any person to embrace his religion; and that whether people believed or not, was not his concern, but belonged only to God.⁷⁶ And he was so far from allowing his followers to use force, that he exhorted them to bear patiently those injuries which were offered them on account of their faith; and, when persecuted himself, chose rather to quit the place of his birth, and retire to Medina, than to make any resistance."⁷⁷

201. Besides the Koran, the Mahomedans have a collection of what were said to be the sayings of the prophet remembered by his followers after his death, and forming thirty books, which is called the Sonnah. To this much respect is paid, but it is not considered equal to the Koran. I have never seen it, but I presume it contains nothing prejudicial to Mahomed or his religion, as Dean Prideaux, though he notices the work, does not notice any thing of that kind. Though this may constitute present Islamism, it evidently no way concerns Mahomed. The author of these books was called Al Bochari;

⁷⁶ This alludes to an oath which, it is said, he exacted from a deputation of proselytes from Medina, that they should be faithful to him and protect him from his enemies.--Sale, pref., p. 63.

⁷⁷ Pref., p. 64.

he died A. D. 869. It does not appear to me that any one of the authors from whom our modern historians have drawn their information, lived earlier than about two hundred years after the death of Mahomed. There seems not to be one contemporary author. Even the Sonnah was not compiled till about two hundred years after Mahomed. Under these circumstances, how little of what our bigoted historians have written can be depended on! Abulfeda, who died A. D. 1345, appears to be the best of them, yet his work, in retailing the contemptible stories of prodigies which took place on the birth of the prophet, betrays his own absurdly credulous character.⁷⁸

202. Severe censures have been passed on several of the laws of Moses which appear to us to be trifling or cruel; but in various instances a more accurate knowledge of the circumstances under which they were ordained has taught us that these censures were unjust, or has furnished a reasonable apology for these laws; and this, combined with a consideration of the general character of Moses and of his laws, seems to raise a fair presumption that, were we equally informed respecting the other laws alluded to of the same kind, we should always find some satisfactory reasons for his conduct.

203. Thus with respect to Mahomed, satisfactory reasons may be assigned for laws which appear cruel, unjust, impolitic, or too lenient. For instance: though murder is forbidden, under the severest penalties to be inflicted in the next life, yet a murder is allowed by the Koran to be compounded for on payment of such sum as may be agreed on betwixt the murderer and the next of kin, and the giving freedom to a Musselman captive. The object of this was to prevent the private wars which had hitherto taken place among the Arabs to avenge murder, by which, at times, whole tribes were destroyed.⁷⁹

204. Thus, when an enlarged view is taken of the conduct of Moses, and of Mahomed, or the writer of the Koran, they are often even in very doubtful cases found to be justified. This, Christian bigots can allow to be just with respect to the former, but with respect to the latter they fix upon some particular point without regarding the context, the reason, or the circumstances, and thus indulge their malice for the glory of God. But they are educated in an habitual hatred of what they believe to be an imposture, and become blinded by prejudice to their own injustice. But the ultra pious people, those described in modern cant as warmed with “a live coal from off the altar,” never reason. They seem to be incapable of reasoning.

205. Much diversity of opinion has arisen on the question whether Mahomed could or could not write. I am of opinion, with the Oxonian Professor, Dr. White, that the affirmative of this question is probable. And I believe the contrary has been asserted by the compiler of the Sonnah, and some others of the early and most bigoted of his followers, merely for the sake of making a miracle out of his ignorance. One of the authors quoted by Prideaux and the Oxford Professor was called Jannabi or Gennabi; he states the Koran to contain sixty thousand miracles. Although some passages of the Koran state that Mahomed could not write, there are others which are in direct contradiction to this. In the thirty-ninth chapter of the Koran Mahomed introduces God, thus addressing him: “Thou couldst not read any book before this; neither couldst thou write it with thy right hand; for then had the gainsayers justly doubted of the divine origin thereof.” Although it is said here that he could write, it is attributed to a miracle. In several places of the Koran he is called the illiterate prophet.

⁷⁸ Abulfeda, p. 112.

