

diately imparted what she had heard to one Waraka, her cousin, who is supposed by some to have been in the secret, and who, being a Christian, had learned to write in the Hebrew character, and was tolerably well versed in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He unhesitatingly assented to her opinion respecting the divine designation of her husband, and even affirmed, that Mohammed was no other than the great prophet foretold by Moses, the son of Amram. This belief that both the prophet and his spurious religion were subjects of inspired prediction in the Old Testament Scriptures, is studiously inculcated in the Koran. "Thy Lord is the mighty, the merciful. This book is certainly a revelation from the Lord of all creatures, which the faithful spirit (Gabriel) hath caused to descend upon thy heart, that thou mightest be a preacher to thy people in the perspicuous Arabic tongue; and it is borne witness to in the Scriptures of former ages. Was it not a sign unto them that the wise men among the children of Israel knew it?"

Having succeeded in gaining over his wife, he persevered in that retired and austere kind of life which tends to beget the reputation of pre-eminent sanctity, and ere long had his servant, Zeid Ebn Hareth, added to the list of proselytes. He rewarded the faith of Zeid by manumitting him from servitude, and it has hence become a standing rule among his followers always to grant their freedom to such of their slaves as embrace the religion of the prophet. Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, Mohammed's cousin, was his next convert, but the impetuous youth, disregarding the other two as persons of comparatively little note, used to style himself the first of believers. His fourth and most important convert was Abubeker, a powerful citizen of Mecca, by whose influence a number of persons possessed of rank and authority were induced to profess the religion of Islam. These were Othman, Zobair, Saad, Abdorrahman, and Abu Obeidah, who afterward became the principal leaders in his armies, and his main instruments in the establishment both of his imposture and of his empire. Four years were spent in the arduous task of winning over these nine individuals to the faith, some of whom were the principal men of the city, and who composed the whole party of his proselytes previously to his beginning to proclaim his mission in public. He was now forty-four years of age.

It has been remarked, as somewhat of a striking coincidence, that the period of Mohammed's retiring to the cave of Hera for the purpose of fabricating his imposture corresponds very nearly with the time in which Boniface, bishop of Rome, by virtue of a grant from the tyrant Phocas, first assumed the title of Universal Pastor, and began to lay claim to that spiritual supremacy over the church of Christ, which has ever since been arrogated to themselves by his successors.

"And from this time," says Pridenux, "both he (the Bishop of Rome) and Mohammed having conspired to found themselves an empire in imposture, their followers have been ever since endeavouring by the same methods, that is, those of fire and sword, to propagate it among mankind; so that Antichrist seems at this time to have set both his feet upon Christendom together; the one in the East, the other in the West, and how much each hath trampled upon the church of

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