

fore because they have broken their covenant, wo* have cursed them and hardened their hearts; they dislocate the words of the Pentateuch from their places, and have forgotten part of what they were admonished; and wilt thou not cease to discover the deceitful practices among them, except a few of them." "O ye who have received the Scriptures, now is our apostle come unto you, to make manifest unto you many things which ye have concealed in the Scriptures."

In the execution of his high behest, he, declared himself appointed to promulge a new revelation in successive portions, the aggregate of which was to constitute the Bible of his followers. The original or archetype of the Koran, he taught, was laid up from everlasting in the archives of Heaven, being written on what he termed the *preserved table*, near to the throne of God, from which the series of chapters communicated by Gabriel were a transcript. This pretended gradual mode of revelation was certainly a master stroke of policy in the impostor. "The unbelievers say, unless the Koran be sent down to him entire at once, we will not believe. But in this manner have we revealed it that we might confirm thy heart thereby, and we have dictated it gradually by distinct parcels." Had the whole volume been published at once, so that a rigid examination could have been instituted into its contents as a whole, and the different parts brought into comparison with each other, glaring inconsistencies would have been easily detected, and objections urged which he would probably have found it impossible to answer. But by pretending to receive his oracles in separate portions, at different times, according as his own exigences or those of his followers required, he had a ready way of silencing all cavils, and extricating himself with credit from every difficulty, as nothing forbade the message or mandate of to-day being modified or abrogated that of to-morrow. In this manner, twenty-three years elapsed before the whole chain of revelations was completed, though the prophet informed his disciples that he had the consolation of seeing the entire Koran, bound in silk and adorned with gold and gems of Paradise, once a year, till, in the last year of his life, he was favoured with the vision twice. A part of these spurious oracles were published at Mecca before his flight, the remainder at Medina after it. The particular mode of publication is said to have been this: When a new chapter had been communicated to the prophet, and was about to be promulgated for the benefit of the world, he first dictated it to his secretary, and then delivered the written paper to his followers, to be read and repeated till it had become firmly imprinted upon their memories, when the paper was again returned to the prophet, who carefully deposited it in a chest, called by him "the chest of his apostleship." The hint of this sacred coffer was doubtless taken from the Ark of the Covenant, the holy chest of the Jewish tabernacle, in which the authentic copy of the law was laid up and preserved. This chest Mohammed left at his death in the care of one of his wives

* The reader will notice that notwithstanding Mohammed's strenuous assertion of God's absolute unity, and his execrations of those who ascribe to him "associates," yet when he introduces him speaking in the Koran it is usually in the plural number