⁷⁹ Sale, Prel., sect. vi., p. 185.

206. In one part of the Sonnah he is also said to have written occasionally. Professor White says, “On this was founded (*alluding to Mahomed’s ignorance*) the most popular and prevailing argument for the truth of that revelation which he professed to communicate to the world. The elegant style of that revelation, the harmony of its sentences, and the sublimity of its conceptions, were universally acknowledged. Was it not then absurd to imagine, (as the impostor specially argued), that a work of such extraordinary beauty and excellence could ever have been composed by a man who was destitute of every species of acquired knowledge, and who, by his ignorance even of the common rudiments of early education, had been precluded from the perusal of books and the use of writing?”⁸⁰

207. Again, he says, “We will not detract from the real merit of the Koran; we allow it to be generally elegant, and often sublime.”

208. This is confirmed by Prideaux, if indeed it be not copied from Prideaux, who says, “It must be allowed that the Alcoran is, as to the style and language, the standard of elegancy in the Arab tongue.”⁸¹

209. In these arguments of Drs. White and Prideaux, they assume that the Koran was Mahomed’s as in its present state. Although I agree with them in the conclusion they draw, I cannot admit this assumption. They forget that the doctrines taught by Mahomed are not necessarily the same as those in the books. Supposing them beautiful when delivered by Mahomed, how absurd is it to imagine that this beauty should continue when edited by Othman, and made out from *the memories of the faithful* after the lapse of twenty years! This would be a miracle. Dr. White seems to make a strange mistake in his argument. What he puts in the mouth of the impostor, as he calls him, he ought to have put into the mouth of his followers, who lived after the publication of the work. The argument which is found in the work is a proof that it is none of Mahomed’s.

210. I have as much difficulty to believe in the extreme ignorance of the Koreish, the inhabitants of Mecca, as I have to believe in the ignorance of their prophet. Speaking of the language of the Arabians, of whom the tribe of Mahomed was the most distinguished, Dr. White says, “And if we look back for many ages on the history of the Arabians, we shall easily perceive that pride among them to have consisted in the knowledge and improvement of their native language. The Arabic, which has been justly esteemed the most copious of the Eastern tongues’ which had existed from the remotest antiquity; which had been embellished by numberless poets, and refined by the constant exercise of the natives, was the most successful instrument which Mahomed employed in planting his new religion among them.”⁸²

211. “The superior degree of refinement which the tribe of Koreish had introduced into their language, arose from various causes; from their distinguished rank as guardians of the Temple of Mecca; from their situation, almost in the centre of Arabia, which precluded them from such an intercourse with foreigners as might have corrupted their language; and, above all, by the continual resort of the several tribes to Mecca, which gave them an opportunity of selecting from their discourse and compositions such words and expressions as they deemed most elegant, and thus gradually of transfusing the various beauties of the whole language into their dialect.”⁸³

⁸⁰ Sermon IV.

⁸¹ Prid. Hist., p. 29.

⁸² Sermon VI.

⁸³ White, Note on Sermon VI.

212. It is difficult to believe that a tribe like the Koreish, taking such care about their language as is shown above, can have been in the state of ignorance here represented--to have been most of them unable to write. If we admit that Mahomed left various tracts of some kind or other behind him, yet, after admitting, what cannot be denied, that they were passed twice through the crucible, once by Abubeker, and a second time, twenty years afterward, by the Caliph Othman, they surely can no longer be called his; as well might we take a golden cup out of which he had drank, and after twice sending it to the goldsmith's, and melting it into the form of a soup ladle, call it his ladle.

213. It is allowed to contain many very foolish things--things very much out of character with the general conduct of the prophet's early life, besides many passages utterly inconsistent with one another. This does not look like the work of one original compositor, but much more like what we might have expected from the history of the Koran and its two publications, by Abubeker and Othman. But though the matter of it is discordant and inconsistent with itself, yet the style is uniformly elegant.

