

Christ, all succeeding ages have abundantly experienced." The arrangement of dates here adverted to may be worth noticing; both events having occurred within the first six or eight years of the seventh century; but we have as yet met with no evidence to convince us of the propriety of applying the epithet Antichrist to Mohammed. It is, however, the opinion of many Protestant expositors of prophecy, that this appellation is properly attributable to that system of ecclesiastical domination so long exercised by the Romish hierarchy, and the continuance of which, it is maintained, is limited by the prophetic term of 1260 years. If, therefore, this predicted period, assigned to the reign of the Roman Antichrist, be dated from near the commencement of the seventh century, we are not very far from the era of great moral changes in the state of the world; and there are reasons to be adduced in a subsequent part of this work, which lead us to believe, that the career of Mohammedanism runs parallel to that of Popery, and that, taking their rise from nearly a common era, they are destined also to synoerise in their fall.

CHAPTER IV.

The Prophet announces his Mission among his kindred of the Koreish—Meets with a harsh repulse—Begins to declare it in public—View of his fundamental doctrines—His pretensions respecting the Koran.—The disdainful Rejection of his Message by his fellow-citizens—His consequent Denunciations against them.

The mission of Mohammed had hitherto been conducted in private. The proselytes he had thus far gained had been won over from among the circle of his immediate friends and connexions. The time had now come, he affirmed, when the Lord commanded him to make his message publicly known, beginning with his kindred of the tribe of Koreish, "O thou covered, arise and preach, and magnify thy Lord." "And admonish thy more near relations." To this end he directed Ali to prepare a generous entertainment, and invite to it the sons and descendants of Abdol Motalleb, where, when they were all convened, he would formally divulge to them the solemn fact of the apostolic commission. Some disturbance, occasioned by Abu Taleb, caused the company to break up before he had an opportunity of effecting his purpose, which induced him to give them a second invitation on the ensuing day. About forty of them accordingly assembled around his board, when the prophet arose, and thus addressed his wondering guests;—"I know no man in the whole peninsula of the Arabs who can propose any thing more excellent to his relations than what I now do to you; I offer you happiness both in this life and in that which is to come; God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto him; who therefore among you will be my vizier (assistant), and will become my brother and vicegerent?" General astonishment kept