

the memory of his
of the four perfect

upon the world—Diffi-
is suggested—Retire-
sits of Gabriel with a
slow progress in gain.

ty with the first citi-
the next twelve years
until the age of forty,
future prophet. His
merchant, as the A-
, have always been
s interval, however,
alming a new religion
results, the most im-
to be regretted, that
ne, have deprived us
a satisfactory clew to
which first suggested
cherish it, the ends
with the real agencies
rapped in impenetra-
the inquiring mind,
ources, is most eager
le to determine whe-
ed enthusiast or a de-
ndly considered the
gress, genius, and ef-

Mohammed was con-
-that his native tem-
d that he might origi-
ving scope to the in-
his retired specula-
cerely persuaded in
unity of God, which
orld, and, therefore,
avour to liberate his

countrymen and his race from the bondage of error. Impelled by this motive in the outset, and being aided by a warm imagination, he might at length have come, it is affirmed, as enthusiasts have often done, to the firm conviction, that he was destined by Providence to be the instrument of a great and glorious reformation; and the circumstances of his being accustomed to solitary retirement would naturally cause this persuasion to take a deeper root in his mind. In this manner, it is supposed, his career might have commenced; but finding himself to have succeeded beyond his expectations, and the force of temptation growing with the increase of his popularity and power, his self-love at last overpowered his honesty, ambition took the place of devotion, his designs expanded with his success, and he who had entered upon a pious enterprise as a well-meaning reformer degenerated in the end into a wilful impostor, a gross debauchee, and an unprincipled despot.

On the other hand, it is maintained, and we think with more of an air of probability, that his conduct from the very first bears the marks of a deep-laid and systematic design; that although he might not have anticipated all the results which crowned the undertaking, yet in every step of his progress he acted with a shrewdness and circumspection very little savouring of the dreams of enthusiasm; that the pretended visits of an angel, and his publishing, from time to time, the chapters of the Koran, as a divine revelation, are wholly inconsistent with the idea of his being merely a deluded fanatic; and that, at any rate, the discovery of his inability to work a miracle, the grand voucher of a divine messenger, must have been sufficient to dispel the fond illusion from his mind.

Many circumstances, moreover, it is said, may be adduced, which might have concurred to prompt and favour the design of this arch imposture. 1. Mohammed's genius was bold and aspiring. His family had formerly held the ascendancy in rank and power in the city of Mecca, and it was merely his misfortune in having lost his father in infancy, and being left an orphan, that prevented him from succeeding to the same distinction. It was therefore the dictate of a very obvious principle of human nature, that he should contrive, if possible, to make the fortune and influence acquired by his marriage a step to still higher honours, and to raise himself to the ancient dignity of his house. 2. He had travelled much in his own and foreign countries. His journeys would of course bring him acquainted with the tenets of the different sects of the religious world, particularly the Jewish and the Christian, which were then predominant, and the latter greatly corrupted and torn to pieces with internal dissensions. Being a sagacious observer of men, he could not fail to perceive that the distracted state of the existing religions had put the Eastern world into posture extremely favourable to the propagation of a new system. His own countrymen, the people of Arabia, were, indeed, for the most part sunk in idolatry, but the vestiges of a purer faith, derived from patriarchal times, were still lingering among them, to a degree that afforded him the hope of recovering them to a sounder creed. 3. The political state of things at that time was such as signally to favour his project. The Roman empire, on the one hand,