214. This is again what we must have expected. If it had been the work of Mahomed, interpolated and corrupted merely, the style would not have been uniform as it is found, but in many parts the corruptions would have been apparent. But if it were entirely re-written, redacted by Othman, it might, and most likely would, be what we find it. The habits and language of his tribe would probably give him elegance of style. Let us suppose the Duke of Wellington, whose general talents no one will dispute, when engaged in his Spanish war, to have found it necessary to write or compose, and materially alter, a gospel from those we have at present, the pages and heading being in confusion, and reduced into short scraps or treatises. I think we should find he would produce something like the Koran--a work containing contradictions and tautologies, but, (if his Grace had been accustomed to keep the best company, and talk the most elegant dialect of his country), like the Koran, we should find in it one uniform style and the most elegant language.

215. In our endeavors to discover what really was the character of Mahomed, and what were his doctrines, we must recollect that, though he was a Christian, with multitudes of other Christians, on account of corruptions, he rejected the four Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles,⁸⁴ and that we have no reason to believe that he was in any sense what may be called the author of the Koran. If he did leave any papers in a box, a very questionable matter, it is inferring rather too much, after knowing, as we have seen above, that they have been twice through the alchemical fires of Abubeker and Othman, to attribute any particular dogma of them to him, which may be to his disadvantage. Seeing that we know much respecting him that is good and excellent, we shall be acting very unjustly to receive any thing against him from the pages of this double-distilled fabrication of two such men as Othman and Abubeker--men, though, perhaps, versed in the poetry and literature of their country, yet deeply tainted with the superstitions of the age in which they lived. That the Koran contains much that is excellent, and in character with what we certainly know of the early part of Mahomed's life, cannot be denied; and though it be not in our power with any certainty to pitch upon any particular passages, and say, This passage or that is from him, yet we are bound to give him credit for much of the excellent moral doctrine which it contains. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that

⁸⁴ The Christian must not forget that the truth of *his* religion does not depend upon the *Gospels*, the *Acts*, or the *Epistles*. If it be true, it was true after the death of Jesus and before they were written. It would have been equally true if they had never been written at all.

the Gospel histories were to be proved spurious,⁸⁵ yet if I believed Jesus Christ to have lived, and the general character of his life to have been as it is represented to us in them, I should be obliged to believe that the moral doctrines which I find in them accordant with his character, were what he taught. And if I found any thing in them disgraceful to him, and not accordant to his general character, I should disbelieve it.

216. It has been said that we have no right to assume that the Caliph Othman would make any material alterations, since it is reported that he only called in the copies to correct them from the papers in the box, as they had got corrupted by transcribers. But it is asserted that he went to the box for this purpose.⁸⁶ Why did he not go to the copy in the mosque at Medina, lying on the very desk where Abubeker had placed it, *in the sight of Othman himself?*--the copy which could not have been corrupted, except it were corrupted by the two preceding Caliphs. This copy, in the space of the twenty-two years, could neither be corrupted by transcribers nor rotted by time. The case is evident. Something must be added, or something must be subtracted, to make the book speak a language suitable to the existing circumstances of the triumphant empire of the Caliphs, and a plausible pretence must be found to enable the government to make the alteration.

217. After Mahomed had made some progress in the conversion of his countrymen from their idolatry, it is not at all surprising that he should have been seduced (if it be determined that his actions prove the charge) into an opinion that the end *for which* a thing is done, in certain cases, will justify the means *by which* it is done. When he was copying, as the priests say, and as I believe, the Christian morality, that is, the morality of his own adopted religion, it is not surprising that he should also have fallen into this pernicious error, which has been acted on by the Christian priests in every age. In the early times of the church of Christ, and, I have little doubt, of the religion of Mahomed, the doctrine of the end sanctifying the means was universally held and defended. Even Grotius defended it, and practised it in the case of the dove. Can it then be a matter of surprise if Mahomed persuaded himself that the security of the worship of the one true God was identified with his possession of the sovereign power, freely bestowed upon him both by the inhabitants of Medina, and by all the great mass of people who had deserted the worship of idols, or the equally degrading and absurd *sectarian* doctrines of the Christians, to join his standard? And in the carrying on of wars and the causing of bloodshed, the good intention would not fail, as in the wars of the Christians, to justify the means; and holy as well as learned casuists have never in either party been found wanting to excuse them. Though it is impossible to defend misconduct in Mahomed by misconduct in Christians, yet it is impossible to be blind to the base hypocrisy in the latter, who pretend to condemn in their opponents that conduct of which they themselves are guilty.

