

may trust to the same authorities, discovered the most wonderful presages. He was no sooner born than he fell prostrate, in a posture of humble adoration, praying devoutly to his Creator, and saying, "God is great! There is no God but God, and I am his prophet!" By these and many other supernatural signs, equally astounding, is the prophet's nativity said to have been marked. To some of them it would indeed appear that the earlier Christians gave an honest credence; with this difference however, between their belief and that of his followers, that while the latter ascribed them without hesitation to the hand of God, giving in this manner a gracious attestation to the prophetic character of his servant, the former referred them directly to the agency of the devil, who might naturally be supposed, they thought, to work some special wonders on the present occasion. Upon the narrative of these miraculous phenomenas the reader will form his own judgment. They are mentioned in the absence of all authentic information touching the period and the event in question. Until the facts alleged are proved, by competent historical testimony, to have taken place, it is scarcely necessary to call in the aid of divine or diabolical agency to account for them; as it is much easier to imagine that an imposition or illusion may have been practised upon the first reporters, or that the whole catalogue of wonders is a mere fabrication of interested partisans, than that the ordinary course of nature should have been disturbed at this crisis.

The Arabic biographers of the prophet, moreover, inform us that Abdol Motaleb, his grandfather, the seventh day after the birth of the child, gave a great entertainment, to which he invited the principal men of the Koreish, who, after the repast was over, desired him to give the infant a name. Abdol Motaleb immediately replied—"I name this child Mohammed." The Koreish grandees at once expressed their surprise that he did not call his grandson, according to custom, by a name which had belonged to some one of the family. But he persisted in the selection he had made, saying, "May the Most High glorify in Heaven him whom he has created on earth!" alluding to the name Mohammed, which signifies *praised or glorified*.

At the early age of two years Mohammed lost his father; and four years after, his mother. The helpless orphan, now cast upon the kindness of his relations, was taken into the house and family of his grandfather, under whose guardian care he remained but two years, when the venerable Motaleb himself was also called to pay the debt of nature. In a dying charge, he confided this tender plant of the ancient stock of the Koreish to the faithful hands of Abu Talab, the eldest of his sons and the successor of his authority. "My dearest, best beloved son" thus history or tradition reports the tenor of his instructions—"to my charge I leave Mohammed, the son of thine own brother, strictly recommended, whose natural father the Lord hath been pleased to make to himself, with the intent that this dear child should become ours by adoption; and much dearer ought he to be unto us than merely an adopted son. Receive him, therefore, at my dying hands, with the same sin cere love and tender bowels with which I deliver him to thy care. Honour, love, and cherish him as much, or even more than if