218. Mr. Gibbon has observed, "that the manners of the first four Caliphs were alike pure and exemplary; that their zeal was fervent, and probably sincere; and that, in the midst of riches and power, their lives were devoted to the practice of moral and religious duties."⁸⁷ These were the men who formed the first of the congregation of the Prophet; who came over to his cause before he had possessed power, or had drawn the sword; when he was the victim of persecution, and obliged to flee his country to avoid

⁸⁵ The reader will recollect that proving the spuriousness of the Gospel histories does not of itself necessarily prove them false; they may be forgeries and yet true. They may be true, though not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

⁸⁶ It must not be forgotten that in the first instance these papers were obliged to be helped out by the *memories* of the faithful. They could not have been much improved by the lapse of twenty years.

⁸⁷ Gibbon, chap. 1, p. 260, 4to.

assassination. Their early conversion proves their sincerity, and their conquests over the empires of the world prove the superiority of their talents.

219. Now, can any one believe that men like these would have attached themselves most enthusiastically, and have suffered banishment from their country and persecution, for the sake of a man disgraced by every vice, and for the sake of a system of fraud and imposture of the grossest nature, and directly contrary to the prejudices of their education and early life? It cannot be believed; it is contrary to all probability.

220. With men like these, probably--indeed, I may say certainly--the pernicious principle of the end sanctifying the means would justify equally the conquest of the empires of the enemies of God, and the redaction and improvement of the Koran, to make it what the premature death of the prophet had denied to him. And the memories of the faithful--superannuated devotees--would enable them to make it whatever their inclination prompted.

221. That these men were sincere disciples of Mahomed cannot be doubted. That they were in a very considerable degree conversant with the poetry and literature of the Koreish, the most elegant of the Arabians, can admit but of as little doubt; and when the belief of such men as Locke and Newton in demons, Sir Matthew Hale in witchcraft, and the most enlightened of the Romish Church in Transubstantiation, is considered, how can we be surprised that the first Caliphs should be tainted with superstition, or should have thought that there was no more harm in indulging some of the ancient prejudices of their countrymen in their renovated Koran, than the Christians before them had thought existed in adopting the Heathen festivals, &c., into the religion of Jesus? On these grounds and on no other, can I account for the conduct of the first Caliphs, or render it consistent with probability, the present state of the Koran, and the undisputed facts relating to it. Thus, as we might have expected, we find in many parts of it very absurd and superstitious ideas, but we find them clothed in the most elegant language of Arabia, and intermixed with the purest morality and the most sublime ideas of the Deity which the poetical imaginations of oriental poets could furnish. Probably the world cannot produce finer or more sublime passages than are to be found in the Koran.

222. Nothing has been more common than for Christians in all ages to fancy themselves endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: moved by the Spirit, as the Society of Friends calls it. What this motion was it is not very easy correctly to describe, because different persons probably ascribed to the word different meanings. It is not very improbable that Mahomed might really believe that he had an internal divine sensation, similar in some respects to the above. This, all his followers tell us, he pretended to have, and upon this Michaelis maintains that the whole of Mahomedanism is grounded.⁸⁸ And he argues against the pretensions of the Christians to this endowment, gift, or whatever it may be called, because, as he justly observes, it will prove the truth of Mahomedanism as well, if admitted, as of Christianity. No person can deny that a man possesses this gift when he claims it, because no man can be a judge of it but himself. I do not think it impossible that Mahomed believed that he possessed this gift. Pious and good Christians believe themselves possessed of it every day.

223. It is evident, I think, that Mahomed may be placed under one or other of three classes of men. He may have been a philosopher, like Socrates, or Pythagoras; or a fanatic, like John Wesley, Brothers, or Southcote; or merely an impostor. Of the last, I think, I may fairly assume that I have already disposed. There is no probability that he

⁸⁸ Marsh's Mich. chap. iii. sect. ii. and note, p. 382.

deserved to be called an impostor in any sense of the word. To decide his character in the other respects will be much more difficult. He may have been a fanatic or a philosopher, or a combination of the two. If we believe the stories of his fancied revelation from heaven, and his visions, we must undoubtedly give him the character of a fanatic; but I am by no means satisfied that he ever pretended to any such thing. It does not seem to me likely that men of the high rank and talents of his chief and most early associates would have joined themselves, and have gone into exile, with a man laboring under a mental hallucination of this kind; and yet his seclusion from society for many years seems to show a tendency this way. Perhaps this seclusion may have been much exaggerated. It must be recollected that at the time he was said to be living this ascetic life, we have no reason to believe that he neglected the duties of society or his family, which was numerous, and, of course, would require constant attention. We have several examples of the union in the same character of fanaticism and philosophy. Priestley was a most amiable man and a great philosopher; but I think no person can acquit him entirely of fanaticism who read his letters to Gibbon. His friends will say it was only zeal. This is but another name for fanaticism.

224. Wesley was a learned man and a good man, but his fancied visions and revelations put his fanaticism out of all doubt.

225. After circumstances had raised Mahomed to a considerable degree of eminence, it seems not unlikely that the accidental coincidence of name in the prophecy of the gospel of Barnabas (the gospel chiefly received by the Christians in his country) with his name, and that of the prophet Haggai, should have led him to believe that he was the person prophesied of, as Cyrus was of old by Isaiah. Nor do I think it unlikely that this should have caused in his character an union of philosophy and fanaticism. When he contemplated his success and future prospects, if he were (as cannot be doubted) a believer in the gospel of Barnabas, I can find no difficulty in supposing that he sincerely believed himself to be the person referred to in the prophecy. Nor does it follow, in believing that he was a sent of God, that he should believe that he was anything superior to a mere man, to the Messiah Cyrus, that was prophesied of by name in the book of Isaiah. A simple belief of this kind surely cannot by the consistent Christian be called fanaticism at all. Why should not he be prophesied of or foretold as well as Cyrus? Can any one read the account of the state of Christianity in his time, as truly described by Dr. White, and deny that the church of God was in as great want of a reformer as it was in the time of Cyrus of a deliverer?

226. I recollect no fanaticism or even religion which has not been either clogged with monstrous absurdities, or with extreme complication, or with both. But of all the established religions which I have ever heard of, that of Mahomed is at once the most simple and the most philosophical, and in its original purity the least clogged with difficulties of any kind. Nothing can be more simple than its creed or confession of faith--*God is God, and Mahomed is his prophet* (i. e., his messenger or preacher, resoul, sent of God.) A man may believe every dogma of every religion in the world, provided he believe nothing contrary to the moral attributes of God, and yet he may be a Mahomedan. According to the Koran, he may practise almost any form and ceremony of other religions, provided he be only not an idolator, and yet be a Mahomedan. This looks not like fanaticism alone. Fanaticism multiplies its creeds, narrows its gates, excludes as many as possible from the mansions only worthy of its superior excellence: but

philosophy reduces them in number, and throws open its gates as wide as possible to all comers.

227. For all these reasons I am strongly inclined to think that in the character of this celebrated man may be found the union of fanaticism and philosophy, which, under favorable auspices, produced the Mahomedan religion, the child not of preconcerted design, but of accident and circumstance; the origin of most religions.

228. I now beg my reader, if he be endowed with a particle of charity, to consider the character of Mahomed coolly and without prejudice; and if he do this, I am quite certain he will perceive that he has no ground to suppose that this great man considered himself inspired in any other manner than the learned and virtuous, however mistaken, John Wesley considered himself, or than as many individuals of the Society of Friends consider themselves to be every day, and that therefore he has no just ground to call him *an Impostor*.

229. The Mahomedan religion has changed like the Christian, and as all religions have changed in long periods of time; for the Christians are no longer what they were five hundred years ago: they are not now employed in casting out devils and burning witches and unhappy heretics. They no longer, with St. Athanasius, or at least very few of them, send all the heathen to hell for having been born in countries where the name of Jesus was never heard. These considerations, I hope, will induce them to make allowance for the intolerance of a race who, in consequence of bad governments, have fallen into a state of barbarism--a race who were once in a state of high refinement, when Europe was buried in darkness and ignorance. Christians I hope will recollect that intolerance begets intolerance, and though this may be excused in the ignorant barbarian, there is no excuse for it in those who claim the merit of civilization and philanthropy.

230. When I contemplate the monstrous absurdities believed by Christian sects, Methodists, Calvinists, Ranters, Jumpers, &c., &c., I am not much surprised that our priests should have trembled for their hierarchy, their tithes, &c., at the more rational system of Mahomed, and have had recourse to the falsities and misrepresentations which I have exposed, to keep it from being fairly seen by their followers. My surprise is still less excited when I find in the nineteenth century a talented and learned man going over to the Mahomedan faith. The celebrated traveller John Louis Burckhardt, [1784-1817], who was educated at the University of Cambridge, after the most careful inquiry and mature deliberation, turned Mahomedan, and, amidst the circle of his Christian friends, died one. It appears that he was instructed in the Mahomedan faith, and converted to it by a learned effendi at Aleppo,⁸⁹ and that he there publicly professed it, and underwent a close examination into his faith and his knowledge of the Mahomedan tenets near Mecca, when he performed his pilgrimage to that place, in consequence of which he ever after claimed the title of Hadji.⁹⁰ His conversion seems to have been sincere, though generally, I think, concealed from his Christian friends.

231. I have the pleasure to be acquainted with a gentleman who now (May, 1829) holds a responsible situation under the British government, but whose name I have not authority to give, who told me he was present with Burckhardt a very little time before he died, when he was gravely assured by him, that he really was a Mahomedan, and would die one. His anonymous biographer, in his posthumous work, gives an account of his death, but carefully avoids saying a word on the subject of his religion. He probably knew

⁸⁹ Burckhardt's Post. Travels, Pref. p. xli.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. lviii.

that if the truth came out, the sale of his book would be ruined by the calumnies of the priests. But one sentence escapes which is sufficient to confirm what I have said.⁹¹ “He died at a quarter before twelve the same night, without a groan. *The funeral, AS HE DESIRED, WAS MAHOMEDAN*, conducted with all proper regard to the respectable rank which he held in the eyes of the natives.” If he were really a Mahomedan, it was natural for him to desire to be buried according to the Mahomedan law, and certainly if the Christians had not complied with the request, the government would have compelled them to do it. It was not likely that it should permit the Christians to defraud the Mussulmans of the honor of such a proselyte. But it is evident that they left him without reserve under the care of the British Consul and in the hands of his countrymen, who had the fullest opportunity of exercising their abilities for his re-conversion. He seems to have had no interest to prejudice him in favor of Mahomedanism, but on the contrary, he thought it necessary to conceal it from his Christian employers, from whom he received his support.

232. If his biographer may be credited, he appears to have been a man of the highest principle and most excellent character. Among other amiable traits recorded of this *apostate Infidel*, as he will be called, he reduced himself to absolute and complete poverty, by giving up his patrimonial inheritance, £1000, for the maintenance of his mother.

233. The confidence which the Mahomedans have always shown in the justice of their own cause, as close examination must convince any one, is very remarkable. I refer my reader to the case detailed above of the Mogul in India,--of the mode in which they have always tolerated the Christian religion in the countries which they conquered; and, lastly, to the fact taking place at this time, that the Grand Seignior and the Pasha of Egypt have sent great numbers of their young men to be educated in London and Paris without exhibiting any fear of their principles of religion being shaken.⁹²

234. I have been told, by very good authority, that the son of Ibrahim, the grandchild and heir of the present Pasha of Egypt, is shortly coming to Paris for Education.

235. A young Egyptian, who has been sent to this country for his education by the Pasha of Egypt, and is evidently meant for a prime minister of that country, with whom I have the pleasure to be acquainted, told me that a gentleman had been talking to him on the subject of his religion, telling him that he would certainly be damned if he did not change it and become Christian; and he asked me my opinion--to which I replied, “I can give no opinion till I know something about the religion which you profess. Does your religion teach you to adore one God with profound reverence and resignation to his divine will; to expect a state of happiness in a future life if you conduct yourself well in this? Does it teach you to be just in all your dealings; to do to others as you would wish others to do to you?” He replied, “All these things it teaches.” “Then,” I rejoined, “remain in the religion of your ancestors. Be assured that God will never damn you *for*

⁹¹ Ibid. p. lxxxix.

⁹² The toleration of Mahomedans is shown by the following extract from the *Classical Journal*, vol. xxxvii. p. 227. This opinion was given at Constantinople in the 17th century by the highest Doctor of the Mahomedan law--the head Mufti, who answers to our Lord Chancellor. Let this be contrasted with the laws which existed a few years ago in England and Ireland, against Papists and Popish recusants, and I am quite certain that every candid person must grant the palm of liberality to the barbarian Turk.

The reply of the Mufti was as follows: “The utterance of opinions contrary to Mahomedanism was not necessarily to be regarded as blasphemy, or as of the nature of a crime: that since the Sultan had permitted to his Christian subjects, without any qualification, the free profession of their religious belief, they were no more blameable in promulgating that belief through the medium of the press, than through that of the pulpit: finally, that it was not diversity of opinion, but the commission of public scandal, that rendered individuals obnoxious to the penalties of the law.”

an opinion--a point of faith, which must always be a matter of necessity, not of choice; for a man cannot choose to believe or not to believe; therefore faith can never be a subject of merit, or proper object of punishment or reward. I think you have too much sense ever to believe that a doctrine contrary to the moral attributes of God, like the doctrine of damnation, which these gentlemen teach, can be true. For, as one of our most eminent divines, the Rev. Dr. Sykes, has said, nothing can be believed contrary to the moral attributes of God, even though it were enforced by miracles themselves. No person, whose mind has not been corrupted by education, can doubt the truth of the Hindoo doctrine, that God is equally present with the pious Jew in the synagogue, the Christian in the church, the Mahomedan in the mosque, and the Brahmin in the temple. Those who wish you to enter upon the question of the truth of Christianity, I have no doubt are actuated by the best intentions, but they have very little knowledge of the subject on which they advise you. When they have read the essays of two or three writers on the Christian side, they fancy that they understand the question, without ever reading the works which have been written against it, so that, in fact, they are less likely to understand it than if they had not read at all.--In addition to this, what will they make of the book of Genesis, respecting the translation of which no two sects, or scarcely any two persons, have ever agreed, and which is essential to their religion? If you mean to understand the question of the truth of the Christian religion, you must first acquire a considerable knowledge of Latin, Greek, and, above all, of Hebrew, without some knowledge of the last of which it is ridiculous to pretend to form an opinion yourself. After you have acquired this, you must prepare yourself for many hours' daily study, for several years together, before you can be master of the subject. If you are not prepared for all this, be assured that you have not the least chance of being able to form a correct opinion *upon the ground of evidence*. Therefore, I repeat, if you feel that this probation is not in your power, place your reliance on the goodness and justice of your Creator, who will never act unjustly or require any thing unreasonable, and remain content with the religion of your ancestors."

236. My amiable young friend told me he was quite satisfied that my advice was good, and I have no doubt that he will follow it; and I flatter myself with the hope, that some day as prime minister under the command of Ibrahim, he will restore his interesting country to the prosperity which it formerly enjoyed under its Caliphs.

237. Although this anecdote may be said not to relate to Mahomed, I have thought that I could not do better than conclude my Essay by making known the fact, so full of promise for the inhabitants of the oriental countries, that the present great sovereigns of Constantinople and Egypt are sending their young men to the West for education, a circumstance which opens a most flattering prospect of improvement to the countries which they govern, and must give great pleasure to every liberal and philanthropic mind.

FINIS.